



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HB2218**  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Wai a me ka 'Āina  
(House Committee on Water & Land)

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

Pepeluāli 10, 2026

9:00AM

Lumi 411

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2218, 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.

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: "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.

HB2218 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**.

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*.

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

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LAND  
STATE PARK

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

Before the House Committee on  
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, February 10, 2026  
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2218  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill 2218 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 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. 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.

House Bill 2218 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 strong support of this measure.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:49:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Curt A. Cottrell	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

TO: Honorable Chairperson Hashem, Vice Chair

Morikawa, and members of the WL Committee

RE:

HOUSE BILL 2218, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, Tuesday, 02-10-26 9:00 AM

FR: Curt Cottrell

House Bill 2218 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 HB 2218 and to amplify DLNR's testimony offer additional comments.***

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 IFB-RFP model still applies to certain park units - such as where there is not an engaged non-profit or community

stakeholders or where the fee collection may not be sufficient to support this relationship, but this legislation may foster and stimulate the creation of new partners.

As an example, DSP is working with several community

based partners and a non-profit on Hawai’i 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.

Chapter 171 HRS was 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 for a variety of natural and cultural resources. HB2218 adds an additional

1. tool to the tool chest for enabling co-management.

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

# 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 Water and Land

February 10, 2026; 9:00 AM

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of

### House Bill 2218 Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

Honorable Chair Hashem, Honorable Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in **strong support** for HB 2218, 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, it 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 collaborated 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 into 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 to effectively manage the State's public trust resources. HB 2218 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.

**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 Water & Land

**February 10, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.**  
Via Videoconference  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

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

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### **Honorable Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:**

My name is Nalani Ka‘auwai Brun, and I serve as the Director of the Office of Economic Development for the County of Kaua‘i. I am writing in **strong support of House Bill 2218**, which authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications and accountability for eligible community co-managers.

HB 2218 provides a clear statutory framework that allows the State to work **hand in hand with community** through formal, written co-management agreements. The bill does not privatize public lands, nor does it prescribe specific land uses. Instead, it allows stewardship decisions to be defined by place, culture, and community, subject to Board approval, oversight, and enforceable terms.

On Kaua‘i, we have already seen the success of this approach at Hā‘ena, where Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana has worked for decades in partnership with the State to steward land and resources, protect cultural sites, manage access, restore ‘āina, and perpetuate ‘ike kūpuna. HB 2218 provides the statutory authority needed to support and strengthen efforts like these, rather than forcing them into short-term or ill-fitting arrangements that do not reflect the nature of the work.

Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana is not alone. Across Hawai‘i, communities are already engaged in this type of stewardship. What has been missing is a legal framework that recognizes **traditional cooperative working arrangements** that may not align with typical permit or concession models, yet have proven effective over time.

HB 2218 reflects the way of the future—one that moves Hawai‘i forward by looking to how communities successfully cared for ‘āina in the past, through cooperation, shared responsibility, and long-term commitment. This bill does not give land away. It restores responsibility, partnership, and accountability.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support of House Bill 2218.

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



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Keeping Hawai'i clean,  
green and beautiful  
since 1912

February 6, 2026

RE: Support for HB2218 Community Co-Management of some DLNR lands

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Outdoor Circle, Hawai'i's oldest nonprofit keeping our state clean, green and beautiful since 1912, supports HB2218.

We support arrangements with state entities on community co-managers. This bill would formalize processes that would promote more effectiveness. Obviously when the rules are written that if this bill passes, there would provisions to ensure proper government oversight in the event that community partners are found to no longer able to fulfill agreements, and also clarifying language that ensures continued appropriate access to public trust resources.

We suggest that there be a uniform, renewable fixed period of time for such agreements, with regular oversight for members of the public to comment on these agreements in the periods of review and possible renewal of agreements, to ensure that community co-managers are effectively filling the responsibilities entrusted to them. We recommend these reviews be placed within the BLNR for review periods to allow for most transparency of the process, with a regular liaison inside of DLNR to support co-managers of these lands and have a place for the public to act as an ombudsman for the community at large for concerns that may arise during the period of the agreements.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Winston Welch, Executive Director



Testimony Before The  
House Committee on Water and Land (WAL)  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB2218**

February 10, 2026, 9:00 a.m., Room 411 & 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 as an incremental step toward 'āina momona.**

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).

Co-management, one pathway for community-based mālama'āina efforts, has been a core purpose in the development of Community-based Subsistence Fishing Areas (CBSFA), with three established so far in Hā'ena, Miloli'i, and Kīpahulu. The genesis of the CBSFA law came out of community efforts originating at Mo'omomi, Molokai, which inspired a number of other communities to seek CBSFA. Since that time community efforts have sustained the work in various forms despite a great gap in the state's capacity and willingness to collaborate or formally define with communities what this collaboration means. Along with the existing CBSFA law, the conservation field has slowly started to change. An Environmental Court, a DOCARE Academy, Makai Watch and CBSFA positions, Adaptive Management Management laws, and a Green Fee were all established to support community-based environmental efforts.

KUA helped support 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 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. We work to increase resilience, adaptation, and transformation through community-based biocultural resource management while supporting our three major networks.

This legislative effort in particular was born in response to a surprising shift from an expected long-term lease to the Hui at a recent 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 huge 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 the issues and solutions toward better recognition and 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.** Ultimately, the working group helped with the creation of HB2218 (companion [SB2685](#)) and similar measure [SB2979](#) as a solution. Please visit our [website](#) for more background information, particularly about the Hui's history with co-management and the inspirations behind this effort.

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

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 submit testimony. Please **PASS** HB2218.

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

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 4:40:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Fox	Malama Kaua‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha pumehana Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is Megan Fox, from Mālama Kaua‘i, and I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

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.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our ‘āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust ‘āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Megan Fox

Mālama Kaua‘i



## HAWAI'I LAND TRUST

House Committee on Water & Land

Date: February 10, 2026

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: CR 411 and via Videoconference

### **Re: SUPPORT – HB 2218, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources**

Aloha e Luna Ho'omalua Hashem, Hope Luna Ho'omalua Morikawa, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike:

Hawai'i Land Trust (HILT) **SUPPORTS** HB 2218, which authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications for eligible community-based organizations to serve as co-managers.

As an entity that works collaboratively with diverse public and private partners to enable and provide land stewardship, HILT recognizes that the care of our natural and cultural resources can be strengthened by formal relationships between the State and the communities who know these lands best. Community co-management is a proven model for effective stewardship, as it leverages local knowledge, ensures a consistent presence on the ground, and fosters a deep sense of kuleana among residents.

HB 2218 provides a much-needed legal framework for the disposition of public lands via co-management agreements. By establishing clear qualifications for community co-managers, this bill ensures that organizations tasked with these responsibilities are non-profits with a demonstrated commitment to resource protection and the technical capacity to execute stewardship plans effectively. This transparency and structure will empower community-based organizations while providing the DLNR with reliable partners to help meet our shared conservation goals.

For organizations like HILT, these agreements represent a vital pathway to formalizing stewardship roles that many community groups have unofficially held for generations. Formalizing these partnerships through HB 2218 will secure the long-term care of Hawai'i's unique ecosystems and cultural sites for the benefit of all residents and future generations.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

**'Olu Campbell**

President and Chief Executive Officer

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 8:13:55 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni DeFranco	Nation of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I submit this testimony in strong support of HB2218 on behalf of the Nation of Hawai'i and in my personal capacity as a cultural practitioner, mahi 'ai, and steward working at Pu'uhonua o Waimānalo, our 45 acre land base. My work is grounded in mālama 'āina through place-based practice, community responsibility, and long-term stewardship informed by generations of kupuna 'ike and ancestral ties to our ahupua'a.

HB2218 is significant because it provides a clear and thoughtful framework for the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements for public lands, while establishing qualifications and accountability for eligible community co-managers. This approach recognizes that communities with long-standing relationships to place should be uplifted as valuable partners in land management and conservation, working alongside state agencies to achieve shared goals.

At Pu'uhonua o Waimānalo, we see every day how community-led stewardship improves ecological outcomes while strengthening community investment and care. When local communities with cultural, historical, and practical knowledge are entrusted with defined roles and responsibilities, land management becomes more responsive, more sustainable, and more cost-effective over the long term. Community co-management also helps reduce conflict by aligning management decisions with local values and on-the-ground realities.

I appreciate the bill's emphasis on clear qualifications, standards, and accountability. Prioritizing Native Hawaiian organizations and community groups with demonstrated connections to specific lands ensures continuity of care, cultural sensitivity, and responsible management. Co-management agreements that protect cultural sites and support traditional practices also enhance public access, education, and respect for these places as shared resources.

I respectfully encourage the Legislature to continue engaging community practitioners, Native Hawaiian organizations, and DLNR staff as implementation guidelines are developed. Transparent processes, capacity-building support, and clear evaluation measures will help ensure these partnerships are effective and durable. HB2218 represents a practical, collaborative step toward improving public land stewardship in Hawai'i, and I urge the committee to advance this measure. Aloha 'Āina.



**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 1:41:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jonathan Likeke Scheuer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

I have worked on the management of environmental conflict in Hawai`i for the entirety of my career of over three decades. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is often not only at the center of these conflicts due to its kuleana, but an inadvertent perpetrator of these conflicts due to institutional structure and inertia. This bill is an important step in a critical direction to ultimately reform DLNR to become an institution that pursues partnership with community as a central activity and an essential method to fulfill their constitutional, statutory, and other legal mandates. Please PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

**Jonathan Likeke Scheuer, Ph.D.**  
**Kahālāwai Consulting LLC**

*Managing Environmental Conflict*

Read: [Water and Power In West Maui](#) (2021)

Listen: [Hawai`i News Now Be Akamai: Why wai?](#) (2024)

Watch: [What Does Sustainable Yield Sustain? What \(and Who\) is Left Out?](#) (2021)

Connect: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/likeke>



February 7, 2026

Aloha pumehana Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is Kamalei Lind, and I submit this testimony on behalf of Kīpahulu 'Ohana, Inc., a grassroots nonprofit organization in Kīpahulu, East Maui, with deep generational ties to the 'āina and nearshore resources we care for. We strongly support HB2218, which would authorize community co-management agreements between the Department of Land and Natural Resources and qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofit organizations.

The State of Hawai'i holds an affirmative duty to mālama 'āina and uphold the public trust for the benefit of present and future generations. Caring for our lands and waters—that which feeds us all—requires shared kuleana. DLNR has long acknowledged that it cannot, on its own, sustainably manage the full scope of Hawai'i's public trust lands and resources.

Across Hawai'i, grassroots and Native Hawaiian-led community organizations have, for decades, been actively engaged in caring for 'āina in collaboration with DLNR—through education, restoration, monitoring, cultural practice, and place-based management. While the need and readiness for these partnerships continues to grow, there remains no consistent or comprehensive legal framework that allows DLNR to enter into long-term, community-based co-management agreements.

Although tools such as permits, curatorships, concessions, and community-based subsistence fishing areas exist, they vary widely in structure and purpose and are often ill-suited to support sustained, holistic management. These limitations can result in administrative inefficiencies, uncertainty for community partners, and missed opportunities for effective resource protection.

HB2218 represents a logical and necessary next step. By authorizing community co-management agreements, the Legislature would create a clear, flexible pathway for DLNR to partner with trusted, Hawai'i-based nonprofit organizations that are rooted in place, accountable to community, and committed to the long-term care of public trust resources.

I respectfully urge you to support this important effort and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheyenne Kamalei Lind". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheyenne Kamalei Lind, Executive Director

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 6:05:49 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

# HAWAI'I OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



February 10, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature  
House Committee on Water and Land

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

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, 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, 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 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 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 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.*



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

February 10, 2026

9:00 AM

Conference Room 411

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

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

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **strongly supports HB2218**. 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 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**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:20:06 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Blake McNaughton	Makahaloa Fishing Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

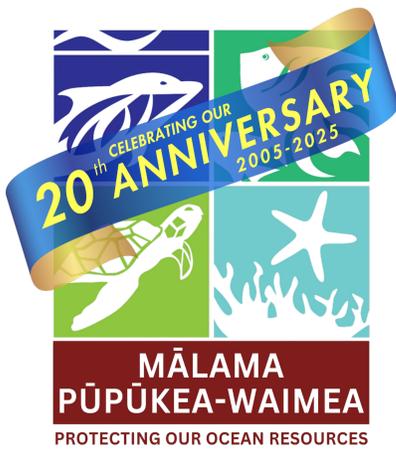
Comments:

Makahaloa Fishing Association strongly supports HB2218, which authorizes DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements. Makahaloa Fishing Association represents 140 fishing ‘ohana from Hilo Palikū on Hawai‘i Island. We struggle to maintain our access to fishing areas and to steward these places. The State has kuleana for helping to manage the lands and waters of Hawaii and needs community support. This has always been the way. Those that live within an area should be responsible for sustainably managing the resources there. Let’s pass this bill and move a longstanding obstacle to community based management.

Mahalo,

Blake McNaughton

President, Makahaloa Fishing Association



February 10, 2026  
WAL Hearing, 9 am

**HB2218 Co-Management – In Support**

Aloha WAL Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, 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.**

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!

Denise Antolini  
President, MPW

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

**Board of Directors**

*Denise Antolini  
Keelan Barcina  
Dr. Anne Chung  
Dr. Jamison Gove*

**Advisory Council**

*Athline Clark  
John Cutting  
Olan Leimomi Fisher  
Dr. Alan Friedlander  
Dr. Debbie Gowensmith  
Roberts "Bob" Leinau  
Maxx E. Phillips, Esq.  
Palakiko Yagodich*

**Staff**

*Jacqueline Leinau  
Executive Director*

*Jenny Yagodich  
Director of Educational Programs &  
Makai Watch Coordinator*

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

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:32:31 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i, we stand in VERY STRONG Support of HB2218. With Grassroots Democracy as one of the four pillars of the Green Party we know we are only as strong as the ocommunities we live in. We need to be sure we are lifting up and supporting the Native Hawaiian caretakers who are tied to the land.

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo,  
Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

Kauai Climate Action Coalition supports HB 2218. HB2218 seeks 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.

The 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.

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 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Helen Cox, Kalaheo

Chair, Kauai Climate Action Coalition



**House Committee on Water and Land  
February 10, 2026 at 9:00 AM  
Room 411**

**Testimony in SUPPORT for HB2218**

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Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) we submit **strong support** for **HB2218**. 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**.



## 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.*

TO: Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
Members of the House COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

DATE: Tuesday, February 10, 2026  
TIME: 9:00 am  
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE in Room 411

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

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

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.**

Our Hui has worked closely with House leadership and DLNR leadership over the past six months to draft this bill. The process of drafting this bill brought together community leaders from across the *pae 'āina* (Hawaiian archipelago) to work collaboratively with leaders and subject matter specialists from DLNR as well as lawmakers. 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 that importance of this bill for both our communities as well as our government.

HB 2218, as currently written, will 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). **This is a “tool” that our State needs to have in our toolbox so that we can collectively work together to better manage the natural and cultural heritage of our State!**

The initial motivation to draft this bill came from the deep frustration caused by the inability of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) in July of last year to issue a long-term lease to our Hui for the management of Hā'ena State Park (HSP). State Parks and the Hui have been working diligently towards the goal of a long-term lease since the Master Plan for HSP was approved in 2018. The concept of a nonprofit lease was the preferred community option on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared along with the Master Plan for HSP.

After working together over the past six years to achieve the goal of a long-term lease, it finally became clear at the BLNR meeting on July 25, 2025, that the legislature would need to create a

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

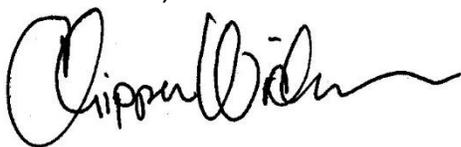
new legal pathway to achieve this important goal. What happened next is something that we should all be proud of. With Speaker Nakamura’s encouragement, community leaders and government leaders worked hand-in-hand, week after week, to not only draft this bill but to engage widespread community input and support.

The legal drafting of the bill over the past several 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 then used their networks to vet the ideas and language that would become the foundation of the draft bill. KUA also met with communities across the State (both in person and virtually) creating an effective feed-back loop that informed the drafting process and ultimately the final language that is in the bill before you today. The Hawaii Conservation Alliance (HCA) was also a key partner is helping to draft and vet this bill through their membership and networks!

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 has emerged from years of frustration for the Hui is an opportunity for finally create a legal pathway for community co-management initiatives across the state. What started as an effort within the Division of State Park has grown and is now embraced and championed by 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 all of DLNR!

In closing, we ask for your STRONG support of HB 2218. The members of the House committee on Water and Land are the experts who are familiar with the issues that make this bill so important. As such, we hope that you too will become champions of the concepts embodied in this important piece of legislation.

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, Secretary  
Hui Maka’āinana o Makana



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

HOUSE COMMITTEE on WATER AND LAND  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 10, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Room 411

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

Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN) is in **STRONG SUPPORT** for **HB2218**, which authorizes the Department of Land of 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 gentlemen's agreement with the Napo'opo'o Village community for over twenty years in providing volunteer support to address invasive species and restoration efforts at the Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park. Since 2018, we formalized that agreement into an Adopt-a-Park Agreement which recognizes the Kealakekua Bay community's capacity to organize and address critical climate change and 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 continue to struggle with environmental and human use impact. This measure will be able to leverage resources between community and agency partnerships, and build trust to support systemic changes needed to meet deliverables in real time. It will allow community to formulate, participate, and ensure socio-economic successes and become responsible parties to ensure available resources for future generations.

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-led Community-based conservation management nonprofit, HKN strongly support this measure's intent to preserve and practice 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, or 'Āina education to



**P.O. Box 1301 | Kealahou | Hawai'i | 96750**

*A Native Hawaiian-led Community-based Conservation Management Non-profit  
www.kealahou.org | FB & IG handles: Hoalakealakekuanuu*

manage human use activities with connecting people to wahi pana (celebrated sacred places).

HKN would like to thank this committee for hearing this measure and the opportunity to provide a voice. We strongly urge this committee to pass HB2218 and urge the next committee to hear this measure.

Mahalo Nui,

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen  
Executive Director

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:31:53 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sonja Kanani Enos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Sonja Kanani Enos, and I reside in the Ahupua'a of Ke'ei in the district of South Kona on the Island of Hawai'i. I am a lineal descendant of Kealakekua Bay. Alongside my 'ohana, I practice and perpetuate cultural traditions that are connected to the health, balance, and sustainability of our resources within Kealakekua Bay. I am writing you today in STRONG SUPPORT for HB2218.

I am currently the Director of Cultural and Community Affairs at Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN). Our organization's current Adopt-a-Park Agreement formally organizes our community to address climate change impacts, carrying capacity on critical habitat and species, restore cultural and significant sites within the Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park and its Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD). We have a strong partnership with State Parks (DSP), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), and Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA). I believe this measure will help us with some of the challenges we are facing.

I am in strong support for HB2218 as I feel this measure strengthens the relationship between community and government agencies for effective and efficient co-management. HB2218 also helps leverage community capacity and expertise, ensuring that State agencies are supported by people with place-based knowledge, consistent on-the-ground presence, and long-term commitment to stewardship.

My sincere thanks to this committee for hearing this measure and allowing me to voice my strong support for HB2218.

Mahalo nui,

Sonja Kanani Enos



## HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA

*The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in Hā'ena, Kaua'i.*

TO: Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
Members of the House COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

DATE: Tuesday, February 10, 2026  
TIME: 9:00 am  
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE in Room 411

From: Billy Kinney, Assistant Director  
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

### **RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2218 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

I am Billy Kinney, testifying on behalf 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). Dedicated to the skills, knowledge, and the practices of our ancestors the Hui has been collaborating with State Parks to restore, care for, and protect the lands of HSP. The Hui has been instrumental in shaping what collaborative care and co-management looks like in Hawai'i: since the late 90's the Hui has worked closely with State Parks to steward HSP via curatorship, the Hui has created important management schema with the Division of Aquatic Resources and DOCARE establishing the first CBSFA with a management plan and rules package in 2015, and it would set a gold standard for regenerative tourism in its community-led, collaborative efforts to manage visitor access to Hā'ena State Park since 2019 with DLNR, State Parks, and other agencies.

#### **The Hui is in strong support of HB 2218.**

HB 2218, as currently written, will 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). This is a "tool" that our State needs to have in our toolbox so that we can collectively work together to better manage the natural and cultural heritage of our State. The initial motivation to draft this bill came from the deep frustration caused by the inability of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) in July of last year to issue a long-term lease to our Hui for the management of Hā'ena State Park (HSP). State Parks and the Hui have been working diligently towards the goal of a long-term lease since the Master Plan for HSP was approved in 2018. The concept of a nonprofit lease was the preferred community option on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared along with the Master Plan for HSP. Even Dawn Chang (Chair of BLNR at the time) mentioned the "disappointment," and that we should look for "a way forward for all of Hawai'i"—she would point to co-management.



## HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA

*The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in Hā'ena, Kaua'i.*

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 the issues and solutions toward better recognition and 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. Ultimately, the working group helped with the creation of HB2218 (companion SB2685) and similar measure SB2979 as a solution. While the origin story was rooted in Hā'ena with the Hui, much of the writing and advocacy work 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 then used their networks to vet the ideas and language that would become the foundation of the draft bill. KUA also met with communities across the State (both in person and virtually) creating an effective, informed drafting process and ultimately the final language that is in the bill before you today. The Hawaii Conservation Alliance (HCA) was also a key partner in helping draft this bill.

For the Hui, we have been using the phrase "Community Led, Government-Supported" to encompass how the Hui and its community partners have been able to make Hā'ena the state-wide model of regenerative tourism and the standard for community-based natural and biocultural resource management. While rooted in historical frustration for the Hui, this bill and the familiars are opportunities to finally create a legal pathway for community co-management initiatives across the state—it will truly benefit DLNR and assist the State to fulfill its duties to protect these resources for all. Please, consider being the champions of this extraordinary bill and important piece of legislation. As the experts, members of the House committee on Water and Land, we ask that you STRONGLY support of HB 2218!

Aloha 'Āina,

William "Billy" Kinney  
Assistant Director, Hui Maka'ainana O Makana  
P.O. Box 1225 Hanalei, HI 96714

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 8:19:24 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Lum	Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Pumehana Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

I am writing to you as the President of the Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club, which was chartered in 1973 by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs. As a part of our mission, we are deeply involved in the restoration of sacred sites and cultural natural resources from mountain to ocean. We are located in the ahupua'a of 'Aiea, O'ahu.

Ali'i Pauahi strongly supports HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofits. DLNR has a presence from the top of the ahupua'a, at Keaiwa Heiau, to the harbor, at 'Aiea Bay. State Park.

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.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our 'āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust 'āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

Kehaulani Lum, Pelekikena





OUR MISSION IS TO PERPETUATE THE LEGACY OF OUR FOREBEARERS BY ADAPTIVELY AND COLLABORATIVELY LEARNING ABOUT, PROTECTING, TENDING, AND RESTORING THE BIOCULTURAL RESOURCES AND PRACTICES OF KEKAHA, NORTH KONA, HAWAI'I ISLAND, FOCUSING ON KA'ŪPŪLEHU

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February 9, 2026

Committee on Water & Land  
Conference Room 411  
State Capitol  
415 South Beratania Street

Re: Testimony in support of HB2218

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Hui Kahuwai **strongly supports HB2218**. Hui Kahuwai represents the continuation of marine stewardship that spans generations in Kekaha, North Kona of Hawai'i Island. Our mission, shown above, details our commitment to collaboration and biocultural resource management. We have decades of experience working with various stakeholders, including state agencies.

Currently, we have been working with the Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to craft a fisheries management plan with rules to sustainably manage marine resources with a Fisheries Management Area (FMA) designation. It is our intent to enter into a co-management agreement with DAR to implement this FMA and continue to steward our shores in perpetuity.

Hui Kahuwai has supported fellow community-led efforts across the pae'āina, and we firmly believe the greatest successes in modern management have resulted when people of place are involved. We welcome added authorization and details for a process that will result in increased collaboration with community-led organizations.

We urge the committee on water on land to support HB2218. Increased involvement of people of place will allow those with the most knowledge and aloha be able to have a greater positive impact. The best thing for water and land resources in any place, is to empower those who have been stewarding them for generations.

'O mākou nō me ka 'oia'i'o,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Hannah Kihalani Springer'.

Hannah Kihalani Springer,  
Hui Kahuwai President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kaikea Nakachi'.

Kaikea Nakachi,  
Hui Kahuwai Vice President



February 9, 2026

Testimony in **Strong Support for HB2218** & Community Co-Management  
Agreements with DLNR

To Whom it May Concern,

As a Director, I, Faith Blalock, am writing this letter on behalf of The Waipā Foundation to express our strong support for HB2218. **This bill authorizes the State to enter into community co-management agreements, a step towards securing the well-being of Hawai'i's lands and peoples for many generations to come.**

The need for the state to receive external support has been made clear both by the community and by State entities themselves. In recent years, the impacts of over-tourism have heightened the need for management of State lands that address the strain caused not only to natural resources but the community as well. Currently, the best efforts seen in achieving this goal comes from co-management between the State and community organizations in Hā'ena.

The Waipā Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit established in 1994 and are long-time stewards of the 1,600 acre ahupua'a of Waipā on Kaua'i, owned by Kamehameha Schools. Waipā Foundation's mission is to restore Waipā's vibrant natural systems and resources and inspire healthy, thriving communities connected to their resources. With a commitment to ensure the health and care of 'āina and community, Waipā Foundation is one of many that serve as a testament to the ability of community organizations to address the goals shared by the community and the State as we have stewarded our own lands for many years. Furthermore, as close partners with the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana, we understand first hand the need and benefits of community co-management agreements. **HB2218 is vital in allowing the replication of the positive care and impact seen in Hā'ena, but ensuring the management of Hā'ena is able to continue.**

Waipā Foundation recommends strong support for the state to continue to invest in community co-management of State Lands.

Most sincerely,

Faith Lehuanani Blalock, Director of Biocultural and Strategic Initiatives  
[lehua@waipafoundation.org](mailto:lehua@waipafoundation.org)

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
Supporting HB2218, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources  
Committee on Water & Land  
February 10, 2026 at 9:00 am  
Conference Room 411 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra strongly supports HB2218, 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.

For more than four decades, 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.

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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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827 Fort Street Mall Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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**TO:** HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Committee

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

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

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 9:00 am

**LOCATION:** Hearing Room 411

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The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **supports** HB 2218 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.

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 urge the legislature to advance HB 2218.**

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:38:34 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alayna DeBina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hasheem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of House Committee on Water and Land

My name is Alayna DeBina and I am a long time resident of Nāpo‘opo‘o and widow of a lineal descendant of Ka‘awaloa, with deep Kuleana to Kealakekua Bay. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2218, a measure that will authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources to build relationships and allow community co-management agreements with qualified and eligible community co-managers. The disposition of public lands by community co-management agreements is what our State needs, and the timing couldn't be better.

My connection to this bill is vital with my role as founding member, President and Treasurer of Ho‘āla Kealakekua Nui. Our NPO has been working with HSP via our Adopt a Park agreement for almost a decade now, and several years prior to our agreement. We have been growing and building capacity to expand our Kuleana from just assisting with vegetation removal and helping to restore cultural and significant sites, to progressively executing the work called out in our Community Action Plan, which was adopted into the Master Plan by the BLNR. Our list of deliverables continues to grow and we take that Kuleana to heart. We are passionate about our role and our vision help maintain Kealakekua Bay's natural and cultural resources is the heart of our mission.

This measure will enable us to strengthen our relationship with community and government agencies by allowing us to secure our co-management agreement. Furthermore, it will allow us to establish the criteria and qualifications to become community co-managers and authorize disposition of public lands through such agreements, allowing us to act quickly and mitigate issues in real time.

As a Native Hawaiian led organization, support of this bill will allow the preservation of cultural and traditional practices exercised by Native Hawaiian for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes. Further protection of environmental and historical resources which include the rehabilitation of native species, fauna and flora. Lastly, the ability to manage visitor activities and parking will allow us to manage the human use aspect while educating and connecting visitors to our wahi pana with ‘Āina based education.

I would like to say mahalo to this committee for hearing this measure and allowing my voice in strong support for HB2218 to be heard. Furthermore, I would like to urge the passage and recommendation for the next committee to hear this measure.

Mahalao Nunui,

Alayna DeBina

HKN

President/Treasurer



## House Committee on Water & Land

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

Tuesday, February 10th, 2026 9:00 a.m. Conference Room 411

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee on Water & Land.

HAPA strongly supports HB2218. 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.



Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anne Frederick  
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 9, 2026

To: Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair, Representative Dee Morikawa,  
Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee on Water & Land

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

Re: Support for HB2218

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED) strongly supports HB2218, 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.

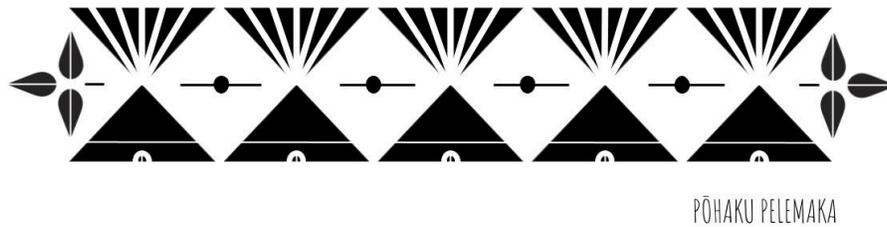
HACBED was established in 1992 as a nonprofit statewide intermediary to address social, economic, and environmental justice concerns through community-based economic development. Our team advances its mission with core competencies in the areas of community and organizational capacity building, community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

The passage of HB2218 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



13-3749 Old Kalapana Road  
Pahoa, Hawaii 96778  
(808) 965-6585  
[leila@pohakupelemaka.org](mailto:leila@pohakupelemaka.org)

**Testimony Before The  
House Committee on Water and Land (WAL)  
IN SUPPORT OF HB2218  
February 10, 2026, 9:00 a.m., Room 411 & via Videoconference**

Aloha pumehana Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

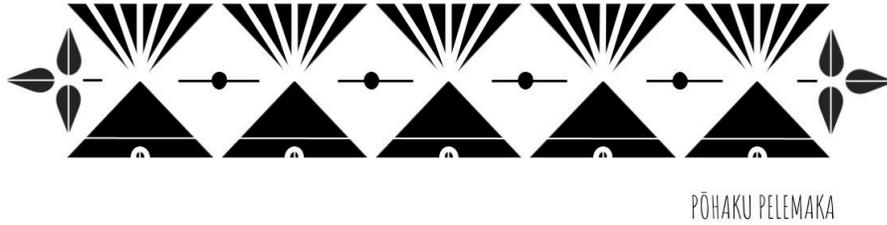
My name is Leila Kealoha, from Pōhaku Pelemaka 501c3 in Puna, Hawaii, and I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofits.

Pōhaku Pelemaka's mission and vision are to protect, perpetuate, and enhance: the intrinsic qualities of Puna makai, Native Hawaiian wellbeing, and the transmission of intergenerational knowledge and practices in partnership with 'ohana (family), county, state, government, public and private sectors.

**Vision**

Pōhaku Pelemaka's educational, charitable and scientific purpose is to Aloha 'Āina (reconnect, study, steward, protect, enhance, maintain, and celebrate) the lower Puna areas, the communities, and natural resources through culturally grounded programs and partnerships.

- Interviews of Kupuna, lineal and cultural descendants (kupa 'āina)
- Nā Lau'ō o Ka'akepa monthly Lā Aloha 'Āina
- Ho'owehe I Ka Niu 'Ohana camp
- Support for the implementation of the Puna Community Development Plan as it pertains to the Red Road Area and sponsoring the Hwy 137 Red Road Scenic Byway; and
- Supporting community initiatives in conformity with its mission.



13-3749 Old Kalapana Road  
Pahoa, Hawaii 96778  
(808) 965-6585  
[leila@pohakupelemaka.org](mailto:leila@pohakupelemaka.org)

Pōhaku Pelemaka currently has the stewardship of ~30-acres owned by DLNR and we have had a yearly right-of-entry since 2021. This bill would allow us to pursue co-management of this 'āina. 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.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our 'āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust 'āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and **PASS** HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

**Leila Kealoha,**

**Executive Director, Pōhaku Pelemaka**

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 11:37:00 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shauna Springer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Welina mai Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is Kēhau Springer, and I am a kanaka ‘ōiwi practitioner and researcher residing in Kea‘au, Moku o Keawe. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

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.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our ‘āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust ‘āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Aloha ‘āina,

na Shauna Kēhaunani Springer

Kea‘au, Moku o Keawe, Hawai‘i

Founder & Executive Director, Ka Pa‘akai Consulting

Member of Nā Kai 'Ewalu

PhD Candidate, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato (The University of Waikato)

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 12:57:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lea Hong	Trust for Public Land	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

Trust for Public Land (TPL) **strongly supports** HB2218 which authorizes community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

TPL is a national land conservation organization that creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy livable communities for generations to come. TPL has worked in HI for over 50 years, and partners with local communities and the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (and other governmental agencies) to protect lands throughout the state. To date, TPL and its partners have protected 56 special places totaling over 79,000 acres of land.

In almost every project, local residents and communities want to partner with the State to steward and manage the lands the State already owns or is acquiring with TPL's help. The State has an affirmative duty to mālama ‘āina, care for the public trust lands and waters of Hawai‘i. DLNR has long recognized that it alone cannot effectively and sustainably manage all the lands and waters under its jurisdiction.

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.

We urge the Committee to support the net step in effectively and sustainably managing our ‘āina -- authorizing community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our ‘āina.

TPL supports this longstanding effort and urges the Committee to **PASS** oHB2218. I apologize that I am not able to attend this hearing on Zoom or in person due to previous conflicting commitment.

Mahalo - Lea Hong, State Director, Trust for Public Land

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:35:10 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards. I am a Wainiha resident, small business owner, and longtime member of the north shore community. I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements.

The State of Hawai‘i has a clear duty to mālama ‘āina and protect public trust lands for current and future generations, as affirmed in Ching v. Case. Fulfilling that duty requires partnership with the communities who live with and care for these places every day.

In Hā‘ena, we have seen what works. Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana has cared for their ancestral lands, and the community-based management of Hā‘ena State Park along with Hanalei Initiative has led to better stewardship, cultural protection, and more responsible access. This success comes from local knowledge, accountability, and deep connection to place.

DLNR has acknowledged it cannot manage all public trust lands alone, yet there is no clear legal pathway for long-term community co-management. HB2218 fills that gap by explicitly authorizing community co-management agreements and clearly defining shared roles and responsibilities.

This bill builds on proven success, strengthens the State’s public trust obligations, and empowers communities to mālama the places they love.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2218.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:43:53 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Nakachi	Moana Ohana	Support	In Person

Comments:

Strong Support of HB2218.



P.O. Box 8637, Honolulu, HI 96830 808.468.1686 www.mgfhawaii.org

TESTIMONY OF THE MOANALUA GARDENS FOUNDATION  
To the House Committee on Education  
February 10, 2026  
**In Support of**

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

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

The Moanalua Gardens Foundation submits testimony in **strong support of HB 2218.**

The Moanalua Gardens Foundation (MGF) was Founded in 1970 to preserve and perpetuate the history, native culture, and environment of Hawai'i through education, stewardship and our kuleana in Kamananui and Kamaniki valleys, known more broadly as Moanalua Valley. As part of the original Damon estate, sold in 2008, we maintain our kuleana in Moanalua Valley through an MOA relationship with The Department of Land and Natural Resources.

DLNR acknowledges that it cannot sustainably manage the public trust lands under its purview alone. We have a long history of working collaboratively with DLNR, other agencies, and our community to work towards beneficial and sustainable goals and outcomes together.

MGF has experienced positive and consistent outcomes in its environmental kuleana because of its partnership with agencies like DLNR. We support any efforts improve access and support partnership like this, that are key for long term mālama 'āina.

The Moanalua Gardens Foundation urges the committee **to pass HB 2218.** Mahalo for your attention and consideration.

*Me ke aloha,*

Ian Keahi Custino  
*Executive Director*

*Moanalua Gardens Foundation*  
ian@mgfhawaii.org



February 9th 2026  
Hearing Date: February 10th, 2026; 9:00 AM  
Committee: WAL

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is **Rafael Bergstrom**, the executive director for **Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i**, and we **strongly support** HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofits.

As a nonprofit with a **mission to inspire communities to care for coastlines**, we firmly believe in the powerful opportunity there is to expand kuleana and connectivity with our natural world through this bill. Across Hawai'i and beyond, we have partnered with local communities who know their 'āina intimately in ways that allow nuanced integration of conservation, stewardship, and culture.

There is a long history of community collaboration and working with DLNR to accomplish shared goals, but the formalization of these partnerships in efficient and meaningful ways is lacking. The idea is not to replace the efforts of DLNR, but to give added and more detailed tools to regions that often lack the state resources to fully meet these shared objectives of active stewardship. There are a growing number of success stories around the state from CBSFA's to simple adopt-a-park programs that empower communities to actively engage in needed care projects.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our 'āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust 'āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

With Aloha & Appreciation,

Rafael Bergstrom,

Executive Director, Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i

# TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2218

## Relating to Community Co-Management

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

My name is Joel Guy, and I am the Executive Director of The Hanalei Initiative. The Hanalei Initiative is a community-based nonprofit on Kaua'i's North Shore. We work in partnership with other non-profits in our moku, residents, cultural practitioners, and public agencies to support the long-term stewardship of our natural and cultural resources, and the quality of life for our community. Our work centers on community safety, mālama 'āina, and strengthening systems that protect place—especially in rural communities that experience heavy visitor impacts. We are also the organization that operates the Haena State Park Access Management System for Hui Makaainana O Makana, the non-profit that currently holds the State Parks permit for the access and cultural management of Haena State Park

The Hanalei Initiative strongly supports HB2218. It is an important step forward in creating a clear and practical pathway for qualified community-based organizations to have these special relationships with the DLNR to ensure the protection of our natural resources for the long term. In our experience, the best outcomes for public trust resources occur when communities are empowered to contribute meaningfully to stewardship, monitoring, education, and day-to-day care of place—while agencies retain their authority and oversight responsibilities in partnership with clear objectives.

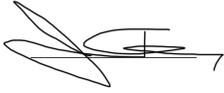
This bill helps address a long-standing gap; community groups are often asked to take on significant responsibilities to ensure the protection and sustainability of public resources, but without a clear structure, durable agreement mechanism, or stable framework that recognizes the legitimacy and value of long-term community stewardship. HB2218 provides an approach that is both responsible and grounded in aloha 'āina.

Community co-management:

- Strengthens mālama 'āina and place-based stewardship
- Supports culturally-informed management and education
- Builds local capacity for monitoring and resource protection
- Improves agency effectiveness through trusted partnerships
- Creates clearer accountability for all parties

The Hanalei Initiative respectfully urges the Legislature to pass HB2218 and to continue supporting policies that recognize the vital role that communities can play in stewarding Hawai'i's public trust resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your leadership on this important issue.



Joel Guy  
Executive Director



[www.hanaleiinitiative.org](http://www.hanaleiinitiative.org)

(808) 635-2074

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:51:48 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Scott Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is Scott Crawford, from Hāna, Maui. I am submitting testimony as an individual, but I have previously worked with Kipahulu Ohana on the establishment of the Kipahulu CBSFA, and in my current role I support several communities who have active partnerships and co-management relationships with DLNR.

I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

Several marine area designations and other arrangements exist within the state that provide for community place-based organizations to partner with the state for management, and many communities are actively managing their areas. But to date there has been no mechanism to formalize these relationships, establish MOUs or other co-management agreements, define roles and responsibilities, etc.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our ‘āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a tool to enable Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust ‘āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha pumehana

Scott Crawford

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 8:50:35 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2218, which would authorize community co-management agreements between the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

The State has an affirmative duty to mālama ‘āina and care for Hawai‘i’s public trust lands and waters. Fulfilling this kuleana requires collective responsibility. As DLNR has long acknowledged, it cannot effectively or sustainably manage all lands and waters on its own.

For decades, grassroots and Native Hawaiian communities across Hawai‘i have actively supported and partnered with DLNR to care for the places we love and call home. Yet despite the growing need and willingness for collaboration, there is no consistent legal pathway for DLNR to enter into true community co-management agreements. Existing tools—such as curatorships, permits, concessions, and CBSFAs—vary widely in structure and purpose and often create administrative delays and management challenges.

Authorizing community co-management agreements is the logical next step toward more effective, place-based stewardship. HB2218 would provide a clear and consistent framework to empower Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our shared public trust ‘āina.

Please support and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,  
**Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy**

**Kalaoa North Kona, Hawai‘i Island**

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 11:47:14 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2218 to allow community groups to co-manage natural areas with the DLNR. DLNR simply does not have the bandwidth to effectively manage all our important natural areas in Hawaii, and needs the help and expertise of local groups intimately involved with those areas.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 4:54:10 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hermina "Mina" Morita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

## Testimony in Strong Support of HB 2218

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mina Morita. I serve as President of the Board of the Hanalei Initiative; however, today I submit testimony in my personal capacity as a Hanalei resident in strong support of House Bill 2218.

I am deeply proud of the work my community—in particular Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana, the lineal descendants of Hā‘ena, Kaua‘i—has undertaken in the stewardship of Hā‘ena State Park and the surrounding nearshore waters in partnership with the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Through careful planning, coordination, and the empowerment of North Shore communities, this collaboration has created an exemplary, place-based model of resource management that can be shared with other visitor-impacted communities across Hawai‘i.

This work reflects nearly three decades of community commitment, preceding my own service as a State Representative, and has continued to flourish through the leadership of Speaker Nadine Nakamura in convening community members, government agencies, and other key stakeholders toward sustainable solutions.

Yet despite this success, existing tools available to the Department of Land and Natural Resources remain limited to short-term revocable permits, concessions, or similar transactional arrangements. These instruments fail to reflect the kuleana embraced by community-based stewards as long-term partners to DLNR and instead create uncertainty that undermines sustained investment in mālama ‘āina.

HB 2218 addresses this gap by explicitly authorizing community co-management agreements between DLNR and qualified community-based organizations, grounded in Native Hawaiian principles of mālama ‘āina and ahupua‘a-based stewardship. These agreements support the preservation of cultural practices, restoration of natural and historical resources, habitat protection, visitor management, and ‘āina-based education.

The DLNR alone cannot sustainably manage Hawai‘i’s public trust resources but as partners with place-based Native Hawaiian and local communities providing essential stewardship,

knowledge, and capacity, hopefully this will achieve better outcomes for the ‘āina. Community co-management therefore helps to fulfill the State’s constitutional responsibilities to protect natural and cultural resources for present and future generations.

By establishing clear qualifications, accountability standards, adaptive management requirements, and defined roles within written co-management agreements, HB 2218 ensures that partnerships are transparent, performance-based, and aligned with community-driven stewardship outcomes.

For communities like Hā‘ena—and many others across the pae ‘āina—this bill represents the next necessary step: moving from short-term, transactional permissions toward durable, trust-based partnerships that reflect and encourage generations of stewardship and responsibility.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 2218.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 5:44:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<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**

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 9:45:31 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaiakahinalii Kaopua- Canonigo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha pumehana Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is Hina Kaopua, from Mānoa, and I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

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.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our ‘āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust ‘āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Hina Kaopua

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:06:49 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Uma Nagendra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members,

I am writing in support of HB2218 as a resident of Wainiha, Kaua'i as well as a biocultural conservation professional employed by the National Tropical Botanical Garden. The establishment of formal community co-management agreements will benefit the State, the community, and the lands themselves.

The State has a responsibility to mālama 'āina, but does not have the resources to devote the care necessary to all of the lands it holds. Having an established process for community co-management of State-held lands will make that more possible.

Community groups such as the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana have already been successfully caring for ancestral lands with only short-term agreements and concessions by the State-- which adds additional red tape, inherent threats of recission, and uncertainty for the future. Mālama 'āina is a generational activity; the type of agreement should reflect that longevity.

While the Hui has paved the way for this type of partnership, establishing a formal process will benefit many other lands and communities. Having an established process will invite other community groups across the pae 'āina to manage state-held lands, further strengthening biocultural conservation, connecting people to place, and assisting the State in its mālama 'āina responsibilities.

Vote YES on HB2218.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:11:28 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I submit this testimony in strong support of H.B. No. 2218, a transformative piece of legislation that finally provides a clear, statutory pathway for true community-based stewardship of our public lands and natural resources. This bill represents a critical shift from a model of state *control* to one of state-community *collaboration*—a shift that is both culturally pono and practically essential.

For generations, the communities living closest to our forests, streams, fisheries, and coastal areas have served as their de facto caretakers. We hold the intergenerational knowledge of these places—the names of the rains, the cycles of the fish, the medicinal plants, and the history of what the land needs to thrive. Yet, too often, we have been sidelined from formal decision-making processes at the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). This has led to frustration, disenfranchisement, and, at times, the degradation of the very resources we seek to protect. Bureaucracy has been a barrier to care.

H.B. No. 2218 directly addresses this by authorizing DLNR to enter into formal Community Co-Management Agreements. This is not about ceding public ownership; it is about empowering the most effective and invested partners the state could ever have. The bill recognizes that the best management is often *hyper-local*.

The establishment of clear qualifications for eligible co-managers is crucial. It ensures that agreements are formed with organized, capable, and dedicated community entities—those with a proven track record of *mālama ʻāina*, whether they are ʻohana-based groups, non-profits, or community associations. This structure brings accountability and legitimacy to both sides of the partnership.

Most significantly, the provision authorizing the disposition of public lands via a co-management agreement is a game-changer. It provides the necessary legal tool for communities to have meaningful, long-term tenure and decision-making authority over the places they are already caring for. This stability is the foundation for successful restoration. You cannot plant a forest for your grandchildren if you have no assurance you'll be able to steward it next year. This enables multi-generational projects and investment.

From my work across the islands, I have seen countless community groups operating in a gray area—volunteering countless hours to clear invasive species, monitor streams, and restore fishponds, all while lacking the formal authority or security to make larger, lasting decisions. This bill validates that work and provides a ladder to greater responsibility and impact.

In conclusion, H.B. No. 2218 is a visionary step toward realizing the principles of aloha ‘āina and mālama ‘āina in our state’s land management system. It leverages the state’s resources and the community’s knowledge, creating a partnership stronger than either could be alone. It is a model for 21st-century resource governance that is rooted in Hawaiian values and proven by community success stories.

I urge you to pass this landmark legislation. Let us empower the hands that are already doing the work of caring for Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Keali‘i Pang, Ph.D.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:28:52 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharde Freitas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha pumehana e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is Sharde Freitas and I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

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.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our ‘āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust ‘āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and **PASS** HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Sharde Freitas

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 11:12:15 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Philip Fernandez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While I support the intent of HB2218, I oppose the bill as written.

Often "community organizations" are composed of a few activist members. Sometimes the organization is only one member or led by a strong individual. Many organizations, probably a majority, over time eventually fail and dissolve, or continue to exist in name only.

For example, in Hawaii there are over 30 designated marine protected areas, including Fisheries Management Areas, Marine Life Conservation Areas, and so on. Most were designated by well-meaning activists, but years and decades later community members are no longer involved. In fact, most marine protected areas do not even have a published management plan and the original intent of the community organization has been forgotten.

For this reason, I strongly oppose this bill.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:05:27 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pam Murphy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “‘āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Pamela Murphy, Kilauea, Kauai

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:22:50 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “‘āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE on WATER AND LAND  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 10, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Room 411

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

My name is Keanu Binney-Medeiros, and I am a Lineal descendant of Kealakekua Bay. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB2218**.

I work directly on the frontlines of resource stewardship as a Digital Media and Research Diver with Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. Our work focuses on documenting marine and coastal resources through underwater research, visual monitoring, and community-based storytelling. Through research diving, I help collect observational data on reef health, species presence, and human-use impacts. Through digital media, I translate that information into educational tools that inform the public, support agency decision-making, and elevate community perspectives. Grounded in mālama 'āina and kuleana to this wahi pana, I also conduct shoreline surveys, help restore anchialine ponds, and stabilize cultural sites.

Through our Adopt-a-Park Agreement, our organization works in partnership with State Parks and the Division of Aquatic Resources to address climate impacts, visitor carrying capacity, habitat degradation, and the protection of cultural and natural resources within Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park and its Marine Life Conservation District.

Despite strong collaboration, existing agreements limit the ability of community partners to respond quickly and effectively to real-time management challenges.

Today, I am testifying in strong support for the following reasons:

1. This measure strengthens community-based co-management, allowing communities who are already doing the work to respond more effectively and in real time to resource threats. This is critical for places like Kealakekua Bay, where impacts can escalate quickly.
2. HB2218 helps leverage community capacity and expertise, ensuring that State agencies are supported by people with place-based knowledge, consistent on-the-ground presence, and long-term commitment to stewardship.

3. This bill improves coordination and trust between agencies and communities, creating clearer roles, shared responsibility, and more efficient decision-making that benefits both resource protection and public access.
4. HB2218 supports the protection of cultural and natural resources, including customary and traditional practices, cultural sites, and native ecosystems that are increasingly vulnerable without adaptive management strategies.

Finally, this measure allows communities to better manage human use, including visitor education, access, and impacts, while supporting the State's constitutional obligation to protect public trust resources for future generations.

My support for this measure is deeply rooted in both my ancestry and my lived experience. Kealakekua Bay is not only where I work, it is my ancestral home, a wahi pana that holds generations of 'ike, practice, and responsibility. The impacts of unmanaged visitation, climate change, and overuse are occurring in real time, directly affecting cultural resources, native ecosystems, and community access.

By supporting HB 2218, you are supporting the people who have long carried the responsibility of caring for this place.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Keanu Binney-Medeiros

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:50:39 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<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.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 1:03:04 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Perle Besserman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Perle Besserman, Oahu

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 1:10:52 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

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Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 1:51:24 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With aloha, Chair and Committee members

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

Please support and pass HB 2218. It is important to consider and take a look at the positive paths which we as a community and the legislature have identified and move forward. It is exciting to see the efforts to build upon our strong communities . To enable a state supported community co-management agreement between DLNR and partners that would strengthen existing efforts and serve to establish a resilient island f place-based practice and sustained care to the work being done.

The legislature has identified grassroots and **lineal descendant** 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 2:04:55 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB2218. I believe it is a good idea for the DLNR to work with those groups which honor Native Hawaiian practices that protect the land and water. This will be good for all of Hawai'i. Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 2:16:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

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Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Keala Fung, Honolulu HI

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 3:17:22 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

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Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

kimdonghyeon

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:28:40 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Giulia Moriondo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill as it will allow for the collaboration between state and community members/organizations which are much needed collaborations. This bill will help pave the way for community members, especially those who are Native Hawaiian to have a more active part in caring for place.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:34:58 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:58:41 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Teri Corpuz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

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Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Sincerely,

Teri Corpuz (Pukalani, Maui)

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 7:29:37 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

Please support HB2218 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.

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

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“rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”,  
“management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the  
authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Thank you

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 7:42:22 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alisha Shanti Chauhan	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha pumehana Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

My name is Alisha Shanti Chauhan, I reside in Kailua, from Toronto, Canada, and I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofits.

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.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our ‘āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust ‘āina.

I have lived and worked for sustaining the waters, lands and biocultural practices in remote Arctic communities as a consultant. Decades ago co-management was established there with the Indigenous Inuvialuit communities. This enabled a fair, easeful and inclusive process to maintain biocultural practices and sustain natural resources. I believe co-management is an effective tool to allow inclusivity of all stakeholders responsible for our 'āina and especially to uphold Native Hawaiian voices that hold longstanding wisdom in sustaining the 'āina.

Please support this longstanding effort, and PASS HB2218 out of your committee.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,  
Alisha Shanti Chauhan



**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 7:49:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Redford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yes to community co-management agreements!

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:37:16 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mele Kaneali'i	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee on Water & Land,

HB 2218 provides long-needed statutory authority to formalize partnerships that communities across Hawai'i have been practicing for decades. Place-based organizations have demonstrated the capacity, commitment, and knowledge to steward public trust resources, yet too often remain constrained by short-term permits or informal arrangements that limit long-term planning, accountability, and sustainability.

By establishing clear qualifications, defined roles, and accountability standards, this measure strengthens public oversight while enabling the State to more effectively fulfill its public trust responsibilities. Authorizing long-term community co-management agreements will improve the stewardship of natural and cultural resources, support education and restoration efforts, and foster more durable and transparent partnerships between the State and community organizations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Mele Kāneali'i

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:55:40 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

Please support HB2218 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.

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour traditional Native Hawaiian concepts of mālama ‘āina and place-based practices for effective management.

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Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kaleiheana Stormcrow, Mountain View

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:20:49 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

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Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:08:27 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<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**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:11:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Water and Land Committee:

Through HB2218, the DLNR 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.

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.

I heartily support this concept and practice!

Mahalo,

Cheryl Ho, Nu‘uanu

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 11:42:26 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha pumehana Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

Having worked with and supported the efforts of KUA Hawaii and the networks it serves, I have seen how effective community organizations are managing the resources of the places they know best. I think DLNR has acknowledged that it cannot on its own mālama ʻāina and care for the public trust lands and waters of Hawaiʻi that fall under its jurisdiction. That is why I strongly support HB2218 to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawaiʻi Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawaiʻi-based nonprofits. Mahalo for ensuring that this bill is passed.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 4:26:58 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jodi Rodar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

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Please support HB2218 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.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jodi Rodar

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 7:41:30 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark Hixon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a professional marine biologist who has studied Hawaii's coral reef fishes since the 1970s, I assure you that the loss of traditional fishery management practices has resulted in extreme overfishing near major population centers, including nearly all of Oahu. A return to community-based management offers some hope of reversing these dangerous trends.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 7:50:17 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Frederick Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB2218 – Community Co-Management Agreements  
House Committee on Water and Land (WAL)  
February 10, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.**

**Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee,**

**My name is Frederick Smith, and I am a master’s student at UH Hilo focused on marine science and policy. I live in the Kealakekua ahupua‘a in South Kona, Hawai‘i Island.**

**I am writing in strong support of HB2218. This measure provides long-needed statutory clarity for DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements with qualified Hawai‘i-based nonprofit organizations—an essential tool for effective, place-based stewardship across the islands.**

**For decades, communities across Hawai‘i have stepped forward to monitor, restore, and mālama the lands and waters they depend on, often filling gaps created by limited state resources. Existing community-led management efforts in places such as Hā‘ena, Miloli‘i, and Kīpahulu demonstrate that collaborative stewardship strengthens resource protection, supports cultural practices, and builds long-term ecosystem resilience.**

**However, as highlighted during the Board of Land and Natural Resources meeting on July 25, 2025, the absence of a clear statutory mechanism has forced DLNR to rely on inappropriate tools, such as concession agreements, which are ill-suited to stewardship, undermine long-standing partnerships, and conflict with the intent of community-based management.**

**HB2218 directly addresses this policy gap.**

**The bill reflects extensive collaboration among community networks, KUA, and multiple DLNR divisions, and it establishes a consistent legal framework for shared management that:**

- strengthens ecological resilience,**
- honors cultural responsibility and local expertise, and**
- advances the State’s public trust obligations.**

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

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.**

**Frederick Smith**

**82-5996 Napo‘opo‘o Road**

**Captain Cook (Ka‘awaloa), HI 96704**

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 8:27:09 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor McKenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

As a Kanaka ʻŌiwi, I ask that you **support HB2218**.

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour traditional Native Hawaiian concepts of mālama ʻāina and place-based practices for effective management.

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

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

**Please support HB2218** 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

TK McKenzie

Honolulu, O‘ahu

February 9, 2026

Committee on Water & Land  
Conference Room 411  
State Capitol  
415 South Beratania Street

Re: Testimony in support of HB2218

My name is Kaikea Nakachi and I **strongly supports HB2218**.

As a kanaka maoli born and raised on Hawai'i Island, I have both the traditional knowledge of my kūpuna who sustainably managed themselves for generations, and the experience to see numerous recent tragedies that resulted from inadequate management when 'ike kūpuna is forgotten or worse, ignored. I also hold a master's degree in tropical conservation biology and environmental management and work closely with many community-led organizations that conduct mālama 'āina work. I can proudly and confidently say that the most successful management in Hawai'i today exists when state agencies listen and "allow" people of place to be involved. Unfortunately, these cases are few and far between, and often only result from decades of hard work and resilience on behalf of communities. I strongly support adding authority to streamline and increase the ability for state agencies to activate community participation and involvement.

I have staunchly supported community-led efforts across the pae'āina and will continue to do so. It is my hope that by increasing co-management we can empower communities to have more say in how their ancestral places are managed. The best decisions for water and land resources will be made by those with the generational knowledge and love for these places. We cannot afford to skip over or ignore centuries of experience stewarding land. Through co-management with appropriate community-led organizations, people of place can be empowered to return traditional values and practices, which will only result in positive impacts to their associated resources.

I urge the committee on water on land to support HB2218, and promise that people, places, and resources will all be better off because of it.

Mahalo nui,  
Kaikea Nakachi

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 8:46:11 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leilani Mayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Leilani, Wailua

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:00:07 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tam Nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

'O wau o Tam Nguyen.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 2218. Though I am submitting testimony in my individual capacity in support of HB 2218, I am also a Project Manager for the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund where I assist the City and County of Honolulu in acquiring conservation lands via a special fund established by Honolulu voters in 2007 using 0.5% of real property tax revenue. In order for there to be effective community-led management of 'aina, there must be a mechanism that allows the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enter into agreements with qualified co-manager organizations.

Native Hawaiian-serving and Kanaka oiwi-led organizations are most qualified to lead bio-cultural restoration efforts with their long understanding of best practices, adaptive management planning, and long proven commitment to aloha 'aina. This ensures that land management is both effective and long-term, which is in the best interests of 'aina, community, and the state.

HB 2218 defines what a qualified co-manager is and ensures that the State can properly fulfill its kuleana to manage lands and see that they are returned to bio-cultural restoration. Mahalo for hearing this testimony.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:03:27 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breon Michel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

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HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “‘āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Breon Michel, Kula HI

Statement of  
**Doreen Wong**  
before the  
**Committee on Water and Land**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026**  
**9:00 AM**  
**State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference**

In consideration of  
**HB 2218**  
**RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Water and Land Committee,

I'm Doreen Wong, an O'ahu resident working on ocean and climate solutions. I am writing in strong support of HB2218 to support community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofits.

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 requires collective kuleana (responsibility). As DLNR has long acknowledged, it alone cannot effectively and sustainably manage all the lands and waters.

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 challenges.

The logical next step to more effectively and sustainably manage our 'āina is to authorize community co-management agreements as a new tool to enable more Native Hawaiian and local community groups to partner with DLNR and mālama our public trust 'āina.

Please support this longstanding effort and PASS HB2218 from your committee.

Mahalo,



Doreen Wong  
O'ahu Resident

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:18:38 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leo Nahe Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “‘āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Leo Nahe, Nu'uano

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:23:21 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyssandra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislatures,

My name is Alyssandra from Kāne‘ohe, O‘ahu, testifying in my own individual capacity, and I strongly support this measure to authorize community co-management agreements between the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Under the Hawai‘i State Constitution, the State has an affirmative duty to “conserve and protect Hawaii’s natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall promote the development and utilization of these resources in a manner consistent with their conservation and in furtherance of the self-sufficiency of the State. All public natural resources are held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people.”

Caring for our biotic and abiotic landscape necessitates a collective effort that has been recognized by most state, county, local, and even federal agencies. Given the human and financial limitations of DLNR, they alone cannot effectively and sustainably manage all land from ma uka to ma kai in Hawai‘i. Instances of DLNR collaborating with local community groups, such as in Hā‘ena, Kaua‘i have proven to be successful, enriching our communities and our ‘āina.

Authorizing DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements is the logical next step to help DLNR by getting more mālama ‘āina practitioners “on the ground” to care for our ‘āina, and for current and future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this matter.

Mālama,

Alyssandra

Ano ai ke aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land

Please let the following serve as testimony for myself, **Conall Kahaka'ioikamalie Ravenscraft**, resident and generational lineal descendant of Kealakekua, Hawaii.

I am speaking in **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2218**, which authorizes the Department of Land of Natural Resources to enter into community co-managent agreements, establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers, and furthermore authorizes the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

In my role and capacity serving in Field Operations for Hoala Kealakekua Nui Inc. I can attest first-hand to the impact and benefit community co-management of public lands - particularly in our instance as an Adopt-a-Park Agreement holder at Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park - has had in our wahi, enhancing our community efforts to steward and address impacts on our rich ecosystem, cultural and historical sites, as well as working within the Kealakekua Bay Marine Life Conservation District.

Strong collaboration between our organization, community, and agency partners such as the Division of Aquatic Resources, Hawaii Tourism Authority, the Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and including other grassroots and community-based organizations has produced positive efforts to address climate impacts, visitor carrying capacity, habitat degradation, and the protection of cultural and natural resources within Kealakekua Bay SHP and its MLCD. However, existing agreements yet come with limitations to the ability of community partners to respond quickly and effectively to real-time management challenges.

To date, it is with great effort that we struggle to manage environmental and human use impacts that are causing rapid decline in the health of our wahi pana.

HB2218 includes provisions which allow organizations such as HKN Inc.

1. to support the State's **kuleana** to uphold constitutional mandates that protect access, resources, and efforts to manage human use by community-lead partnerships, creating avenues for us to be better informed in the arenas of advocacy and policy making, and improving coordination and trust between agencies and communities, creating clearer roles, shared responsibility, and more efficient decision-making to the benefit of both resource protection and public access.
2. leverage resources between community and agency partnerships, and build trust to support systemic changes needed to meet deliverables and benchmarks as community stewards. This provision ensures that State agencies are supported by people with place-based knowledge, consistent on-the-ground presence, and long-term commitment as stewards.
3. 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 and apply adaptive-management strategies to foreseen and unforeseen circumstances faced by communities participating in co-management.

HB2218's intent serves the protection and preservation of the customary and traditional practices exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes, which further align with adaptive and transformative efforts to protect and cultivate cultural, historical, and environmental resources - all intrinsically intertwined - with the application of traditional ecological knowledge to contemporary resource management practices.

I would like to thank this committee for hearing this measure, and voice my strong support for HB2218. I further urge the passage and recommendation of this measure to the next committee.

Me ke aloha haahaa. Nou no ka pono,

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Conall Ravenscraft".

Conall Kahaka'ioikamalie Ravenscraft

Napoopoo, Ka Hema o Kona, Hawaii o Keawe

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:26:41 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am writing in **strong support of HB2218**, which authorizes the DLNR to enter into community co-management agreements for "preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes; preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources; rehabilitation, vegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats; management of parking and visitor activities; and ‘āina education."

We know that native Hawaiians and other generational ‘ohana best know how to steward our lands, but our state and county governments' "ownership" have left them mismanaged for decades. However, community–government partnerships currently exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements. The lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness.

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendent 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."

Please choose to protect our ‘āina and pass HB2218.  
Mahalo for your consideration,

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:32:21 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
madison kearsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I suport this bill.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 11:03:51 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

support

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 11:51:55 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hayley Peter-Contesse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

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Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Hayley Peter-Contesse, Makaha

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:00:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kekoa Alip	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

*I fully support HB2218.*

*Mahalo,*

*Kekoa Alip*

*Kailua-Kona, HI*

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:46:10 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please SUPPORT HB2218 that codifies the examples of government collaboration with grassroots and descendant communities. This is the direction our shared management of 'āina should be heading to honor traditional Kanaka Maoli practices of mālama 'āina and traditional customary practices that have been proven effective in balancing our competing priorities for land and resources in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for introducing this important bill and I hope it passes this session.

Mahalo,

Stacey Alapai, Maui

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:53:14 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

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Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Molly Mamaril

Kaimukī, O‘ahu

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 2:11:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Annalise Hart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

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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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Annalise Hart

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 2:24:55 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

I write today in support of HB2218.

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks to enter into community co-management agreements with community-based organizations who honour 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony today.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 2:55:23 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Lamson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House Representatives in the WAL Committee,

Apologies for the belated submission, but just found out about this hearing. I absolutely and **wholeheartedly support this bill and initiative to bolster community-based management efforts across the state.** Please pass HB2218 out of committee on 2/10 and onto the next step. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Best,

*Megan (Lamson) Leatherman*

Honalo, HI

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 3:35:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support this bill for it authorizes the disposition of PUBLIC LANDS by a community co-management agreement.

Thank you so much,

Elizabeth Nelson

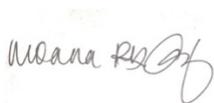
**Testimony in Support of HB2218  
House Committee on Water & Land  
Position: Support**

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

My name is Moana Ching and I am submitting this written testimony in **strong support of HB2218**, which authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications for eligibility for community co-managers. I have worked professionally within communities of place and practice for over 20 years to support ‘āina-based initiatives. Those community-based efforts were, and continue to be, led by community leaders upholding their kuleana to mālama...their privilege to serve ‘āina. In all my experiences, I have seen communities negotiate and navigate collaborative spaces with government and non-government partners to successfully steward ancestral lands and waters...normally with no formal mechanism to codify formal roles, responsibilities, expectations, and conflict resolution processes. HB2218 would lay the foundations for equitable agreements to provide safe and uniform boundaries across DLNR: community partners and ensure the health and well-being of ‘āina and those with ancestral ties with place can formalize their partnership with the Department.

Please accept this testimony in strong support of HB2218. While brief, my testimony is sent with the spirit of numerous kūpuna and the commitment of many to use this critical tool to continue their kuleana to mālama. Mahalo for your leadership and service.

Me ke aloha,



Moana P.K. Ching  
Hawai‘i  
96720

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 4:29:06 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charlene Casserley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of Committee,

The legislature has identified grassroots and lineal descendant 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.”

HB2218 seeks 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 Hawai‘i State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes.

Currently, community–government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. Through HB2218, 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.

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.

HB2218 authorizes the department of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements for “preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes”, “preservation, protection, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and environmental resources”, “rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and preservation of native species and habitats”, “management of parking and visitor activities”, and “āina education.”

Qualifications for eligible community co-managers would be established as well as the authorization of the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement.

Please support HB2218 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Charlene Casserley

Kula, Maui

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:12:33 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jocelyn Grandinetti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

‘O Jocelyn ko‘u inoa, no Wai‘alae Nui mai au. Aloha, My name is Jocelyn Whei-Tsi Grandinetti and I am born and raised in the ‘ili ‘āina of Wai‘alae Nui. I currently work as an environmental educator at a local nonprofit here on O‘ahu, and through my work I have become starkly aware of the immense need of our keiki to learn and care about their places and be empowered with the civic powers to mālama the 'āina, wai, and kai that sustain them.

Growing research has deemed community comanagement as an important and effective tool to help empower communities to have a stake in their local natural resources that they live and experience daily. When government agencies lack capacity to thoroughly monitor resources throughout the entire island chain and local communities who have knowledge of place are not given the rights to collectively care for and manage their local resources, entire ecologies are put at risk of being over exploited, polluted, and mismanaged.

Of course, it is important to recognize that there are many communities today that have become quite disconnected from their natural environments, especially in more urban areas. However, this should not discount the communities that remain in deep connection to place that are willing to put in the work to care for their local resources in comanagement schemes. Normalizing and enabling comanagement on a broader level could also potentially increase the stakes of other communities to care for local resources because it gives them an avenue of meaningful participation in civic engagement, providing a model for ahupua'a-based management to grow throughout the islands.

I am in strong support of HB2218 to enable a future of collaborative care throughout the islands. Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

**HB-2218**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 7:41:58 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/10/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brissa Christophersen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB2218, which would authorize DLNR to enter into "community co-management agreements" with qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofit groups both mauka and makai. As someone who works in the conservation field here in Hawai'i, I am a witness to the success that our community co-managed fisheries (CBSFAs, loko i'a systems, etc.) for our more ocean-facing ecosystems and I have full faith that this would be welcomed in mauka areas as well. For conservation to really work here in Hawai'i, the community needs to be on board and have buy-in to the way that management is carried out and what better way to do that than to build trust between government entities and the nonprofit groups that are the boots-on-the-ground forces that care about our 'āina.