



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

H.B. NO. 2104, H.D. 1, RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026      **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 325

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Alyssa-Marie Y.H. Kau, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to extend the time for submitting nominations to fill vacancies that occur during the term of a member of an Island Burial Council. The bill also authorizes the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to determine and disburse stipends for council members appointed to represent geographic regions, while providing that such members shall serve without salary. In addition, the bill revises the quorum requirement for Island Burial Councils to provide that a majority of the appointed members constitutes a quorum to conduct business.

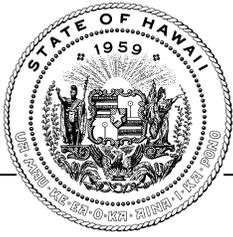
First, the bill does not specify the source of funds for payment of the stipend. Identifying the funding source would provide additional clarity for implementation.

Second, the bill provides that members of the Island Burial Council shall serve "without salary" while simultaneously authorizing a "stipend for attendance at a duly noticed council meeting." Page 3, line 18, through page 4, line 2. Clarifying the terminology describing the payment for meeting attendance would ensure consistency within section 6E-43.5, HRS.

To address the Department's concerns, we recommend amending subsection (e) of section 6E-43.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, on page 3, line 13, through page 4, line 5, to read: (changes shown in bold)

"(e) The department, in consultation with the councils, office of Hawaiian affairs, representatives of development and large landowner interests, and appropriate Hawaiian organizations, such as Hui Malama I Na Kupuna O Hawai'i Nei, shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. The council members shall serve without **[compensation,] salary**, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred during the performance of their duties. Council members appointed to represent geographic regions may receive a stipend for expenses actually incurred in connection with attendance at a duly noticed council meeting [through a process of application to the office of Hawaiian affairs.], subject to documentation requirements established by the office of Hawaiian affairs and paid from funds available to the office of Hawaiian affairs. The councils shall be a part of the department for administrative purposes."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of  
**HB 2104, HD 1**  
**RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS.**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **offers the following comments on HB 2104, HD 1**, which extends the time to fill vacancies that occur during an Island Burial Council member's term; provides per diem compensation in the form of a stipend for Island Burial members representing geographic regions; and revises the Island Burial Councils' quorum for business to be a majority of the appointed council members.

The issue of Island Burial Councils frequently lacking quorum, and the subsequent meeting cancellations that follow, was a concern raised in the Chapter 6E Historic Preservation Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) of the SPEED Taskforce. **OPSD respectfully refers** committee members to review the data on island burial council vacancies and meeting cancellations contained in the final report of Set 1 of the SPEED PIGs, which highlights the severity of these administrative hurdles.

When councils cannot meet or act promptly, the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) and project applicants face prolonged uncertainty regarding permissible treatment options for previously identified burial sites. This lack of predictability significantly slows the development of critical infrastructure and residential projects, directly impeding the State's ability to address the urgent need for housing. OPSD believes that the quorum requirement change to a majority of appointed council members addresses the quorum issue in an immediate and practical way, ensuring that these bodies can continue their essential work without undue delay.

While HB 2104, HD 1, is a necessary step forward, **OPSD notes** that additional action will be required to effectively bring the island burial councils to a level where they are fully operational and sustainable. We emphasize that any further actions or policy refinements should

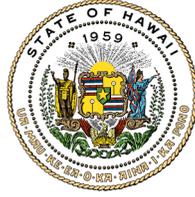
HB 2104 HD1 RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS - COMMENT  
State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development  
February 24, 2026

be conducted in close collaboration with existing island burial council members to ensure that administrative efficiency is balanced with cultural sensitivity and community trust.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Tuesday, February 24, 2026  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2104, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS

House Bill 2104, House Draft 1 would amend Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §6E-43.5 to increase the amount of time the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) is afforded to submit their list of names to fill vacancies on the Island Burial Councils (IBC), allows for an OHA-funded stipend to burial council members, and decreases the number of IBC members required for quorum. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and submits the follow comments for consideration.**

HRS Chapter 6E provides the framework for a comprehensive statewide historic preservation program in Hawai'i. A key part of that program is management of the burial sites program and its associated IBCs, as required by HRS §6E-43, 43.5, and 43.6, respectively.

Over the past decade, there have been ongoing challenges with filling vacant seats and maintaining quorum for the Hawai'i (HIBC), Maui/Lana'i (MLIBC), Oahu (OIBC), Kaua'i/Ni'ihau (KNIBC), and the Moloka'i (MIBC) Island Burial Councils. (Currently, the MLIBC maintains eight members, the HIBC and OIBC maintain six members each, the KNIBC maintains five members, and the MIBC maintains only one member.) These ongoing challenges directly impact each IBCs ability to fulfill their responsibilities and protect iwi kupuna. HRS §43.5(f) expressly defines quorum as, "[a] majority of all members to which each council is entitled." OHA's proposed measure will change the quorum requirement to "a majority of all members appointed, provided that no fewer than three members shall constitute quorum."

The amendments proposed by OHA are reasonable, appropriate, and will assist the department and the IBCs to fulfill their program requirements under HRS §6E-43.5.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2104 HD1**  
RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 24, 2026

2:00 PM

Room 325

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Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

Mahalo for setting HB2104 HD1 for public hearing, which is part of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA's) 2026 Legislative Package. OHA submits this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB2104 HD1**, which aims to strengthen the operation of Island Burial Councils (IBCs) by addressing long-standing barriers hindering the ability of IBCs to regularly meet and do business.

Background

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.<sup>1</sup> Among its statutory duties, OHA is required to (1) serve as principal public agency in the State of Hawai'i responsible for the performance, development and coordination of programs and activities relating to native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; (2) assess the policies and practices of other agencies impacting native Hawaiians and Hawaiians; and (3) conduct advocacy efforts for native Hawaiians and Hawaiians.<sup>2</sup>

In fulfillment of our mandates, OHA has been deeply involved with the protection of iwi kūpuna for decades. Under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 6E and its implementing administrative rules, OHA is tasked with specific kuleana including nominating moku candidates to serve on the island burial councils (IBCs) and consulting on sites that are important to Native Hawaiians.<sup>3</sup> OHA also regularly receives calls and emails from beneficiaries about the desecration of iwi, difficulties exerting their rights as cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Haw. Const. Art. XII § 5

<sup>2</sup> HRS § 10-3.

<sup>3</sup> See HRS §§ 6E-3, 6E-43, 6E-43.5, 6E-43.6; HAR §§ 13-284-6(c), 13-275-6(c).

and lineal descendants, and other issues related to proper implementation of HRS Chapter 6E. In response, OHA will intervene and advocate on behalf of beneficiaries to the IBCs, State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD), and private landowners, to encourage compliance with existing law, including the requirement to consult with cultural and lineal descendants.

In establishing the IBCs in 1990, the Legislature expressly recognized that the public has a vital interest in the disposition of its interred persons and characterized it as a sacred trust responsibility. Further, under the State of Hawai'i Constitution Article XII, section 7, the state has a specific trust duty to protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices, including those related to mālama iwi kūpuna. The IBCs are a vital means for the State to effectuate these important trust duties and to ensure protection of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. Accordingly, functioning IBCs benefit both the Native Hawaiian community and project proponents by providing timely, transparent guidance that helps avoid conflict, litigation risk, and delays.

HB2104 HD1: Addressing IBC barriers to service and maintaining a quorum

**Despite their importance, IBCs have faced persistent challenges meeting quorum and maintaining full membership, limiting their ability to carry out their statutory responsibilities.** Vacancies often remain unfilled and quorum requirements based on a majority of all seats—rather than a majority of appointed members—have made it particularly difficult for councils to act. These issues have been well documented over time and were recently identified by the State's Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force (2025) as structural and resource constraints limiting the IBCs ability to fulfill their role consistently, thereby causing project stalls and delays.<sup>4</sup> Amending the quorum requirement is a practical reform to reduce IBC decision-making delays.

**Moreover, IBCs rely on uncompensated volunteer service, which places a disproportionate burden on Native Hawaiians who are selected specifically for their cultural knowledge and expertise.** Regional (moku) representatives require significant expertise in cultural history and Native Hawaiian burial customs—they are appointed as cultural experts carrying out a public trust responsibility. Yet, in practice, IBC members must take time off work and incur childcare and other out-of-pocket expenses in order to serve. As a result, qualified candidates are often deterred from applying, withdraw from service, or simply find it impossible to attend meetings consistently.

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<sup>4</sup> See [\*Final Report of the Permitted Interaction Groups for Chapter 6E/Historic Preservation, Individual Wastewater Systems, and Building Permits\*](#), SPEED Task Force, p. 14 (Dec. 2025).

In the process of executing OHA's IBC nomination duties, we have witnessed several well qualified candidates withdraw due to financial barriers. The State's SPEED Task Force likewise identified reliance on volunteer service as factor undermining IBC effectiveness.<sup>5</sup> Authorizing modest stipends directly addresses this barrier by supporting recruitment, retention, and consistent participation, while recognizing the time and expertise contributed by moku representative council members. The intent of this bill is to allow OHA the option to fund and provide stipends by removing the statutory prohibition, and there is no appropriation request attached to this measure. Further, because implementation must be accompanied by OHA Board of Trustee action at a publicly noticed Sunshine Law meeting, beneficiaries will have further opportunities for input into the structure of any stipend or scholarship program at that time.

**In conclusion, HB2104 HD1 offers practical amendments to strengthen Island Burial Council function and ensure the framework established under HRS Chapter 6E operates as intended.** By addressing barriers to participation and quorum, the bill supports meaningful descendant involvement, improves administrative efficiency, and promotes greater public confidence in the historic review process.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HB2104 HD1**.

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<sup>5</sup>*Id.*



*Ko`olau Foundation*

P. O. Box 4749 / 46-005 Kawa St., #205  
Kane`ohe, HI 96744

February 23, 2026

To: Rep. David Tarnas, Chair  
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
& Members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

From: Mahealani Cypher, President

Re: H.B. 2104, H.D.1, Relating to Island Burial Councils

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation supports H.B.2104, H.D.1, which amends the law regarding burial councils to extend the time for filling vacancies, provides for a modest stipend, and revises the quorum needed to conduct business.

In our view, this bill would greatly increase the likelihood of our island burial councils to convene and conduct business to fulfill its purpose to malama our iwi kupuna.

One of the problems we have noted, in past years, is that taking on the kuleana of serving on the burial council places great responsibility upon each member. We Hawaiians do not take this kuleana lightly, and many people feel that serving on these councils may unduly burden them and their families with obligations toward the remains of our ancestors. While so deeply and dearly important to the Hawaiian people, this is something to think about. The small stipend may help offset that, perhaps?

We urge all of you to act favorably by passing this bill out of committee.

Mahalo for considering our mana`o.



Queen's Court  
800 Bethel Street, Suite 501  
Honolulu HI 96813

Phone 808.587.7770  
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## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

### **RE HB 2140: RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS**

Avalon Development submits this testimony in support of HB2104, HD1, which addresses long-standing structural challenges that have limited the ability of the Island Burial Councils (IBCs) to carry out their important work. The IBCs play a critical role in Hawai'i's historic preservation framework by ensuring the respectful treatment and protection of iwi kūpuna and by providing a forum for lineal and cultural descendants to exercise their kuleana.

As recognized by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and documented by the State's Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force, persistent vacancies and quorum requirements tied to unfilled seats have made it difficult, particularly for smaller island councils, to meet and conduct business. These structural barriers have led to delays and canceled meetings, undermining the councils' ability to perform time-sensitive and culturally significant responsibilities.

HB2104 provides practical, targeted reforms to address these issues. Revising quorum to a majority of appointed members allows councils to function as intended despite vacancies, while authorizing modest, OHA-funded stipends helps reduce barriers to participation for community members who must balance council service with work and family obligations. Together, these changes support more consistent membership and informed, place-based decision-making.

With functioning councils, descendants can more meaningfully participate in the care of iwi kūpuna, and all stakeholders benefit from greater predictability and efficiency in the review process. Avalon Development supports HB2104, HD1 and respectfully urges its passage.

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 6:50:11 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support. Including testimony from OHA 2/5/26.

2104 HB RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS.

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 7:23:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ahia Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide

project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 7:29:25 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Naomi Tachera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

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project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Dr. Naomi Tachera

Hawai'i Island

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 7:29:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nalani Hao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

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project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Nalani Mamoaliiapai Hao

Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 7:30:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ikaika Dwight	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ensuring the protection, preservation, and respect of iwi kūpuna is not just the right thing to do, it's the sacred thing to do. Fund the IBC members so that more members can afford to put their time, energy, and resources into this very important part of our history.

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 8:28:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shaeralee-Tiare Manosa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I grew up knowing how sacred nā 'iwi kūpuna is in our culture. It wasn't a matter we questioned to protect. It is the "pono" thing to do. IBC is taking time out of their days to make pono what shouldn't happen in the first place. 'Āina is also OUR ANCESTOR. KANAKA ARE THE 'IWI of our ancestors. WE who are ALIVE right now, are telling YOU exactly HOW WE EXPECT OUR 'IWI to be treated when we join our ancestors. So, it's not a matter of only the past...it's the now and the then. I don't want anybody moving me once im laid to rest, just to FIT a new building where I already am. Until you learn, which you will because Americans are disrespectful like that, the "least" you can do is give those who are doing your dirty work, doing the required ceremony to APOLOGIZE on AMERICA's behalf. The length it takes to find someone new to replace and fill IBC positions take time, because it is not a normal job where you can take a course and get certified. You have to be spiritually and mentally grounded and ready because if you're not, you risk your sanity. The spirits play. And not much Kanaka would risk that, not even for money. If you find those who want to try, be grateful. Pay them for their time because when they pau that work, they have go home properly, cleansed, without worries on their shoulders, without spirits on their backs. Hui Hou 💖

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 8:54:02 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Martha Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Martha Evans

Honolulu, O'ahu

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 9:00:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kawaiohawaiki Anakalea-Kila	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

**Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:**

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Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kawaiohawaiki Anakalea-Kila

Honolulu HI

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 12:44:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

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A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 5:09:55 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Inam Rahman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Inam Rahman, MD, and I reside in Waipahu, Hawaii. I respectfully submit testimony in support of HB2104 HD1, with suggested amendments to strengthen accountability, transparency, and long-term effectiveness.

Island Burial Councils (IBCs) play a vital role in protecting iwi kūpuna and ensuring that Native Hawaiian lineal and cultural descendants retain a meaningful voice in decisions affecting ancestral remains. When these councils cannot convene due to quorum technicalities or recruitment delays, both cultural protection and project clarity suffer. HB2104 HD1 appropriately addresses structural barriers that have prevented IBCs from functioning as intended.

Quorum Reform Is a Practical and Necessary Fix.

Adjusting quorum requirements to a majority of appointed members—rather than counting vacant seats—ensures that councils remain operational. This reform preserves cultural authority while eliminating procedural paralysis that has led to repeated cancellations and delayed decision-making.

Optional Stipends Reduce Barriers to Participation.

Allowing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to provide optional stipends to moku representatives acknowledges the time, expertise, and kuleana required of council members. Volunteer-only service may unintentionally exclude qualified individuals who face financial or employment constraints. A modest stipend option can broaden participation and reduce vacancies.

However, to ensure fiscal responsibility and public confidence, I respectfully recommend the following strengthening amendments:

1. Establish a Clear Stipend Cap:  
Set a reasonable per-meeting or annual stipend limit to ensure responsible budgeting and avoid unintended financial escalation.
2. Require Annual Public Reporting:  
Mandate transparent reporting of stipend expenditures and council attendance to maintain public trust and accountability.
3. Include a Sunset Review Clause (2–3 Years):  
Require legislative review after a set period to assess whether stipend authority and quorum reforms have improved council functionality and recruitment.
4. Clarify Descendant Consultation Protections:  
Ensure that quorum reform does not diminish existing consultation requirements with lineal and cultural descendants.

Strong, functioning Island Burial Councils benefit all parties—descendants, communities, and project proponents alike—by providing culturally informed, timely, and place-based decision-making. HB2104 HD1 takes important steps toward operational stability while upholding Hawaii’s constitutional trust responsibilities.

With the suggested amendments above, this measure can enhance both effectiveness and public accountability.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Inam Rahman, MD

Waipahu, Hawaii

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 6:04:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maxine L Akee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Maxine Akee

Maili Oahi

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 6:57:46 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
János Samu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide

project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

János Keoni Samu

Kalaheo

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB2104 HD1, relating to Island Burial Councils.

Island Burial Councils (IBCs) play a vital role in ensuring that Native Hawaiian lineal and cultural descendants can exercise meaningful decision-making authority over the care and treatment of iwi kūpuna when ancestral remains are encountered. When these councils are unable to convene, our voices are effectively excluded from decisions that directly impact our ancestors, cultural practices, and sense of place.

HB2104 HD1 addresses a longstanding and practical problem by reforming quorum requirements. Under current law, vacant seats are counted toward quorum, often preventing IBCs from meeting despite the presence of active, appointed members. This has led to repeated meeting cancellations and delayed decision-making. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members is a commonsense solution that ensures IBCs remain functional rather than merely symbolic, allowing them to fulfill their statutory responsibilities in a timely manner.

IBCs rely on volunteer moku representatives who are selected for their deep understanding of Native Hawaiian culture, history, burial practices, and regional knowledge. However, the inability to provide any form of compensation creates real barriers for many qualified individuals who must balance service with work and family obligations. Allowing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to offer optional stipends removes financial barriers to participation, supports recruitment and retention, and appropriately recognizes the significant kuleana carried by IBC members.

Fully functioning IBCs benefit not only our families and cultural descendants, but also landowners and project proponents. Effective councils provide culturally informed, place-based guidance that helps prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the State's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. When IBCs can meet and act as intended, outcomes are clearer, more respectful, and more equitable for everyone involved.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to protecting iwi kūpuna and strengthening Native Hawaiian self-determination.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Camille Kahakukaalani Naluai-Rios  
Moku O Kakuhihewa

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 7:53:19 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brandee Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state’s trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide

project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Brandee Yuen

Pearl city, oahu

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 8:51:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Rich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Linda Rich and I strongly support HB2104.

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 9:01:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kimberly Rivera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support HB2104 HD1

Kanaka need to meet regularly, be paid a stipend and ultimately protect iwi kupuna. Mahalo

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 9:26:05 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wainani Traub	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Wainani Traub

Kaneohe, Oahu

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 11:48:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Summer Sylva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB2104 HD1.**

This measure reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that Island Burial Councils (IBCs) can successfully carry out one of the State’s most sensitive and important responsibilities: safeguarding iwi kūpuna while helping communities and development interests navigate difficult moments with care, clarity, and respect. Hawai‘i’s Constitution recognizes the protection of Native Hawaiian cultural practices and ancestral burial sites not only as a legal obligation, but as a reflection of values grounded in human dignity and respect that resonate far beyond our islands.

***Ensuring Island Burial Councils Can Function as Intended***

IBCs were created to bridge development realities with cultural stewardship. Yet, quorum requirements that count vacant seats often prevent Councils from convening, leaving critical decisions delayed and communities without guidance. Adjusting quorum to reflect a majority of appointed members is a practical, responsible reform that allows Councils to meet, deliberate, and fulfill their statutory charge. Functional councils help ensure decisions are made thoughtfully and proactively — before conflict escalates.

***Supporting Participation in Difficult and Essential Work***

IBC members undertake emotionally and culturally demanding responsibilities, often balancing Council service alongside employment and family obligations. Providing the option for modest stipends recognizes the time, expertise, and cultural labor required, reduces persistent vacancies, and enables broader participation by community members entrusted to represent their moku. This support is not about compensation for its own sake; it is about ensuring Councils have the capacity and continuity needed to perform their work responsibly.

***Strong Councils Prevent Harm and Strengthen Community Trust***

When IBCs are able to operate effectively, they help avoid the desecration of human remains by enabling timely, informed decisions grounded in cultural knowledge and community relationships. Effective Councils mitigate conflict, reduce litigation and costly remediation, and prevent avoidable harm and suffering for families, cultural descendants, and project proponents

alike. Done well, this work strengthens community bonds rather than compounding historic trauma.

At its core, HB2104 HD1 acknowledges the profound responsibility and difficulty inherent in cultural stewardship and in preserving the dignity of those who came before us. It recognizes that when Hawai'i invests in functional, empowered Island Burial Councils, we choose to act proactively and affirmatively — to prevent harm rather than respond to harm that occurs when systems are unable to act fully, effectively, or in time.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration ~ Summer Sylva

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 12:05:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 6:50:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
muhtadia rice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

**Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:** Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

**A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:** IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

**Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:** Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state’s trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Muhtadia Riice

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 6:44:08 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Allen Chinn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I write in strong support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

**Maintaining Functional Island Burial Councils:**

Reforming quorum requirements is essential to ensure that Island Burial Councils (IBCs) are able to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Many Councils struggle to fill every authorized seat, and the current practice of counting vacancies toward quorum often prevents meetings from convening and business from proceeding. Adjusting quorum to reflect a majority of appointed members offers a straightforward and reasonable solution that enables Councils to meet, deliberate, and fulfill their statutory obligations.

**Providing a Modest Stipend to Encourage Service:**

IBC members currently volunteer their time without compensation, which can pose significant challenges for those balancing employment, family responsibilities, and community commitments. Authorizing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to offer stipends to moku representatives would help reduce barriers to service, improve recruitment and retention, and recognize the valuable cultural expertise and time contributed by Native Hawaiian council members.

**Effective Councils Serve the Public Interest:**

Well-functioning Island Burial Councils help safeguard iwi kūpuna while also providing clarity and predictability for project proponents. When Councils are able to meet consistently and act in

a timely manner, they help prevent avoidable delays and ensure that the State's trust responsibility to protect ancestral remains is honored. Strong Councils support families and cultural descendants in carrying out their kuleana with dignity and care.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Allen Chinn

Hilo, Hawaii

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:19:24 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janali Torees	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state’s trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide

project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Janali Torees

Mountain View, Hawai'i Island

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:53:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Claresa Lynn Makalapua Asuncion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Statement of Support for HB2104 HD1

To: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

From: Claresa Lynn Makalapua Asuncion

Date: February 22, 2026

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB2104 HD1, relating to Island Burial Councils, which is scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday, February 24. As a resident of Hawai'i and as a Hawaiian, I am concerned with the current state in regards to the protection of Hawai'i's cultural heritage. Bill HB2104 HD1 will provide a much needed practical solution to the current barriers preventing Island Burial Councils (IBCs) from fulfilling their statutory duties.

By reforming quorum requirements to a majority of currently appointed members (rather than counting vacant seats) this legislation provides an outlet for councils to remain functional and can conduct business regularly without the frustration of repeated cancellations. This shift from a symbolic presence to a functional body is essential for maintaining the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains.

Furthermore, I support the provision to allow the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide optional stipends to moku representatives. Currently, the prohibition on compensation creates a significant financial barrier for many Native Hawaiians who wish to serve their community but must balance this kuleana with work and family obligations. Providing a modest stipend acknowledges the profound value of the cultural expertise these volunteers provide and ensures that financial need does not exclude qualified voices from the decision-making process.

By extending recruitment timelines for midterm vacancies, HB2104 HD1 also allows for a more thorough and culturally informed selection process, leading to more stable and effective councils.

Reliable and fully functioning Island Burial Councils benefit all stakeholders by preventing unnecessary project delays and providing landowners with clear, timely, and culturally responsible guidance. When IBCs are unable to meet, the voices of lineal and cultural descendants are silenced, and the process of self-determination regarding the care of iwi kūpuna is stalled.

With aloha, I urge the Committee to pass HB2104 HD1 to empower our communities, honor our ancestors, and ensure that place-based, culturally informed decision-making remains at the heart of our land-use process.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in support of this critical measure.

With Aloha ‘Āina,

Claresa Lynn Makalapua Asuncion

154 Waianuenue Ave Unit 10105

Hilo, HI 96721

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 1:18:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brenten Kanoa Yamane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brenten Kanoa Yamane

Kapolei, O'ahu

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:22:11 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helene DeLillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

I am writing in **support of HB2104 HD1** for the following reasons:

**Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:**

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of *appointed* members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

**A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:**

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

**Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:**

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. As someone raised here and now back home we must do this!!

Helene DeLillo helene@mac.com

1924 Lime Street Honolulu hi 96826



**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:54:59 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leimana Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

**Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:**

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

**A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:**

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

**Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:**

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state’s trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leimana Kāne

Kahului, Maui

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:09:59 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JoNelle Sood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

**Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:**

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

**A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:**

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

**Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:**

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state’s trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

JoNelle Sood

Native Hawaiian living in California

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:35:56 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisette Akamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

**Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:**

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

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**Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:**

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state’s trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Lisette Puanani Akamine

Kahalu'u, O'ahu

**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:18:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelcy Durbin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2104, which proposes essential changes to the operations of Hawaii's Island Burial Councils. This bill addresses three critical areas: extending the time to fill council member vacancies, providing per diem compensation in the form of a stipend for members representing geographic regions, and revising the quorum requirement for council business to a majority of appointed members.

Extending the time to fill vacancies will ensure that qualified individuals have sufficient opportunity to apply and be considered, thereby maintaining the integrity and continuity of the councils' work. This change is especially important given the unique cultural responsibilities entrusted to the Island Burial Councils.

Providing a per diem stipend for council members acknowledges the commitment and effort required to serve, particularly for those who represent geographically diverse regions. This compensation will help attract and retain dedicated individuals, ensuring that council members are not unduly burdened by their service and can fully participate in meetings and decision-making.

Finally, revising the quorum requirement to a majority of appointed council members will facilitate more efficient and effective council operations. This adjustment ensures that important business can proceed without unnecessary delays, while still maintaining robust representation and oversight.

House Bill 2104 demonstrates a thoughtful approach to supporting the Island Burial Councils, strengthening their ability to fulfill their responsibilities in protecting and honoring Hawaii's ancestral remains. I urge the legislature to pass this bill and support the continued stewardship of our cultural heritage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelcy Durbin



**HB-2104-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:56:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexander McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of **HB2104 HD1**.