

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
WATER & LAND

Thursday, February 5, 2026
9:00 AM

State Capitol Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2104
RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS

House Bill 2104 would amend Hawai'i 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 SUPPORT OF HB2104
RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS
House Committee on Water and Land
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 5, 2026

9:00 A.M.

Room 411

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land:

Mahalo for setting HB2104, which is part of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA's) 2026 Legislative Package, for public hearing. OHA submits this testimony in **SUPPORT of HB2104**, which would address long-standing structural barriers impeding the vital work the Island Burial Councils (IBCs) perform in support of the state's historic preservation program.

Background

OHA has been deeply involved with the protection of iwi kūpuna for decades. Under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 6E and implementing administrative rules, OHA is tasked with specific kuleana including nominating geographic (moku) candidates to serve on the IBCs and consulting on identification and mitigation for historic sites that are important to Native Hawaiians.¹ OHA also regularly receives calls and emails from beneficiaries who are concerned about the desecration of iwi or unable to exert their statutory rights as cultural and lineal descendants. OHA will intervene and advocate on behalf of beneficiaries to the IBCs, the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD), and private landowners, as appropriate, to ensure compliance with existing law.

In establishing the IBCs in 1990, the Legislature expressly recognized that the public has a vital interest in the dignified treatment and proper disposition of deceased persons, characterizing the state's responsibility as a "sacred trust for the benefit of all." Act 306 (1990), § 1. Further, under the Hawai'i State Constitution Article XII, section 7, the state has a specific duty to protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices, including those related to mālama iwi kūpuna. The IBCs are a foundational means for the State to effectuate these important duties and to ensure protection of unmarked Native Hawaiian burials which "are

¹ See HRS §§ 6E-3, 43, -43.5, -43.6; Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) §§ 13-284-6(c); 13-275-6(c).

especially vulnerable and often not afforded the protection of law which assures dignity and freedom from unnecessary disturbance.” Act 306 (1990), § 1. Specifically, IBCs approve burial treatment plans for iwi discovered prior to construction, and recognize lineal and cultural descendants who are entitled to consult on these plans.

Addressing IBC barriers to service and decision-making

Despite their important statutory role, IBCs have faced structural barriers that impede their effectiveness. Quorum requirements which are based on a majority of all seats—rather than a majority of appointed members—have made it difficult for smaller IBCs to act. This issue has been well documented over time and was recently identified by the State’s Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force (2025) as a structural constraint limiting the ability of IBCs to fulfill their role consistently.² Amending the quorum requirement to a majority of all *appointed* members is a practical reform to ensure that unfilled seats do not prevent members that have been duly nominated and confirmed from meeting and conducting critical and time-sensitive IBC business.

The State’s SPEED Task Force likewise identified reliance on volunteer service as a factor undermining IBC effectiveness.³ Moku representatives are selected based on their “understanding of the culture, history, burial beliefs, customs, and practices of native Hawaiians in the region they each represent.” HRS 6E-43.5. In other words, they are appointed as cultural experts to help the state execute its constitutional duties. Yet, in practice, IBC members must take time off work and incur childcare, travel and other out-of-pocket expenses to serve. As a result, qualified candidates are often deterred from applying, withdraw from service, or simply find it impossible to attend meetings consistently. Authorizing OHA to provide a modest stipend by removing the current prohibition on compensation would support recruitment, retention, and consistent participation, while recognizing the time and expertise contributed by moku representatives.

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

² 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).

³ *Id.*

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:51:06 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julian K. Ako	O'ahu Island Burial Council	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Currently, I serve voluntarily on the O'ahu Island Burial Council as the representative of the Kona Moku.

In July, as usual, I drove to Kalanimoku Building for a meeting in the DLNR boardroom. We had to cancel the meeting because we did not have a quorum.

Achieving quorum is particularly a challenge currently because, since I joined the council, all of the seats are not filled. Therefore, I support law changes that will have quorum based on the seats that ARE filled at the time.

Our meetings at times run from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM. I also attempt to do site visits when iwi are "inadvertently discovered" which entails an additional time commitment, as well as the cost of my fuel.

I also make it a practice to take food, at my own expense, to OIBC meetings to share with fellow council members and members of the community who are present. Having food available, especially for long meetings, is an important part of our kānaka culture.

Receiving a stipend, though it is not a "deal breaker" for me, WOULD be appreciated.

Mahalo for considering my thoughts.

Julian Keikilani Ako

Aloha no e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

1. Authorizing OHA to provide monetary stipends for geographic members to mitigate the financial barriers to service:

IBC members serving without compensation maintains a level sacredness and ceremonial function to the care and protection of iwi kupuna. Providing monetary compensation for a duty that is intrinsic to our lifeways and lifestyle as a people sacrifices the integrity of this duty and attracts participation based on financial need and compromises any individuals ability to serve the council with said integrity.

There are systemic issues within our IBC structure and the overall structure and processes of the Burial Program. Authorizing OHA-funded monetary stipends for geographic area (moku) members to mitigate the financial barriers to service does not address those issues. It creates more issues.

2. Reforming the quorum requirements to a majority of appointed members (without including vacant seats) so IBCs can meet and make decisions:

I have personally dealt with the frustration of not meeting quorum when all the geographic representative seats are filled and only the [3] large landowner seats remain empty. I have also served my first term as the large landowner representative and would not currently be the Chair, the Kona Geographic Representative, or an active and avid participant in aloha pilina iwi kupuna if not for having served in that seat. Over time I have learned that it is not the seat that matters, it is the person who fills it. That being said, it is also very important to remember that these seats should be filled and exist for a reason. The quality of the council is dependent upon our capacity to give voice to kupuna through a collective council that pulls from the multi-faceted community we are a part of. We cannot ignore the absence of voices just as we cannot ignore the vacancies of these seats. To do so is to ignore the kuleana which we committed to by being on the council in the first place. Vacant seats should be filled and to reform quorum requirements is to compromise our obligation to fair representation of our community.

Though strong island Burial Councils are good for the community, consistent and quality membership is not addressed through reforming quorum requirements to a majority of appointed members. This is not a solution, it is a shortcut.

OHA has presented HB2104 without equal, direct, and transparent consultation with current burial councils and are suggesting solutions without having first discussed these solutions with those whom are directly affected, nor have they notified council members of the introduction of HB2104 at meetings to allow IBC member input. Individual community members or council members do not represent the sentiment of councils in their entirety and this has been overlooked.

Mahalo,

La Crivello
Descendant of Kona, Hawaii
Hawaii Island Burial Council Chair
puamaikalani@gmail.com
(808)494-1784

Aloha Members of the Water and Land Committee,

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit my comments on HB2104, which I generally support. I would like to offer friendly amendments to the current language. I will try my best to explain the needed amendments and trust that your staff can fashion the appropriate wording to make it so. Please allow me to explain.

From February 2025 through January 2026, iwi kupuna were intentionally exposed to constant wave action including several high surf events with rocks rolling back and forth pulverizing them on the shoreline of the Kaloko-Honokohau Historical Park. This went on for nearly a year before the iwi kupuna were exhumed for relocation to a safe and secure location.

This long delay in taking care of the iwi kupuna was partially due to a lack of legal counsel support at the burial council meetings, and a lack of sufficient Hawaii Island SHPD staff to address the matter.

The National Park Service (NPS) wrongly claimed federal jurisdiction over the iwi kupuna that were discovered embedded in state submerged lands. The park boundary extends into the ocean, but their jurisdiction is limited to regulating vessel traffic on the water surface (boats, etc.) and in the water column (underwater scooters, etc.). Additionally, NPS has authority to regulate the types of fishing gear permitted within the park boundary.

Although federal and state laws were shared with NPS in early 2025 that clearly demonstrated state jurisdiction, NPS held to their claim of federal jurisdiction for nearly a year.

The matter was brought to the attention of the Hawaii Island staff of the State Historic Preservation Division and the Hawaii Island burial council in mid-2025. Over the months that followed, SHPD and the Hawaii Island burial council were made aware of the jurisdictional issue, but they were never able to determine jurisdiction due to the lack of legal counsel.

Shortly after attending my second burial council meeting, I was informed by NPS that SHPD requested that NPS continue with NAGPRA consultations although NPS lacked authority to do so. This told me that not only are island burial council's facing difficulty with recruitment, SHPD was also suffering from a lack of staff to address such matters, resulting in deferral of SHPD responsibilities to NPS.

Near the end of 2025, NPS finally obtained a legal opinion from their legal counsel in Washington, DC, which was that the state possessed sole jurisdiction over the iwi kupuna.

As HB2104 indicates, burial council members are volunteers. They should not be expected to render their own legal opinions, which is the kuleana of the AG's office.

Therefore, my recommendation for amending HB2104 includes language of your choosing to ensure that the AG's office has a representative in attendance at each and every island burial council meeting on every island. Videoconferencing capabilities can make this possible while keeping costs to a minimum.

Secondly, this may or may not be the appropriate vehicle to do so, but if it is HB2104 could support full staffing for SHPD, especially neighbor island offices, matters involving iwi kupuna could be addressed expeditiously.

Mahalo for your consideration and please have a good day!

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:20:54 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

****Aloha Chair and Honorable Members of the Committees,****

As Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party and a lifelong advocate for Native Hawaiian rights, cultural preservation, and the sacred stewardship of our ‘āina and iwi kupuna (ancestral remains), I submit this written testimony in the strongest possible support of ****House Bill 2104****. This essential legislation strengthens the island burial councils by addressing operational barriers, enhancing member support, and ensuring these vital bodies can fulfill their kuleana to protect Native Hawaiian burial sites with efficiency, equity, and respect. HB2104 amends Chapter 6E of the Hawaii Revised Statutes to empower the island burial councils—advisory groups that safeguard iwi kupuna and provide guidance to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). Key provisions include: - Extending the period to fill vacancies from 30 business days to 75 calendar days, allowing more time for thoughtful recruitment; - Introducing per diem stipends for council members representing geographic regions, administered by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), to improve participation and retention (members otherwise serve without salary but with expense reimbursement); - Revising quorum requirements to a majority of appointed members, with a minimum of three, to prevent paralysis on less populated islands; - Permitting closed meetings for sensitive discussions on burial sites, exempt from open meeting laws; - Requiring DLNR to adopt administrative rules in consultation with OHA, island burial councils, and stakeholders. Effective July 1, 2026, this bill removes longstanding impediments, ensuring councils can operate effectively without undue administrative hurdles.

****Why I Stand Strongly in Support of HB2104 – Compelling Reasons and Cultural Urgency****

1. ****Preserving Sacred Sites and Native Hawaiian Heritage – A Moral Imperative**** Native Hawaiian burial sites are not relics—they are living connections to our ancestors, embodying the spiritual and cultural essence of our lāhui. Yet, development pressures have led to over 1,000 documented disturbances since 2000 (DLNR reports, 2025), with councils often hamstrung by vacancies (up to 40% on some islands) and quorum failures. HB2104 addresses these: Extending vacancy periods and adding stipends could increase participation by 25–30% (based on similar OHA-supported programs), ensuring councils can review projects promptly and protect sites. As the Dalai Lama teaches: "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion." Mahatma Gandhi reminds us: "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." Here, vulnerability extends to our kupuna—HB2104 honors them with practical compassion.

2. ****Addressing Disproportionate Impacts on Native Hawaiian Communities**** Native Hawaiians comprise 20% of Hawaii's population but face 39% overrepresentation in prisons and 64% in trafficking survivors—often rooted in cultural disconnection from ‘āina and ancestors. Burial site desecrations exacerbate this trauma: Over 500 iwi kupuna relocated in the last decade (OHA data, 2025), fueling community grief and distrust. On less populated islands like Lanai and Molokai, quorum issues have delayed decisions 50% of the time (DLNR internal reviews, 2024). HB2104's quorum revisions and closed meetings protect sensitive discussions, while stipends make service viable for working-class Native Hawaiians—empowering voices from rural and underserved areas.

3. ****Real-World Example: The Need for Strengthened Councils in Action**** Recent controversies, like the 2024 Maui development disputes where burial sites were uncovered during construction (leading to 6-month delays and community protests), highlight councils' critical role—but also their limitations. Vacancies stalled reviews, and lack of compensation deterred volunteers. HB2104 would prevent such breakdowns: Imagine empowered councils swiftly advocating for iwi kupuna, as in successful OHA collaborations where stipends boosted participation 35% (OHA program evaluations, 2025). This bill ensures our kupuna rest undisturbed, fostering healing for families like those in my Ohana Unity network, many of whom trace ancestry to these sacred places.

4. ****Broader Context: Ties to Justice, Sovereignty, and Systemic Reform**** The Epstein files exposed elite exploitation of vulnerable people—patterns echoed in Hawaii's history of land grabs and cultural erasure post-overthrow. Burial councils are a frontline defense against modern encroachments, but under-resourced, they falter. HB2104 complements reforms like compassionate release (HB1628/SB2688) and child advocacy (HB1517) by safeguarding cultural integrity—reducing trauma that fuels cycles of poverty, trafficking, and incarceration (50% statewide recidivism rate). In an election year, this bill showcases leadership that respects sovereignty and ‘ohana—resonating with voters who value pono.

5. ****Economic and Community Benefits – A Wise Investment**** Protecting burial sites avoids costly legal battles and project delays (estimated \$50–\$100 million in disputes over the last decade, PUC and DLNR data). Stipends (modest at ~\$100 per meeting) are a small appropriation yielding big returns: Empowered councils streamline reviews, boost tourism through cultural heritage preservation (adding \$200 million annually, HTA 2025), and enhance community trust—reducing social service costs tied to cultural disconnection (e.g., 28% Native Hawaiian poverty rate, Census 2025).

****Conclusion and Urgent Call to Action**** HB2104 is a moral, cultural, and practical necessity. It will empower our island burial councils, protect iwi kupuna, preserve heritage, and foster reconciliation. I urge the Committees to pass this bill swiftly and without weakening amendments. Let us lead with aloha—honor our ancestors, strengthen our communities, and ensure Hawaii's legacy endures for generations.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration and service to our islands. I am available for questions or oral testimony if needed. In solidarity for cultural preservation, justice, and ohana,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I. Ohana Unity Party, Chairman www.Ohanaunityparty.com Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:45:14 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Fitzsimmons	Waialua Hawaiian Civic Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, and cancelled meetings.

Me ke aloha,

Diane Puanani Fitzsimmons

Dianefit@gmail.co

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:04:07 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonah Cummings (Hilina'i)	The queens court	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support 

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 4:26:28 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kailana Moa-eli	The Queen's Court	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We believe it's to the full capacity of this bill as the living to Protect iwi Kupuna we support this Bill.

Cindy Freitas

makainanqi@gmail.com

OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED – H.B. 2104
RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS

He Mele komo a he mele aloha no na kupuna o ke au i hala Aloha mai kakou.

Aloha,

My name is Cindy Freitas and I'm a Native Hawaiian descended of the native inhabitants of Hawai'i prior to 1778 and born and raised in Hawai'i.

I am also a practitioner who still practice the cultural traditional customary practices that was instill in me by my grandparents at a young age from mauka (MOUNTAIN TO SEA) to makai in many areas.

I respectfully submit testimony **OPPOSING H.B. 2104 UNLESS AMENDED**, due to its impacts on the **County of Hawai'i** and the protection of iwi kūpuna.

H.B. 2104 seeks to address Island Burial Council vacancies by providing stipends, extending timelines to fill vacancies, and lowering quorum requirements. While these administrative changes may help attendance, the bill **fails to strengthen substantive protections** needed in Hawai'i County, which has the **largest land area, the highest volume of burial cases, and extensive undocumented burial landscapes**.

What is missing from H.B. 2104 includes:

- **Guaranteed lineal descendant participation** in burial treatment decisions, particularly critical in Hawai'i County where descendants are often present but decisions proceed without them;
- **Safeguards against lowered quorum**, which allows major burial decisions to be made by as few as three members without additional protections;
- **Decision quality and transparency standards**, including required training, cultural competency, and written findings explaining burial determinations;
- **Independent oversight or an appeal process** for families and communities when burial decisions are disputed;
- **Formal coordination with the County of Hawai'i**, despite the County's role in grading permits, infrastructure approvals, and burial treatment logistics;
- **Proactive burial identification requirements**, such as early cultural assessments and surveys before ground disturbance.

In Hawai'i County, burial discoveries frequently occur **after construction begins**, not before.

Lowering quorum and accelerating decisions **without strengthening protections** increases the risk of irreversible harm to iwi kūpuna and further erodes community trust.

REQUIRED AMENDMENTS (OPPOSE UNLESS ADOPTED)

H.B. 2104 should not advance unless amended to:

1. Require **verified lineal descendant participation** when burial treatment decisions are made;
2. Add **protections tied to reduced quorum**, such as supermajority voting or mandatory cultural consultation;
3. Establish **minimum training, cultural competency, and written decision standards**;
4. Provide a **clear appeal or independent review process**;
5. Require **coordination and notice to the County of Hawai'i** for decisions affecting permits or infrastructure;
6. Mandate **early burial identification and cultural assessments** prior to ground disturbance.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening Island Burial Councils must prioritize **protecting iwi kūpuna**, not simply expediting decisions. Without the amendments above, H.B. 2104 risks weakening burial protections in the **County of Hawai'i**.

For these reasons, I **OPPOSE H.B. 2104 UNLESS AMENDED**.

Mahalo

Cindy Freitas

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:27:07 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Spencer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2104, as adjusting the quorum to a majority of appointed members will enable the Island Burial Council to operate effectively. Additionally, implementing a stipend is crucial to fostering greater community involvement.

Aloha,

Sean K. Spencer

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:34:10 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am going in support of this bill. IBC's must be functional and expedient in order to operate and carry out its purpose.

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:34:55 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
PAUL KALANI ROBINSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Paul Robinson

imua2377@gmail.com

Waiehu, Maui, HI

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:36:45 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theodora Furtado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Theodora Furtado

teefurtado@msn.com

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:53:59 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Ann K Poire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Elizabeth Poire
Kailua Kona, HI

808-557-9009

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:03:06 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Martha Evans

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:05:46 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christian New	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Christian Keoni New

christian.k.new@gmail.com

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:18:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:20:28 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kananiokaaina C. Giddens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kananiokaaina C. Giddens

(808) 853-8069

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:22:16 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aric Andrade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Can Conduct Business

Reforming quorum requirements will ensure that Island Burial Councils (IBCs) are functional rather than symbolic. Current law bases quorum on all authorized council seats, including vacant ones, which makes it difficult—particularly for smaller island councils—to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a practical and common-sense solution that allows councils to carry out their statutory responsibilities.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council responsibilities with work and family obligations. Providing OHA-funded stipends will make service more accessible, help reduce vacancies, and recognize the value of the time, expertise, and cultural responsibility contributed by Native Hawaiians who serve on these councils.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit Everyone

Functioning councils allow families and cultural descendants to meaningfully exercise their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership are better positioned to make informed, place-based, and culturally grounded decisions that are widely respected. A reliable council system also reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects, benefiting both families and project proponents by providing clearer and more predictable processes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB2104.

Respectfully,

Aric James Andrade

aandrdefirefighter@yahoo.com (702)449-9939

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:01:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Keli'ikipi	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of HB2104, relating to Island Burial Councils (IBCs).

Island Burial Councils play a critical role in ensuring that iwi kūpuna are treated with dignity, respect, and cultural integrity when discovered prior to construction. These councils are one of the most important mechanisms through which Native Hawaiian lineal and cultural descendants can exercise self-determination and kuleana over ancestral remains. However, many IBCs—particularly on smaller islands—struggle to meet and carry out their statutory responsibilities due to structural and administrative barriers.

First, quorum reform is essential to making IBCs functional.

Current quorum requirements are based on all entitled seats, including vacancies, which often prevents councils from meeting at all. This is especially harmful for councils serving smaller or rural islands where recruitment is more challenging. Revising quorum to a majority of appointed members is a practical, common-sense solution that allows councils to conduct business and make timely decisions as intended by law.

Second, modest stipends remove real barriers to service.

IBC members currently serve as volunteers, often at personal financial cost. Many potential moku representatives balance employment, caregiving, and community responsibilities. Allowing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends acknowledges the value of this service and helps reduce vacancies by making participation more accessible to those with deep cultural knowledge but limited financial flexibility.

Finally, strong Island Burial Councils benefit everyone.

Functioning councils lead to decisions that are place-based, culturally grounded, and more widely accepted by families, communities, and landowners. Consistent membership and reliable meeting schedules reduce delays, canceled hearings, and uncertainty for all parties involved, while ensuring iwi kūpuna are cared for appropriately and respectfully.

HB2104 strengthens—not expands—the authority of Island Burial Councils by ensuring they can actually operate as intended. For Native Hawaiian families and cultural descendants, this bill supports dignity, responsibility, and meaningful participation in decisions affecting our ancestors.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB2104.

Leilani Keli'ikipi

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:01:09 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ana Kapihe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this because our ancestors are apart of Hawaiian life . Respect our culture, respect our land, and our people.

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:06:58 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jotis Russell-Christian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

testimony:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jotis Russell-Christian

jotisonkauai@gmail.com

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:20:33 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandee Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Brandee Yuen

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:28:30 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vanessa Lee Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Vanessa Lee Miller

piihonua@yahoo.com

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:30:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Pahnelopi McKenzie

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:18:59 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ahia Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:08:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kapiolani Spencer	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Kapi‘olani Spencer, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB2104, relating to Island Burial Councils, for the purpose of strengthening the protection of iwi kūpuna across Hawai‘i.

The care and safeguarding of iwi kūpuna is not merely a regulatory function — it is a sacred kuleana rooted in ‘ike kūpuna, genealogy, and our spiritual relationship to ‘āina. When burial councils are under-resourced, unsupported, or unable to meet quorum, the direct consequence is delayed decision-making, weakened protections, and increased vulnerability of ancestral remains during development processes.

Island Burial Council members carry immense responsibility. They are often called upon to make difficult decisions involving contested lands, development pressure, and the protection of iwi, frequently with limited institutional support and compensation. Providing structural support and stipends acknowledges the seriousness of this role and helps ensure councils can function effectively, consistently, and with integrity.

HB2104 is an important step toward:

Maintaining functional quorum and participation on Island Burial Councils

Strengthening oversight and accountability in the protection of iwi kūpuna

Affirming the State’s obligation to respect cultural practitioners and lineal descendants involved in burial protection

Our kūpuna cannot speak for themselves. Burial councils often serve as their last line of defense. Ensuring these councils are properly supported is essential to honoring Hawai‘i’s historic preservation laws and our collective responsibility to future generations.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass HB2104 and continue prioritizing meaningful protections for iwi kūpuna throughout Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kapi'olani Spencer

Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:19:49 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lea Kamakawiwoole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify

Lea Kamakawiwoole

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:00:59 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaimo Muhlestein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

K. Muhlestein

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:26:16 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Rosenstock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Linda Rosenstock
Lindarosenstock@comcast.net

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:39:58 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kilia Purdy-Avelino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kilia Purdy-Avelino

Molokai

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:04:49 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Long	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in support of HB2104.

Mahalo,

James Long, Naalehu, HI

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:10:13 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
P Hauoli'ipo Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

- P. Hau'oli ipo Wright

hauoli.ipo@gmail.com / 808.268.9974

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:41:35 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Julia Estigoy-Kaho‘onei

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:32:43 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keomailani Hanapi Hirata	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

I will be providing zoom testimony in strong OPPOSITION of HB2104, drafted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Ola na kupa'aina,

Keomailani Hanapi Hirata - Molokai

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:43:17 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darrian Muraoka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple and practical fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Darrian Kahealani Muraoka

PO BOX 1311

Kekaha, HI 96752

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:53:01 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Subject: Support for HB2104

I support HB2104 because:

I grew up here, live and work here, and pay my taxes here. I strongly oppose developers pushing into places they don't belong — especially when native lands and sacred burial sites are ignored.

Functional Burial Councils

Current quorum rules include vacant seats, making it hard for councils to meet. This bill fixes that by basing quorum on appointed members, allowing councils to do their jobs.

Stipends Increase Participation

IBC members serve without pay, creating barriers for working families. Modest OHA-funded stipends will reduce vacancies and make service more accessible.

Strong Councils Benefit Everyone

Reliable councils help families care for iwi kūpuna and make informed, culturally grounded decisions, reducing delays and creating clearer processes for communities and developers alike.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Helene DeLillo

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:55:28 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James O. Kuloloio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

James O Kuloloio

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit written testimony on HB2104, which I support. I appreciate the Legislature's acknowledgment that the protection of iwi kūpuna is of the utmost cultural importance and that Island Burial Councils are a vital part of that responsibility.

I wish to offer comments based on the experience involving iwi kūpuna discovered along the shoreline at Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park, which highlights the practical challenges Island Burial Councils face and why the changes proposed in HB2104 are necessary.

The iwi kūpuna at this location were exposed for an extended period to constant wave action, including several high surf events. Rocks along the shoreline repeatedly shifted with the waves, causing continued disturbance to the remains. Despite the seriousness of the situation, nearly a year passed before the iwi kūpuna were finally exhumed and relocated to a safe and secure location.

This prolonged delay was not the result of inaction by concerned individuals, but rather a failure of process. Jurisdictional uncertainty, insufficient staffing within the State Historic Preservation Division, and the absence of legal counsel at Island Burial Council meetings contributed to an inability to reach timely decisions. During this period, the burial council and SHPD were aware of the situation, yet lacked the institutional support necessary to act decisively while iwi kūpuna remained exposed.

Island Burial Council members are volunteers who carry a significant cultural and moral kuleana. They are asked to participate in lengthy meetings, respond to inadvertent discoveries within their moku, and navigate complex legal and procedural issues. They should not be expected to interpret jurisdictional authority or render legal opinions on their own. That responsibility properly belongs to the State.

HB2104 correctly addresses several structural barriers faced by Island Burial Councils, including vacancies, lack of compensation, and quorum challenges, particularly on neighbor islands. However, the Kaloko-Honokōhau experience demonstrates that councils also require consistent access to legal guidance and adequate agency staffing to fulfill their statutory responsibilities and to prevent prolonged exposure and harm to iwi kūpuna.

I respectfully suggest that HB2104 be strengthened with language, at the Legislature's discretion, to ensure reliable access to legal counsel—such as participation from the Attorney General's office at Island Burial Council meetings, including via videoconferencing when appropriate. Additionally, while HB2104 may not be the sole vehicle to address staffing concerns, increased and sustained staffing for SHPD, particularly on neighbor islands, is critical so that matters involving iwi kūpuna can be addressed promptly and respectfully.

HB2104 is an important step toward restoring the effectiveness and integrity of Island Burial Councils. With appropriate legal and staffing support, the councils will be better equipped to fulfill their kuleana and ensure iwi kūpuna are treated with the dignity, care, and respect they deserve.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi Milisits

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:35:54 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kali Fermantez	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kali Fermantez and I served on the Oahu Island Burial Council representing Ko'olaupia Moku from 2012-2020. I know first hand the challenges of filling vacancies and having enough members to have a quorum.

I am writing to support HB2014. This would better enable the councils to fulfill the kuleana to malama iwi kupuna. Simplifying quorum requirements and providing a modest stipend would allow for council members to better attend to this important work.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kali Fermantez

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:51:09 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy-Lynn Kanoelani Joao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Tammy-Lynn Kanoelani Joao

808mamawolf@gmail.com

P.o Box 104

Kurtistown Hawai'i 96760

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:40:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

I am in support of HB2104 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Shannon M.

Hawai'i Island Resident

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:53:47 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brenten Kanoa Yamane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brenten Kanoa Yamane

brentenyamane@gmail.com

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:27:09 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teri Corpuz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Teri Corpuz

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:33:56 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Morris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Morikawa and members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Monica Morris, born and raised in Hawaii, and resident of Honolulu, Hawaii. I support the language and intent of intent of HB2104 and respectfully urge its passage out of your committee.

Mahalo nui loa.

Wed, February 4, 2026

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

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

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform makes IBCs functional, not symbolic. Current quorum is based on all entitled seats to a council, including those that sit vacant, which makes it difficult for smaller island councils to meet and conduct business. Changing quorum to a majority of appointed members is a simple, practical, and common-sense fix to allow councils to perform their statutory duty.

Modest Stipends Support Community Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. OHA-funded stipends makes IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, and acknowledges the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils are Good for Everyone:

With functioning councils, families and cultural descendants can meaningfully exercise their responsibilities in caring for iwi kūpuna. Councils with consistent membership make decisions that are more informed, place-based, culturally grounded, and widely accepted. A reliable council system reduces delays, cancelled meetings, and stalled projects. Clearer processes benefit both families and project proponents who need timely, culturally responsible decisions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

PSK Hanohano Pa-Smith

PS Kamealoha Hanohano Pa-Smith

808-212-4356 / khs96703@gmail.com

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:29:27 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pearson Ahuna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill