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

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Monday, March 23, 2026
1:05 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2361, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE KANEOHE BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

House Bill 2361, House Draft 1 requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to provide administrative support to the Kaneohe Bay Regional Council (Council); requires the chairperson of the Council to be selected by the voting members from among all voting and nonvoting members on an annual and rotating basis; and requires the Council to meet quarterly. **The Department supports this bill and offers the following comments.**

The Council was established to serve as a community-based advisory body to the Department on the management, use, and protection of Kaneohe Bay. The Council provides a vital forum for stakeholder input, coordinating the perspectives of residents, cultural practitioners, environmental groups, fishers, and commercial operators to guide implementation of the Kaneohe Bay Master Plan and ensure the Bay's sustainable use.

The Department supports this measure because it strengthens the Council's capacity to fulfill its advisory role. Providing administrative support will improve meeting coordination and record-keeping, ensuring consistent stakeholder engagement. The annual rotating chair system will promote balanced leadership and diverse representation, while the quarterly meeting requirement will maintain regular communication between the Department and the community on issues vital to the stewardship of Kaneohe Bay. These changes align with the Department's commitment to collaborative and transparent management of Hawaii's natural and cultural resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.