

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  
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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  
Finance**

**Monday, February 23, 2026  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Room 224**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2218, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 2218, House Draft 1, authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to enter into community co-management agreements, establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers, and allows for the disposition of public lands through such agreements. **The Department submits this testimony in strong support of this measure and offers the following comments.**

This measure responds to long-standing structural limitations that prevent the Department from forming meaningful, long-term partnerships with community organizations that are essential to the stewardship, education, and care of public lands. Across the Department's divisions, existing legal tools—such as short-term permits, rights-of-entry, revocable agreements, or concession contracts—do not adequately support community-based co-management models and do not align with public trust principles or on-the-ground realities.

The Department manages vast and diverse public lands with limited staff and resources. These lands require ongoing stewardship, education, restoration, cultural access, and monitoring that cannot be met by the Department alone. Community partners regularly step forward to fulfill these roles on a volunteer or nonprofit basis, without seeking commercial benefit. However, current mechanisms do not allow for secure, long-term agreements that reflect the true nature of these partnerships.

In some cases, the Department has been unable to implement community co-management because existing legal tools are either too restrictive or inappropriate. For example, leasing arrangements that grant exclusive control have been found to conflict with public trust requirements, while concession agreements are designed for commercial activity and are not suitable for non-commercial stewardship or cultural partnerships. As a result, the Department

has been limited to short-term or revocable agreements that fail to meet long-term management and restoration goals.

These short-term arrangements also make it difficult for community organizations to obtain funding or invest in long-term projects. Financial institutions are reluctant to support programs where agreements are month-to-month, revocable, or lack long-term security. Community partners must repeatedly seek renewals, creating uncertainty and administrative burden that undermines sustained engagement and capacity-building.

House Bill 2218, House Draft 1, would allow the Board of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements through direct negotiation, without recourse to public auction, with qualified community-based organizations. This authority would create a more appropriate and transparent pathway for long-term partnerships that support stewardship, mālama ‘āina, and public access.

Under this framework, the Department would continue to require compliance with all applicable laws, including Chapter 343, HRS, and would ensure community outreach and environmental review where required.

Many community organizations lack the capacity to meet the financial, bonding, and environmental testing requirements associated with long-term commercial leases. Community co-management agreements would allow these largely volunteer-based groups to provide management, maintenance, education, restoration, and cultural programming without being subject to requirements that are unrelated to their mission or activities.

For lands managed for conservation and resource protection, such as Forest Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Natural Area Reserves, and Nā Ala Hele trails, long-term agreements are especially critical. Restoration, ecosystem recovery, and cultural practices require time horizons that extend well beyond the limits of short-term permits. A co-management framework would allow for sustained collaboration, trust-building, and continuity of care.

In addition, many public lands—such as Forest Reserves—do not generate sufficient revenue to cover management costs. Community co-management agreements would allow partners to generate revenue, where appropriate, to help offset operational and stewardship expenses while maintaining public access and trust protections.

Community co-management agreements have the potential to create jobs for residents and to allow generated revenue to remain within these communities instead of in the pockets of foreign entities. Accordingly, every co-managed site represents avoided contractor costs, permitting the Department to extend project lifespans without engaging in public auction or procurement requirements, making co-management one of the most cost- and time-effective tools available for achieving various Department goals.

House Bill 2218, House Draft 1, provides a long-term, secure, and flexible framework that protects the public trust, strengthens relationships between the Department and community partners, and supports collaborative mālama ‘āina principles. It fills a critical gap in existing law and enables the Department to more effectively steward Hawai‘i’s public lands for present and future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments in support of this measure.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HB2218 HD1**  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana ‘Imi Kālā  
(House Committee on Finance)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i  
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Pepeluali 23, 2026

2:00PM

Lumi 308

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Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2218 HD1, which provides clear and consistent pathway and standards for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements. Such agreements empower communities to continue to mālama ‘āina and support ahupua‘a-based management. Further, this bill has no appropriation or other funding request.

OHA supports policies that protect and perpetuate traditional, place-based management practices consistent with OHA’s statutory and constitutional duties. OHA is the constitutionally-established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.<sup>1</sup> Further, under the Hawai‘i State Constitution Article XII, section 7, the state has a specific duty to protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices, including practices that mālama ‘āina. In furtherance of its constitutional mission, OHA has identified the following strategic priority relevant to HB2218 HD1: “Increased community stewardship of Hawai‘i’s natural and cultural resources that foster connection to ‘āina, ‘ohana, and communities.”<sup>2</sup> OHA therefore has substantive obligations to protect the cultural and natural resources of Hawai‘i for the agency’s beneficiaries and believes this measure assists in this kuleana.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Haw. Const. Art. XII Sec. 5

<sup>2</sup> Office of Hawaiian Affairs, *Mana I Maui Ola: OHA’s 15-Year Strategic Plan for 2020-2035*, available at <https://www.oha.org/about/mana-to-maui-ola/>.

<sup>3</sup> See HRS Chapter 10.

OHA recognizes community-based stewardship and management as perpetuating Native Hawaiian traditional and customary resource management practices. OHA has supported community-based fisheries management initiatives, particularly initiatives by rural communities that follow the Native Hawaiian traditions, values, and lifestyles that have sustained communities for generations.<sup>4</sup> The promotion of traditional, place-based harvesting practices also preserves and perpetuates culture, highlights the cultural significance of the nearshore area, and models the sense of respect traditionally maintained for the ocean and its resources.

DLNR has long acknowledged that it alone cannot sustainably manage the public trust lands. Place based management by ‘āina based groups ensures resource protection and assists DLNR in fulfilling its mission to sustainability manage public trust lands. While communities and the State increasingly demonstrate overlapping interests and goals, no consistent legal pathway exists for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. As a friendly amendment, since “performance and accountability standards” and “reporting processes and requirements” (on page 7, lines 13 and 16) are already required for any community co-management plan, we suggest a friendly amendment of removing the 5-year review as it is unnecessary. If the Committee chooses to not include this friendly amendment, we suggest that the 5-year reviews be coordinated and led by DLNR, and not for the community-based organization to burden alone.

HB2218 HD1 will ensure DLNR has the authority to enter into community co-management agreements to continue the work they are already doing and for years to come. The management framework outlined in this bill provides meaningful guidance to identify bona fide community groups with community ties and place-based relationships, and establishes clear rights, roles, and responsibilities of co-managers. The proposed framework in this bill is not merely theory, but codifies demonstrated best practices developed by community groups practicing mālama ‘āina. Authorizing community co-management agreements allows Native Hawaiian and local communities to care for their beloved places.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HB2218 HD1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

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<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board of Trustees Resolution of February 27, 2014, *A Resolution Supporting Community Based Subsistence Fishing Area Designation and Rules*.

# OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

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## Testimony of Derek S.K. Kawakami

Mayor, County of Kaua'i

Before the

### Committee on Finance

February 23, 2026; 2:00 PM

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of

### House Bill 2218 HD1

### Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

Honorable Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I write in **strong support** for HB 2218 HD1 which would authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements and establish qualifications for eligible community co-managers; additionally authorizes the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

This legislation addresses critical gaps in Hawai'i's natural resource management framework while honoring traditional native Hawaiian stewardship practices with qualified community-based organizations.

Many community-government partnerships have existed for years in Hawai'i. The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana from Hā'ena, Kaua'i has worked for over two decades to steward Hā'ena State Park. The Hui has helped transform what was once a chaotic and overrun park to an area where the practices of our kupuna are perpetuated through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of its natural and cultural resources.

Although the Hui has a concession agreement with the DLNR, a longer-term agreement that honors the traditional native Hawaiian concept of mālama 'āina and place-based practices for natural and cultural resource management will allow them and other community groups across the state effectively manage the State's public trust resources. HB 2218 HD1 provides the mechanism for this care and protection.

Community co-management is not merely a cultural preference; it is a practical necessity. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of HB 2218 HD1.

**OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
NALANI BRUN, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR  
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## Testimony of Nalani Ka‘auwai Brun

Director, Office of Economic Development  
County of Kaua‘i

**Before the**  
House Committee on Finance  
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Committee

**February 23, 2026, 2:00 p.m.**  
Via Videoconference  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

**In consideration of**  
**House Bill 2218, HD1**  
Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

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### Honorable Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nalani Ka‘auwai Brun, Director of the Office of Economic Development for the County of Kaua‘i. I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB 2218, HD1**.

HB 2218 establishes a statutory framework allowing the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements with qualified community-based organizations. Importantly, this measure does not appropriate funds, create new positions, or mandate additional state programs. Instead, it provides a governance structure that strengthens accountability while leveraging existing community capacity.

From a fiscal perspective, this bill represents a responsible approach to stewardship of public lands.

Across Hawai‘i, community organizations are already contributing substantial time, expertise, volunteer labor, and external grant funding toward cultural preservation, ecological restoration, and visitor management. HB 2218 provides the legal clarity to formalize those partnerships, potentially reducing long-term state maintenance costs and improving resource management outcomes without expanding state staffing obligations.

The bill also maintains safeguards. Agreements must define roles, performance standards, reporting requirements, and enforcement mechanisms. Public lands remain public, and agreements remain subject to Board oversight and termination if conditions are not met.

In practical terms, this measure allows the State to work more efficiently by recognizing cooperative stewardship models that have demonstrated effectiveness on the ground. It does not transfer ownership, create entitlement, or weaken fiscal controls.

At a time when state agencies face increasing workload demands and constrained resources, HB 2218 allows Hawai'i to move forward through partnership — aligning community commitment with state oversight in a structured and accountable way.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support of HB 2218, HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your thoughtful consideration.

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 9:13:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tapani Vuori	Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2218 HD1 Community Co-management model. This is exactly what a local community group here on Maui has proposed to DLNR for Managing the derelict Buzz's Wharf area. We have several community based non profits and cultural organizations who have come together and formed a Hui. So instead of auctioning off this property the community benefit and the financial benefit for DLNR will be much larger and more impactful rather than just simple monetary exchange. It is time for our community to start thinking generationally and holistically. Thank you for your consideration.

Tapani Vuori

MOCMI



**House Committee on Finance  
February 23, 2026 at 2:00 PM  
Room 308**

**Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2218 HD1**

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Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) we submit **strong support** for **HB2218 HD1**. This measure provides an essential framework for community co-management of state lands, strengthening partnerships between DLNR and trusted nonprofit and community stewards.

HANO is a statewide, sector-wide association representing nonprofits across Hawai'i. Since 2006, HANO has worked to strengthen and unite the nonprofit sector as a collective force to improve quality of life statewide by advancing policies and practices that promote nonprofit professionalism, sustainability, and effectiveness.

HB2218 directly supports nonprofits and community-based organizations that have long engaged in place-based stewardship of public trust lands. These organizations bring deep-rooted knowledge and demonstrated capacity to care for natural resources, cultural sites, and customary practices through restoration, education, and mālama 'āina. By establishing clear eligibility and agreement standards, this bill creates more durable, transparent, and effective pathways for community participation in land stewardship.

Community co-management recognizes the reality that many nonprofits have been caring for these lands for generations, often with limited resources but significant public benefit. HB2218 affirms their role as partners in achieving sustainable land management while improving continuity, planning, and long-term stewardship outcomes.

Importantly, this bill advances Hawai'i's constitutional obligations under Articles XI and XII by supporting the sustainable management of natural resources and the protection of traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices. HB2218 aligns state policy with mālama 'āina values and ensures that stewardship decisions are informed by community-based nonprofits and leaders who are most connected to place.

For nonprofits and community-based organizations, HB2218 represents a meaningful step toward equitable, effective, and culturally grounded stewardship of state lands. HANO respectfully urges your **strong support**.



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Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahālāwai,  
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Rachel LaDrig  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB2218.**

HB2218 is a pivotal piece of legislation that recognizes the importance of community involvement in the stewardship of Hawaii's public lands. By authorizing community co-management agreements, the bill ensures that local communities, who have an intimate understanding of their environments, are active partners in managing their lands. This approach not only promotes sustainable land use but also ties into traditional practices of ahupua'a management, where the land is cared for in a holistic manner that respects cultural, environmental, and food security objectives. Community co-management empowers those who are directly affected by and most knowledgeable about their local ecosystems, leading to more effective and responsive stewardship.

The bill acknowledges the historical challenges posed by centralized land management, which often struggles with localized ecological issues such as invasive species and neglect of nuanced, site-specific needs. By shifting some management authority to community-level stakeholders, especially small family farmers and indigenous groups, HB2218 aligns land use with local priorities such as agricultural productivity, natural resource protection, and cultural preservation. The legal framework it establishes helps guard against land speculation and extractive practices that threaten the resilience and self-sufficiency of Hawaiian communities. This community-focused model not only aims to enhance ecological health and local food systems but also fortifies the cultural identity and environmental security of Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 23, 2026

2:00 PM

Conference Room 308

### In **SUPPORT** of **HB2218 HD1**: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **strongly supports HB2218 HD1**. This bill provides long-needed statutory clarity for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements with qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofits, an essential tool for effective, place-based stewardship across the islands.

For decades, communities across Hawai'i have stepped up to monitor, restore, and mālama the lands and waters they rely on, providing countless thousands of volunteer hours monitoring resources and both human and non-human activities, educating the public, developing place-based and culturally-informed management plans, and otherwise filling the gaps left by the lack of sufficient government resources. Existing community-based partnerships in places such as Hā'ena, Miloli'i, and Kīpahulu have already demonstrated that collaborative co-management strengthens resource protection and supports long-term ecosystem resilience. Yet, as highlighted at the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) meeting on July 25, 2025, the absence of a clear legal co-resource management mechanism has forced the state to rely on unsuitable and piecemeal instruments such as concession agreements, to attempt to leverage the potential contributions of our communities – undermining long-standing community efforts and the true value of community-based stewardship.

HB2218 HD1 directly addresses this policy gap. The bill reflects extensive collaboration among community networks and organizations, such as Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo, and multiple DLNR divisions, and provides a consistent framework for shared management from mauka to makai that strengthens ecological resilience, honors cultural responsibility, and advances the public trust.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB2218 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 10:19:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Fox	Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** HB2218 HD1 authorizing the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements with qualified community-based organizations. **There is no funding attached to this bill, as it only asks for the authorization needed for DLNR to enter into these types of agreements.**

**The State has an affirmative duty to mālama‘āina, care for the public trust lands and waters of Hawai‘i.** Caring for our precious ‘āina (that which feeds us all) requires collective kuleana (responsibility), and as DLNR has long acknowledged, it alone cannot effectively and sustainably manage all the lands and waters within its purview. For decades, grassroots communities throughout Hawai‘i have been supporting and collaborating with DLNR to mālama the places we all love and call home. But while the need and interest in collaborative mālama‘āina continues to grow, no consistent legal pathway exists for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. Several different tools do exist (e.g., curatorships, permits, concessions, community-based subsistence fishing areas), but these all vary significantly in form and function, often causing various administrative delays and managerial issues.

I do suggest a friendly amendment, **as the the HD1 addition of 5-year reviews is unnecessary** with “performance and accountability standards,” and “reporting processes and requirements” already required for any community co-management plan (Page 7, Lines 13 and 16). **Regular review and reporting of community co-management agreements should be left to the discretion of DLNR and each community-based organization to determine what is best given their own unique circumstances.** However, if your Committee chooses to accept this HD1 amendment and require 5-year reviews via statute, please ensure that these 5-year reviews are *coordinated and led by DLNR*, and not left to community-based organizations to shoulder alone.

Please **PASS** HB2218 HD1 out of your committee with my friendly amendment.

Me ke aloha ha‘aha‘a,

Megan Fox  
Mālama Kaua‘i





Testimony Before The  
House Committee on Finance (FIN)  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB2218 HD1**  
February 23, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Room 308 & via Videoconference

We are Olan Leimomi Fisher and Kevin Chang, Kua'āina Advocate and Executive Director, respectively, testifying on behalf of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). "Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo" stands for "grassroots growing through shared responsibility," and our acronym "KUA" means "backbone." **Our mission is to connect and empower communities to improve their quality of life through the collective care for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage, serving as a "backbone organization" that supports creative and community-driven solutions to problems stemming from environmental degradation.** Hawai'i's biocultural resources continue to be negatively impacted by political, economic, and social changes, and the increasing dangers of climate change make fostering and empowering resilient communities acutely critical.

Currently KUA supports three major networks of: (1) over 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or "that which feeds") community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) and wai 'ōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things "limu" or locally-grown "seaweed." **Our shared vision is to once again experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as 'ĀINA MOMONA – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.**

**KUA strongly supports HB2218 HD1 as an incremental step toward 'āina momona, with two few friendly amendments.**

This measure would authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into "community co-management agreements" with qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofit groups both mauka (inland) and makai (seaward). **There is no appropriation or other governmental funding requested in this bill, as it merely seeks *authorization* for these agreements.** KUA supported the development of this bill over the past several months with significant community input and under the leadership of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (the Hui), longtime collaborative caretakers of the Hā'ena State Park and Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) on Kaua'i. KUA was founded in part by leaders from Hā'ena and the Hui to empower communities to care for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage together.

This legislative effort was born in response to a shift from the expected long-term lease to the Hui at a Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) meeting on July 25, 2025, to a concession agreement that was deemed the "only" legal instrument available to secure a long-term agreement with the Hui. As made clear during that BLNR meeting, while the Hui

greatly appreciated the efforts of Division of State Parks (DSP) to help secure a concession agreement, the shift from an anticipated long-term lease came as a shock and disappointment to the Hui and many of their supporters. Both DSP and the Hui voiced that a concession agreement is a step backward in their decades-long journey toward co-management of their ancestral 'āina in Hā'ena. After this disappointing BLNR meeting, and with strong support from Speaker Nakamura's office, an informal "Community Co-management Strategy Working Group" was formed to delve further into solutions to better support for community co-management in Hawai'i. What emerged from an issue only for the Hui was insight on a policy gap that could serve a greater statewide effort for other community co-management initiatives across the state. The working group helped with the creation of HB2218 (companion [SB2685](#)) as one potential solution. **Visit our [website](#) for more on the Hui's history with co-management and the inspirations behind this legislative effort.**

Emphasizing the collaborative nature of this bill, DLNR (DSP and Division of Aquatic Resources) have been key partners from the beginning, with the Division of Forestry and Wildlife recently coming on board, too. House Speaker Nakamura's office has been instrumental in this whole effort as well. KUA hosted three community talk story sessions regarding this legislation, the first with our E Alu Pū network members on October 11, 2025 in Kahalu'u, Hawai'i Island, then two virtual talk story sessions on October 28, 2025 and January 7, 2026 with various KUA network members and partners. Feedback from this outreach was carefully incorporated into the original version of the bill.

**We appreciate this HD1 version, and offer two friendly amendments:**

1. The "Community co-management agreement" definition should be amended as follows to mirror the existing definition for "Community co-management," on Page 4, Lines 15-17:

"Community co-management agreement" means a written agreement between the department and ~~a~~ one or more community-based organizations for community co-management pursuant to this part."

2. **The addition of 5-year reviews is unnecessary given that any community co-management agreement plan already requires "performance and accountability standards..." as well as "reporting processes and requirements," (Page 7, Lines 13 and 16).** Regular reviews/reporting should be unique to each community co-management agreement plan, leaving more flexibility and discretion for DLNR and the communities themselves to determine. However, if your Committee determines that *also* requiring 5-year reviews is essential in statute, we urge you to clarify that DLNR will coordinate these 5-year reviews. For the Hā'ena CBSFA 5-year review, the kuleana (responsibility) fell mainly on the Hui to organize and complete. For their upcoming 10-year review however, DAR is taking the lead. To avoid confusion on who will lead these *additional* 5-year reviews for co-management agreements, we recommend amending the language as follows on Page 8, Lines 3-9:

"(d) Every five years, beginning from the effective date of the community co-management agreement, the

department shall coordinate and submit to the board for its review a report detailing the community-based organization's progress on meeting the goals set out in the co-management plan. The board may make any pertinent amendments to the co-management plan or terminate the community co-management agreement."

We also want to clarify certain questions raised in past hearings, particularly regarding Section 4 of HB2218 HD1 amending *Hawai'i Revised Statutes* (HRS) § 171-13. Currently, [HRS § 171-13](#) authorizes DLNR to dispose of public lands through various means including fee-simple, lease, lease with option to purchase, license, permit, and easement with reverter, subject to certain restrictions. Adding "community co-management agreements" to HRS § 171-13, along with the 65-year time period restriction (Page 6, Lines 1-5), gives DLNR the authority to enter into co-management agreements for *no longer than 65 years*, as already allowed for leases under HRS §§ [171-36\(a\)\(2\)](#) and [171-95\(a\)\(2\)](#). Therefore, **this bill does not allow for any fee-simple sale of public lands through community co-management agreements, but merely mirrors the existing law, and gives DLNR and community organizations the flexibility to determine appropriate time periods for such agreements that can be *no longer than 65 years*.**

Further, regarding potential disputes related to the hypothetical of two or more community-based organizations seeking to undertake co-management for the same area – the intention behind these community co-management agreements is to better enable established, well-respected, community nonprofits that have largely already proven they are ready to carry co-management kuleana with DLNR. **Vetting for community co-manager organizations was deliberated extensively through our community outreach discussions and infused throughout the bill**, including: (1) providing information on past and current projects in the proposed area, (2) justification for the co-management agreement, and (3) a list of qualifications for board members and staff. As written, HB2218 HD1 already allows for multiple purposes under these agreements (Page 5, Lines 9-21), and encourages cross-community collaboration with *more than one* organization able to partake in co-management *in the same area*. Even further, any co-management agreement would still have to go through the HRS Chapter 91 public hearing process for further feedback and testimonies by others across Hawai'i.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources that they have cared for and depended on for generations since time immemorial. **We believe protecting our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about sustained and long-term commitments toward achieving 'āina momona abundance once again.** To get there requires clear steps to enable more collaborative mālama 'āina efforts, including through this bill. Our decisions today will continue to shape the future that our keiki's keiki's keiki will one day inherit – we hope for a future of shared and harmonious abundance, and hope you do, too.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please **PASS** HB2218 HD1 with our friendly amendments listed above.

**Aloha 'Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.**



PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || [www.agstewardshiphawaii.org](http://www.agstewardshiphawaii.org)

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February 20, 2026

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB2218 HD1, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources**

On behalf of Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i, we support HB2218 HD1, which authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements for public trust lands.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i works statewide to strengthen the viability of farmers and ranchers through technical assistance, conservation planning, capital access, and policy support. **Much of our work centers on conservation agriculture** — soil health, watershed protection, climate resilience, and adaptive land stewardship practices that align with the values of mālama 'āina and ahupua'a-based management.

HB2218 HD1 provides statutory clarity for shared stewardship, allowing DLNR to partner with qualified community-based organizations. These agreements strengthen conservation outcomes, support adaptive management in response to climate change, and leverage community capacity to manage public trust resources more effectively.

**For agricultural producers and practitioners, co-management is a resilience strategy:** healthy soils, functioning watersheds, and restored native species support both food production and community well-being. Structured agreements with clear roles, responsibilities, and review mechanisms ensure accountability while empowering local stewardship.

This measure is a practical and fiscally responsible step toward improving Hawai'i's natural and cultural resource management, increasing ecological resilience, and supporting sustainable agriculture. We respectfully urge you to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Shaw".

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator  
Email: [amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org](mailto:amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org),  
Tel: 808 429 5310

**TO:** HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair  
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Committee

**FROM:** Michelle Ka'uhane, COO & Executive Vice President

**RE:** Testimony in Support for HB 2218 HD 1, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

**DATE:** Monday, February 23, 2026 at 2:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Hearing Room 308

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The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **strongly supports** HB 2218 HD 1 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofit organizations. Protecting natural resources and promoting responsible 'āina stewardship are priority areas within HCF's CHANGE Framework under the Natural Environment sector. This bill is cost neutral.

For decades, Native Hawaiian and local community groups throughout Hawai'i have been supporting and collaborating with DLNR to mālama our public trust 'āina. However, the need and interest in collaborative mālama 'āina continues to grow, and no consistent legal pathway exists for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. Several different tools do exist, but they all vary significantly in form and function, often causing various administrative delays and managerial issues.

Currently, HCF partners with the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to implement the goals of the Holomua Marine Initiative including working with communities to effectively manage our nearshore marine resources around each main Hawaiian island so that our local resources are available and plentiful, today and for future generations. HCF manages philanthropic donations that supports the Holomua Marine Initiative. By administering a pooled fund and providing grants and contracts to carry out the initiative and build a marine managed areas (MMA) program, we see first-hand the power of community co-management.

Protecting the ‘āina, preserving the ocean and its marine life, and ensuring fresh water is critical to the future of our people. DLNR has long acknowledged it cannot alone effectively and sustainably manage all the lands and waters within its purview. Authorizing community co-management agreements will enable our communities to more effectively and sustainably manage Hawai‘i’s ‘āina and waters. **We strongly urge you to advance HB 2218 HD 1.**

# HAWAI'I OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



February 23, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature  
House Committee on Finance

Re: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB 2218 HD1, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and esteemed members of the committee,

The Ocean Legislative Task Force—a coalition of more than 150 individuals across over 20 organizations statewide—**strongly supports** HB 2218 HD1, relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. This measure authorizes DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers. It also authorizes the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

HB 2218 HD1 advances responsible stewardship of Hawai'i's public trust resources by formally recognizing the role that communities can play in caring for lands and waters through structured partnerships with the State. By authorizing DLNR to enter into written community co-management agreements with qualified community-based organizations, this bill creates a clear legal framework for collaborative, place-based management that can strengthen ecological outcomes while supporting cultural practices and local knowledge.

The Task Force strongly supports the bill's recognition of long-standing Native Hawaiian and community stewardship traditions, which have helped sustain natural and cultural resources for generations. Providing statutory authority for co-management will empower communities to participate meaningfully in conservation, restoration, education, and monitoring efforts in ways that align with both traditional practices and contemporary science.

This measure also helps build long-term local capacity to advance statewide conservation goals. Community co-management agreements can support habitat restoration, protection of marine and coastal resources, visitor management, and the preservation of customary and subsistence practices—priorities that directly align with DLNR's mission to protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations.

*The Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that advance cesspool conversion and wastewater management, protect Hawai'i's coral reefs and reef fish, ensure transparent and sustainable implementation of the Green Fee program and long-term environmental staffing, and support other measures that strengthen Hawai'i's coastal and marine ecosystems.*

Finally, HB 2218 HD1 establishes important qualifications for community co-managers that promote accountability, transparency, and readiness to undertake shared management responsibilities. These standards will help ensure that partnerships are effective, equitable, and grounded in broad community support, while respecting the State's public trust obligations.

For these reasons, the Ocean Legislative Task Force respectfully urges the Committee to pass HB 2218 HD1 with favorable recommendations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

*The Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that advance cesspool conversion and wastewater management, protect Hawai'i's coral reefs and reef fish, ensure transparent and sustainable implementation of the Green Fee program and long-term environmental staffing, and support other measures that strengthen Hawai'i's coastal and marine ecosystems.*



Hawai'i Conservation Alliance  
FOUNDATION

Testimony in Support of HB2218 HD1

House Committee on Finance  
Monday February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026  
2:00pm

Position: Support

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

The Hawai'i Conservation Alliance Foundation (HCAF) was founded in 2006 to support and advance the native ecosystem and biocultural conservation work of the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance (HCA) through fundraising, advocacy, and strategic outreach and communications. The HCA is a cooperative collaboration of conservation leaders representing twenty-eight government, education, and non-profit organizations working together to provide unified leadership for Hawai'i's most critical conservation issues. Together, the HCA and the HCAF strive to protect native ecosystems and ensure the unique biodiversity of our islands endures.

HCA has a strong history of supporting community co-management working with and from within various state and federal government agencies to encourage and co-design collaborative management principles and practices that guide the establishment and maintenance of equitable partnerships with communities. In 2018, HCA published its position paper, [\*Making the Case for Community-Based Adaptive Collaborative Management in Hawai'i\*](#), detailing how effective conservation in Hawai'i is achieved when grounded in the spirit and practice of co-management, a unique and critical relationship that elevates the benefits of cultivating and institutionalizing collaborations with community-based partners.

Individuals and communities with ancestral, generational, and cultural ties to place continue to 'auamo kuleana: to lovingly shoulder the privilege to care for the lands and waters we all depend on. Too often, those individuals and communities work alongside the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) without the formalization of their roles and responsibilities via appropriate mechanisms that also recognize their contributions. **HB2218 HD1** provides such a mechanism to formalize collaborations and move towards a more equitable framework for Mālama 'Āina within the Department.

There is both empirical and anecdotal evidence demonstrating the economic benefits of co-management. Families and residents in Hā'ena and in the surrounding communities are realized a suite of economic benefits after the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana partnered with the Division of State Parks to oversee park management and parking operations at Hā'ena State Park. This

collaboration has created over 50 jobs that circulate funds within the communities providing direct and immediate benefits and stability. With **minimal** cost to the state, 'āina-based management by communities of place can occur in culturally significant and high-traffic areas that generate **significant revenue** to support living wage jobs for nā kupa 'āina (those of the land).

HCA stands in strong **SUPPORT** of **HB2218 HD1** and urges you to pass this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your leadership on this key issue within our communities.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Moana P.K. Ching". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Moana P.K. "Ulu" Ching  
Executive Director



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*Executive Director*

#### *Merri Keli'ikuli*

*Office Manager & Program  
Support*

#### *Mckenzie Au*

*Community-Based Economic  
Development Project Associate*

Date: February 21, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair, Representative Jenna Takenouchi,  
Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee on Finance

From: Brent Kakesako, Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic  
Development (HACBED)

Re: Support for HB2218 HD1 and comments

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED) strongly supports HB2218 HD1, which would authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers and authorize the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

HACBED was established in 1992 as a nonprofit statewide intermediary to address social, economic, and environmental justice concerns through community-based economic development. Our team advances its mission with core competencies in the areas of community and organizational capacity building, community and economic development planning, and asset policy development and advocacy.

In our work over the years, we have seen the commitment and struggle of community members and community-based organizations in stewarding 'āina that is connected to the different divisions of DLNR. There is also a growing interest and capacity to engage in collaborative mālama 'āina activities with the different divisions of DLNR but no consistent legal pathway exists across DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. Several different tools do exist (e.g., curatorships, permits, concessions, community-based subsistence fishing areas), but these all vary significantly in form and function, often causing various administrative delays and managerial issues. As such, we see the authorization of community co-management agreements across DLNR as a huge opportunity for stewardship of 'āina in partnership with the people who know their places the best – and by extension a form of community-based economic development.

In reviewing the current bill, I humbly request the removal of the HD1 addition of 5-year reviews. The bill already includes “performance and accountability standards,” and “reporting processes and requirements” as requirements for any community co-management plan (Page 7, Lines 13 and 16). Regular review and reporting of community co-management agreements should be left to the discretion of DLNR and each community-based organization to determine what is best given their own unique circumstances. However, if your Committee chooses to accept this HD1 amendment and require 5-year reviews via statute, please ensure that these 5-year reviews are *coordinated and led by DLNR*, and not left to community-based organizations to shoulder alone.

The passage of HB2218 HD1 with the above amendments would be an opportunity for reciprocal benefit for DLNR and the state alongside community-based organizations and community members who are truly connected to these important places across our pae ‘āina.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

Brent N. Kakesako  
Executive Director



## HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA

*teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in within the Hā'ena State Park.*

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

February 23, 2026, 2:00 p.m.,

Conference Room 308 & via Videoconference

#### Testimony in Support of HB 2218 HD1

#### From Chipper Wichman, Vice President of Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

I am writing today as a founding Director and current Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (the Hui) a nonprofit established in 1998 to support the care and management of Hā'ena State Park (HSP). **The Hui is in strong support of HB 2218 HD1.**

We are requesting your support for the two friendly amendments being proposed by KUA (Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo). KUA has taken the lead on community outreach as well as the actual drafting of this bill. Their testimony today articulates the importance of these two amendments we support.

I also wanted to focus my testimony today in response to the comment in the WAL Committee Report on HB2218 documenting the action they took after hearing this bill. In the last paragraph on page of the report, it says: *"Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider how to address the issue of two or more community-based organizations that wish to undertake community co-management in the same community co-management unit."*

In response to this comment, which is a very important issue, I wanted to share that the drafting working group that spent nearly six months working on the language in this bill with DLNR subject matter experts, discussed this scenario on multiple occasions. Additionally, this was an important point of discussion during the several community outreach sessions we held with mālama 'āina practitioners across the State. As a result of the input from both DLNR and the community, it was clear that a community co-management agreement was intended to be a tool that would be most appropriate for well-established and respected organizations – organizations that have already demonstrated their *pilina* (connection/relationship) to that place over years if not decades. It was the opinion of the drafting group that rarely will you have two community organizations competing with each other as long-established stewards of a place. However, in the event there is more than one qualified organization desiring to enter into a community co-management agreement with DLNR for a specific place, this bill has been written so as to provide the BLNR with a wealth of information about each organization so that they can make an informed and thoughtful decision.

Specifically, beginning at the bottom of page 7 at line 21, section §171-C(c)(7) the bill describes the **"co-management plan"** that the aspiring organization must provide to the BLNR. There are

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2218 HD1 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

10 sub-paragraphs that follow listing specific information that must be included in that co-management plan prepared by the organization for the BLNR's review. The wealth of details provided in the co-management plan will provide the BLNR with the critical information they need to make a wise decision about which organization is best qualified to enter into a co-management agreement with the Department. I hope that this explanation is helpful in understanding why this section of the bill was drafted the way it is.

In closing, I wanted to note that our Hui has worked closely with Speaker Nakamura's office and DLNR leadership over the past six months to draft this bill. The actual drafting of the bill over these many months was done by Olan Leimomi Fisher the Kua'āina Advocate working for Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (or KUA) in collaboration with a "working group" made up of government experts and community leaders. KUA used their established networks to vet the ideas and proposed language which ultimately became the foundation of a draft bill creating an effective feed-back loop that informed the drafting process and ultimately the final language that is in the bill before you today.

Another key partner in the process has been the Hawaii Conservation Alliance (HCA) which hosted weekly zoom calls and gathered valuable suggestions and feed-back from their extensive membership and networks! In the 50 years that I have been advocating for community-based resource management I have never been part of such a collaborative process. This reflects the importance of this bill for both our communities as well as our State government.

This effort was truly a "Community Led, Government-Supported" process which has been the model our Hui has used to make Hā'ena a State-wide model of regenerative tourism and the gold standard for community-based natural and cultural resource management. What started as an effort within the Division of State Park to support the Hui, has grown into a coalition of three divisions within DLNR – State Parks, the Division of Aquatic Resources, and the Division of Forestry and Wildlife – all of whom are important members of the "community co-management working group". This bill will truly benefit DLNR by giving these divisions a new tool to work with!

In closing, we ask for your **STRONG** support of HB 2218 HD1 and support for the amendments requested by both KUA and DLNR.

Me ke aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chipper Wichman", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Chipper Wichman, Vice President  
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
Supporting HB2218 HD1, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources  
Committee on Finance  
February 23, 2026 at 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 308 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra strongly supports HB2218 HD1, which authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements, establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers, and authorizes the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

TNC has worked across Hawai'i to conserve native ecosystems in partnership with the State and community leaders who hold generational knowledge and kuleana for their lands and waters. These partnerships have advanced watershed protection, invasive species control, community-led monitoring, nearshore fisheries management, coastal restoration, and resident and visitor education. Despite their maturity and success, there remains no consistent statutory authority to define shared responsibilities, roles, and rights of entry and use between DLNR and co-managers.

Across the state, including at Kīholo, Kīpahulu, and Ka'ūpūlehu, TNC has seen how supporting community-led stewardship produces stronger ecological outcomes and more durable, culturally grounded management solutions. These communities already engage in long-standing collaborative management with DLNR, including through Curatorship Agreements, Fishery Management Areas, and other arrangements. However, these tools do not provide the consistent, comprehensive, durable framework needed to clarify shared management functions, ensure accountability, and support the multi-generational planning needed to best manage the state's natural and cultural resources.

By authorizing long-term agreements with qualified nonprofits, this bill allows successful partnerships to be supported in a consistent, transparent, and enduring way. TNC respectfully urges passage of this measure to ensure that Hawai'i's communities and ecosystems can continue to thrive through sustained collaborative care.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2218 HD1.

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*Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.*

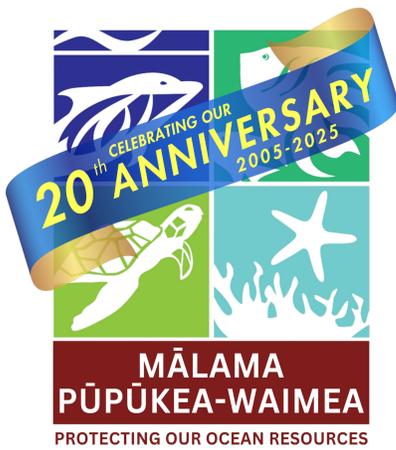
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February 23, 2026

FIN Hearing, 2 pm

**HB2218 HD1 DLNR Community Co-Management – In Support**

Aloha FIN Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members,

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) is a Hawai'i non-profit organization founded on the North Shore of O'ahu in 2005. Our mission is "working to replenish and sustain the natural and cultural resources of the Pūpūkea and Waimea ahupua'a for present and future generations through active community stewardship, education, and partnerships."

For twenty-one years, we have focused our collaborative stewardship and education efforts on the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD), one of only three MLCDs on O'ahu.

**MPW strongly supports HB2218 HD1.**

This bill provides DLNR clear authority to enter into community based co-management agreements, with qualified community groups, which significantly amplifies the ability of both the State and communities across the islands to more effectively achieve our collective goals for sustained protection of the 'āina.

Mahalo for passing HB2218 HD1!

Denise Antolini

President, MPW

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea  
Post Office Box 188  
Hale'iwa, HI 96712

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Federal Nonprofit Organization  
501(c)(3) FEIN 27-0855937  
[www.pupukeawaimea.org](http://www.pupukeawaimea.org)  
[info@pupukeawaimea.org](mailto:info@pupukeawaimea.org)



LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 2218 HD1  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

HOUSE COMMITTEE on FINANCE  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 23, 2026

2:00 p.m.

Room 308

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the Finance Committee,

Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN) is in **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2218 HD1**, which authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers. Authorizes the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

HKN's has held a relationship for nearly twenty years with the Division of State Parks (DSP). Since 2018, the relationship was formalized through an Adopt-a-Park agreement which recognizes the Kealakekua Bay community's capacity to organize and address conservation concerns such as invasive species, critical climate change and adaptation solutions, environmental impacts, human use causing cumulative negative impacts on critical habitat and species, and restoration of cultural and significant sites within the Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park and its Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD).

Our strong partnership with State Parks (DSP), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), and Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), allow us to support the State's kuleana to uphold constitutional mandates that protect access, resources, and manage human use in developing carrying capacity reports for the partnerships to be better informed in decision making arenas. To date, we are struggling to meet environmental and human use impacts that are causing the rapid decline of critical elements such as water quality for coral and fish populations, soil and native vegetation.

The Kealakekua Bay community has stepped forward volunteering and now implementing a workforce development plan with livable wages and comparable benefit package, however, HKN seeks support through this measure to continue to leverage resources between community and state agency partnerships, and build trust to support much needed resources to meet deliverables.

This measure provides avenues to strengthen relationships between community and government agencies by entering into a co-management agreement. It further establishes qualifications and criteria for eligible community co-managers, and authorizes disposition of public lands through such agreements for quick response to mitigate real time issues. As a Native Hawaiian I strongly support this bill's intent to preserve and protect all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes; and further protect restoration of historical and environmental resources to include rehabilitation of



native species, flora and fauna. Lastly, to manage parking and visitor activities to manage human use activities with connecting people to wahi pana (celebrated sacred places).

I would like to thank this committee for hearing this measure and allowing me to voice my strong support for HB2218 HD1. I further urge the passage and recommendation for the next committee to hear this measure.

Mahalo Nui,

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen  
Executive Director



**House Committee on Finance**

**Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB 2218 HD1**

Monday, February 23rd, 2026 2:00 p.m. Conference Room 308

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

HAPA strongly supports HB2218 HD1. The legislature has identified grassroot communities which have spent decades collaborating with government agencies to care for spaces (wahi pana) and the surrounding resources. The legislature also finds that “these efforts would be more effective and sustainable if supported by long-term community co-management agreements.”

Acknowledging the Department of Land and Natural Resources’ comment on the topic of entering into community co-management, the current tools – short-term permits, rights-of-entry, revocable agreements, or concession contracts – do not adequately support community based co-management. HB2218 HD1 would provide a framework for the state to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honor traditional Native Hawaiian concepts of mālama ‘āina and place-based practices for effective management.

Article XI, section 1, and Article XII, Section 7, of the Hawaii State Constitution supports co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Through HB2218 HD1, the board may enter into community co-management agreements, by direct negotiation and without recourse to public auction, with qualified community-based organizations for a time period exceeding sixty-five years. This will provide a framework to enable more advantageous pathways to securing funding to support costs of running and administering successful programs.

Community-based co-management has established community-based subsistence fishing areas, and additional communities are organizing, all of which would benefit from long-term co-management agreements. This legislation seeks to strengthen the management efforts currently sustained by the organizations performing the work to-date.

Please support HB2218 HD1 in enabling a state supported community co-management agreement between DLNR and partners that would strengthen existing efforts and serve to establish a resilient island of place-based practice and sustained care to the work being done.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written below the text 'Respectfully,'.

Anne Frederick, Executive Director

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 3:57:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support.

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 4:33:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 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

2218 HB RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 4:44:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB2218, a landmark bill that would empower the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to formally enter into long-term community co-management agreements. This legislation represents a profound and necessary shift toward collaborative stewardship, recognizing that the most effective and sustainable management of our public trust resources arises from partnerships with the communities who know, love, and are culturally bound to these places.

For decades, grassroots and lineal descendant organizations have been the de facto stewards of countless wahi pana and natural resources across our islands. They have invested immense volunteer labor, traditional knowledge, and cultural passion into restoration, education, and protection—often without the formal recognition or security needed to sustain their work for generations. HB2218 provides that essential framework. It moves beyond temporary permits and unstable arrangements to authorize agreements of 65 years or more, granted through direct negotiation. This long-term security is not a privilege; it is the necessary foundation for true, multi-generational stewardship.

This bill is a direct fulfillment of our State Constitution’s mandate. Article XI, Section 1, and Article XII, Section 7, charge the state with protecting public trust resources and upholding Native Hawaiian customary and traditional rights. Community co-management is the most powerful tool to achieve both goals simultaneously. By authorizing agreements specifically for the "preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians," and for the restoration of native ecosystems, this bill ensures that management is guided by the very principles of mālama ‘āina that have sustained these islands for millennia.

The qualifications established in HB2218 ensure that agreements are forged with legitimate, place-based organizations deeply rooted in their areas of care. This structure provides clarity and accountability for both the state and the community. Furthermore, by enabling the disposition of public lands through these agreements, the bill provides the tangible authority needed for co-managers to effectively carry out their kuleana, from managing visitor impacts to restoring native forests.

We have seen the success of this model in Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Areas (CBSFAs) and in countless informal partnerships. HB2218 seeks to replicate and strengthen that

success statewide. It is a recognition that the state cannot manage these precious resources alone, and that the most powerful resource we have is the love and knowledge of our own communities.

I urge you to pass HB2218. It is a critical step toward justice, resilience, and a future where the state and its people work in true partnership to heal and protect our ‘āina for all generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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February 20, 2026

**TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND**  
**COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ON**  
**HB 2218, HD1, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND**  
**AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
House Committee on Finance  
Monday, February 23, 2026  
2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308  
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2218, HD1, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kauai County Council.

I serve as Chair of the Parks & Recreation / Transportation Committee, and on Kauai, we have witnessed the successful transformation and stewardship of the Ha'ena State Park by the Hui Maka'ainana o Makana, a community-based organization, over the course of two (2) decades. The Hui's direct contributions to perpetuate Native Hawaiian cultural practices; foster place-based restoration, care, and education; and fortify the area's natural and cultural resources, have proven their ability to safely manage Hawaii's public trust resources. Therefore, what is needed currently is a legal pathway for DLNR to enter into lasting community co-management agreements that honor grassroots communities.

HB 2218, HD1 provides the critical statutory authority necessary to support and strengthen community co-management agreements, which reflect a traditional cooperative working arrangement in Hawaii that looks to a future in which the state's resources are cared for cooperatively, with shared responsibility, and with enduring commitment.

Chair Todd and Members of the Committee  
Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2218, HD1  
February 20, 2026  
Page 2

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2218, HD1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to [cokcouncil@kauai.gov](mailto:cokcouncil@kauai.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "FERN HOLLAND", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

FERN HOLLAND  
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

RM:sf

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 9:48:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards. I am a resident of Wainiha, Kaua‘i, a small business owner, and a community advocate. I am testifying in strong support of HB2218 which authorize community co-management agreements.

On the North Shore of Kaua‘i, we have seen what community co-management can accomplish. In Hā‘ena, the work of Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana has demonstrated how community-led stewardship protects cultural sites, restores natural resources, and manages access in ways that honor both place and people.

That work has been strengthened through collaboration and coordination with The Hanalei Initiative, aligning agencies, nonprofits, and community partners around shared responsibility for mālama ‘āina.

Beyond environmental benefits, these efforts are also a powerful model for workforce development. Community co-management creates stable, place-based jobs for local residents — resource managers, cultural practitioners, educators, and field staff — building skills in conservation, visitor management, restoration, and environmental monitoring. These are meaningful career pathways rooted in stewardship and ‘ike kūpuna, not just temporary positions.

For rural communities like mine, where economic opportunities can be limited, co-management keeps talent local. It allows our young people and working families to build careers caring for the places they call home, rather than having to leave to find opportunity elsewhere. That strengthens both our economy and our long-term capacity to mālama ‘āina.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources cannot manage all public trust lands alone. Authorizing community co-management agreements expands the State’s capacity while cultivating a skilled, locally grounded stewardship workforce for future generations.

For us on the North Shore, this is not theoretical — it is already working. I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 10:45:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I stand in support of HB2218.

This bill includes good evidence in Section 1 that outlines the value of community groups that have previously managed the State’s resources, and the challenges that persist. Many other groups on private lands are restoring and stewarding natural and cultural resources that will protect and perpetuate those resources for future generations. These same groups, with an improved process, could also spread their impact to State resources, benefiting the State, our environment, and the future generations.

I appreciate the authoring and introduction of this bill, and hope that you consider passing it.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Keoni Shizuma

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 3:54:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mehana Vaughan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for all the work you do for our Hawai‘i on this vital committee. My name is Mehana Vaughan, and I have worked for over thirty years with community management efforts in my home community of Halele‘a, Kaua‘i, particularly with Hui Maka‘ainana o Makana in Hā‘ena, Kāhili Preserve through the Hawaiian Islands Lans Trust, and the Waipā Foundation, among other groups. Over the past 15 years, I have had the broader opportunity to support and learn from similar community efforts across our pae ‘āina, in my role as a professor of watershed management the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management and the Sea Grant Program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Through our research on community and collaborative management, we see not only the growth of these efforts, from around 90 organizations in 1990 to 220 in 2022, but the many benefits they create in terms of jobs, community cohesion, education across generations, improved human and ecosystem health, climate change resilience, and enhanced enforcement.

I **strongly support** HB2218 HD1 authorizing the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations. **The State has an affirmative duty to mālama‘āina, care for the public trust lands and waters of Hawai‘i.** Caring for our precious ‘āina (that which feeds us all) requires collective kuleana (responsibility), and DLNR alone does not have adequate funding, personell or expertise to effectively and sustainably manage all the lands and waters within its purview.

Local level collective management by those who are closest to, and rely most upon, natural resources is documented worldwide as an efective alternative to either solely private or government approaches. In fact, Hawai‘i’s historic ahupu‘a managent systems, developed over centuries of relationship between local people and place, are cited globally as models of sustainability. For decades, grassroots communities throughout Hawai‘i have been supporting and collaborating with DLNR to mālama the places we all love and call home. One of their largest challenges is the short term nature of stewardship and lease agreements, without a consistent legal pathway for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. This impermanence exacerbates another main challenge for community groups, making it mroe difficult to secure financing and long term funding, particularly from sources beyond state government.

I do suggest a friendly amendment, **as the the HD1 addition of 5-year reviews is unnecessary** with “performance and accountability standards,” and “reporting processes and requirements” already required for any community co-management plan (Page 7, Lines 13 and 16). **Regular review and reporting of community co-management agreements should be left to the discretion of DLNR and each community-based organization to determine what is best given their own unique circumstances.** Community groups have more than proven their capacity to manage effectively in Hawai‘i. Restoring the health of ecosystems and people together is long term cross generational work and this bill is needed to allow this work to flourish.

Please **PASS** HB2218 HD1 out of your committee with my friendly amendment. This may be the single most important, and cost effective measure your committee has the opportunity to pass this session, in terms of its potential impact on the health of the ecosystems which fuel Hawai‘i’s economy and are vital to all of our wellbeing.

Me ke aloha ha‘aha‘a,

Dr. Mehana Blaich Vaughan

(testifying as a private citizen)

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 4:43:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pua Chin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the passage of HB2218 HD1

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 5:26:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 8:08:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isaac Carroo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** HB2218 HD1 authorizing the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements with qualified community-based organizations. **There is no funding attached to this bill, as it only asks for the authorization needed for DLNR to enter into these types of agreements.**

**The State has an affirmative duty to mālama‘āina, care for the public trust lands and waters of Hawai‘i.** Caring for our precious ‘āina (that which feeds us all) requires collective kuleana (responsibility), and as DLNR has long acknowledged, it alone cannot effectively and sustainably manage all the lands and waters within its purview. For decades, grassroots communities throughout Hawai‘i have been supporting and collaborating with DLNR to mālama the places we all love and call home. But while the need and interest in collaborative mālama‘āina continues to grow, no consistent legal pathway exists for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. Several different tools do exist (e.g., curatorships, permits, concessions, community-based subsistence fishing areas), but these all vary significantly in form and function, often causing various administrative delays and managerial issues.

Comanagement is also a rapidly growing approach in the other U.S. states that allows the Federal government to work with Federally Recognized Tribes to do similar projects. Since there is no such designation for Kanaka Maoli, the way that kuleana finds expression is through community groups that qualify here. This bill can position Hawai‘i as a leader in this space nationally and internationally.

I do suggest a friendly amendment, **as the the HD1 addition of 5-year reviews is unnecessary** with “performance and accountability standards,” and “reporting processes and requirements” already required for any community co-management plan (Page 7, Lines 13 and 16). **Regular review and reporting of community co-management agreements should be left to the discretion of DLNR and each community-based organization to determine what is best given their own unique circumstances.** However, if your Committee chooses to accept this HD1 amendment and require 5-year reviews via statute, please ensure that these 5-year reviews are *coordinated and led by DLNR*, and not left to community-based organizations to shoulder alone.

Please **PASS** HB2218 HD1 out of your committee with my friendly amendment.

Me ke aloha ha'aha'a,

Isaac Carroo

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:02:34 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Quimby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** HB2218 HD1 authorizing the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements with qualified community-based organizations.

This bill will provide a streamlined approach to locally-led efforts to sustainably manage our resources, reducing the administrative burden currently placed on community organizations and ensuring that partnerships have a formal and equitable framework for decision-making, review, and outcomes.

**There is no funding attached to this bill, as it only asks for the authorization needed for DLNR to enter into these types of agreements.**

I do suggest a friendly amendment, **as the the HD1 addition of 5-year reviews is unnecessary** with “performance and accountability standards,” and “reporting processes and requirements” already required for any community co-management plan (Page 7, Lines 13 and 16). **Regular review and reporting of community co-management agreements should be left to the discretion of DLNR and each community-based organization to determine what is best given their own unique circumstances.** However, if your Committee chooses to accept this HD1 amendment and require 5-year reviews via statute, please ensure that these 5-year reviews are *coordinated and led by DLNR*, and not left to community-based organizations to shoulder alone.

Please **PASS** HB2218 HD1 out of your committee with my friendly amendment.

Me ke aloha ha‘aha‘a,

Barbara Quimby

Kailua, O'ahu

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:51:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali‘i Pang, PhD. I am a Native Hawaiian practitioner and educator. While I currently serve as the Board President for Ka‘ala Farm, Inc., I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2218, HD1.

**The "Proof of Concept": 50 Years of Community Stewardship**

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Ka‘ala Farm in Wai‘anae. I have witnessed firsthand how half a century of uninterrupted community-led stewardship can transform a landscape and a people. However, for most of those 50 years, organizations like ours have operated without a clear, long-term statutory framework.

Based on my decades of experience, I believe HB2218 HD1 is essential for the following reasons:

- Longevity Breeds Impact: True restoration—whether it is clearing invasive species from a watershed or restoring a traditional *lo‘i* system—does not happen on a fiscal year cycle. It happens over decades. The 65-year maximum term proposed in this bill matches the biological and cultural reality of the land.
- Assurance to Funders: In my personal experience, philanthropic partners and federal agencies look for "site control" or long-term tenure before committing significant capital. By providing a formal Community Co-Management Agreement, the State gives community groups the credentials needed to bring outside investment into our public lands at no cost to the taxpayer.
- Validation of Community ‘Ike: This bill moves us away from a model where communities are merely "volunteers" or "curators" and recognizes us as formal partners. It honors the *kuleana* of those who have the deepest genealogical and physical ties to the *‘āina*.

**Support for the HD1 Framework**

The specific structure of HB2218 HD1 provides the necessary safeguards to ensure these agreements are successful:

- Rigorous Qualifications (§171-C): The requirement for a detailed co-management plan and five-year progress reviews ensures that only capable, mission-driven organizations hold these agreements.
- Āina Education: Explicitly authorizing agreements for the purpose of Āina education ensures that these lands remain a living classroom for our *keiki*, preserving the connection between the people and the environment.

## **Conclusion**

We have 50 years of evidence from Ka‘ala Farm and other sites across the islands that community-based management is the most resilient model we have. We no longer need to treat these successes as "exceptions" to the rule. HB2218 HD1 makes community stewardship the standard.

I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2218 HD1 and empower the communities that have already proven they can care for Hawai‘i’s most precious resources.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to share my mana‘o.

Respectfully,

Keali‘i Pang, Ph.D.

## LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY – HB2218

Date: February 23, 2:00 PM

Committee: House Committee on Finance (FIN)

Measure: HB2218 – Relating to Community Co-Management

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Frederick Smith. I live in the Kealakekua ahupua'a in the South Kona moku and am a graduate student focused on marine science and policy at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. I am writing **in strong support of HB2218**, a fiscally responsible and forward-looking measure that strengthens community involvement in the stewardship of Hawai'i's public lands.

Community co-management is one of the most cost-effective tools available to DLNR. Across Hawai'i, community groups already care for cultural sites, native habitats, trail systems, watershed lands, and other public resources, often performing work the State would otherwise need to fund. These partnerships reduce DLNR's operational and enforcement burdens and help the State meet its public trust responsibilities by ensuring that public lands are cared for by the communities most connected to them.

Community stewardship strengthens compliance and prevents damage before it occurs, allowing the State to avoid costly restoration projects and reduce long-term fiscal burdens. Greater compliance, in turn, means fewer enforcement actions and lower enforcement costs, producing real fiscal benefits for the State.

HB2218 also provides needed administrative clarity. Clear statutory authority reduces disputes, establishes predictable pathways for co-management agreements, and allows DLNR to use its limited staff time more efficiently. Administrative clarity itself saves resources by enabling the department to focus on monitoring, enforcement, and resource protection rather than navigating ambiguous procedures. In addition, clear co-management authority strengthens eligibility for grants and other funding opportunities that support stewardship and restoration, making it easier for the State and community partners to secure external resources.

Beyond its fiscal benefits, HB2218 reflects a simple truth: Hawai'i's lands and waters are best protected when the State and communities work together. By clarifying DLNR's authority to engage in co-management, this bill affirms the value of local knowledge, cultural connection, and the shared kuleana we hold to care for public trust resources. It supports a stewardship model rooted not just in policy, but in relationship.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of HB2218**.

Mahalo,

Frederick Smith

82-5996 Napo'opo'o Road

Captain Cook, HI 96704

## COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Monday, February 23, 2026, 2:00 p.m. Conference Room 308

**TO:** COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair, Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair and Committee Members

**RE:** HB 2218, HD1

**FR:** Curt Cottrell

HB 2218, HD1 authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements, establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers, and allows for the disposition of public lands through such agreements. ***I strongly support and amplify DLNR, KUA and the other community group's testimony in support. I request that the date of enactment be amended to ensure passage.***

The renowned success of the DLNR's Division of State Park's (DSP) on collaborative co-management at Ha'ena State Park with Hui Maka'āinana O Makana is well documented and demonstrates the paradigm shift from top-down government park management to "community lead, government supported" collaboration – and should be encouraged and continued.

After decades of underfunding - DSP has established a robust revenue base primarily derived from out-of-state visitor entrance and parking fees at 10 DSP park units statewide. Prior to increased revenue, the common tool and approach is to conduct a request for proposals or invitation for bid with private sector entities to support fee collection or management with an aggressive percentage base rent to DSP, and a negotiated percentage to the lessee or permittee. This goal was purely revenue generation vs collaborative management and did not consider community-based partners. The current DSP revenue stream now allows for a shift in focus from purely income to enhanced management – without adding to the State's personnel costs. Instead, this model creates new community jobs. Hui Maka'āinana O Makana now employs 55 neighboring residents to support park management – funded from their share of the visitor-based parking patronage revenue.

The standard IFB-RFP model still applies to certain park units - such as where there is not an engaged non-profit or community stakeholder or where the fee collection may not be sufficient to support this relationship, but this legislation is intended to solidify current partnerships and will likely foster and stimulate the creation of new partners. As an example, DSP is working with several community-based partners and a non-profit on Hawaii Island to establish a comparable co-management partnership at Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park. As with Ha'ena, lineal descendants of this moku are engaged.

Back in the day provisions of Chapter 171 HRS were initially crafted primarily to enable straight up exclusive leases, and the proposed amendments will simply add to the flexibility of DLNR to consider and establish community-based co-management leases for a variety of natural and cultural resources. These amendments provide additional and critical legal tools to the tool chest for enabling and sustaining co-management.

***Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this timely and important measure.***

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:01:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Cates	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

Although I support the intent of HB2218, I have concerns about potential conflict with ongoing, developing management programs that replicate the actions of this bill, making it unnecessary.

DLNR has spent the last few years meeting with communities and held scoping meetings for the Holomua Initiative. The initiative supports a community-based approach to manage marine resources. This bill appears to address the same issues, including management of marine resources out to one mile from shore.

Please consider deferring this measure until DAR is able to assess the impacts of the first community based management pilot project on Maui, or amend the bill and remove management of nearshore resources.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-2218-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:56:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Rozendo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I work frequently with community organizations who steward ‘āina in my professional capacity, however I am testifying as an individual independent of my employer. I **strongly support** HB2218 HD1 authorizing the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements with qualified community-based organizations. **There is no funding attached to this bill, as it only asks for the authorization needed for DLNR to enter into these types of agreements.**

**The State has an affirmative duty to mālama‘āina, care for the public trust lands and waters of Hawai‘i.** Caring for our precious ‘āina (the lands and waters where we are fed from) requires collective respect and thoughtful work from us residents of Hawai‘i. This commitment should be modeled by our government leaders, and as DLNR has long acknowledged, the department alone cannot effectively and sustainably manage all the lands and waters within its purview. For decades, grassroots communities throughout Hawai‘i have been supporting and collaborating with DLNR to mālama the places we all love and call home. And while the need and interest in collaborative mālama‘āina continues to grow, no consistent legal pathway yet exists for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. Several different tools do exist (e.g., curatorships, permits, concessions, community-based subsistence fishing areas), but these all vary significantly in form and function, often causing various administrative delays and managerial issues.

My testimony is in support of suggesting a friendly amendment, **as the the HD1 addition of 5-year reviews is unnecessary** with “performance and accountability standards,” and “reporting processes and requirements” already required for any community co-management plan (Page 7, Lines 13 and 16). I recommend that **regular review and reporting of community co-management agreements should be left to the discretion of DLNR and each community-based organization to determine what is best given their own unique circumstances.** However, if your Committee chooses to accept this HD1 amendment and require 5-year reviews via statute, please ensure that these 5-year reviews are *coordinated and led by DLNR*, and not left to community-based organizations to shoulder alone.

Please **PASS** HB2218 HD1 out of your committee with my friendly amendment.

Me ke aloha ha‘aha‘a,

Hannah Rozendo