



Ko`olau Foundation

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

April 6, 2026

To: Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
And Members, Committee on Ways and Means

From: Mahealani Cypher, President
Ko`olau Foundation

Re: H.B. 2361, HD1, SD1 – Relating to the Kaneohe Bay Regional Council

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation supports H.B. 2361, HD1, SD1, which assigns the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to provide administrative support for the Kaneohe Bay Regional Council, rotates the chairperson of this council, and requires quarterly meetings.

The Ko`olau Foundation advocates for the preservation of Hawaiian culture, history, heritage and practices. This council serves as the guardian of marine resources and usage of this important bay, and this bill would engage all of its voting members directly in its leadership roles.

Also important is to have DLNR provide the critical administrative support that can help this council maintain its effectiveness as a citizen advisory group to the department and the State of Hawai`i.

We urge your favorable consideration and passage of this bill.

Mahalo nui for this opportunity to share our mana`o.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

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

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, April 7, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

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

House Bill 2361, House Draft 1, Senate 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.