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OFFICE OF PLANNING
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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Friday, February 13, 2026, 8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

in consideration of
HB 2490
RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE.

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) offers the following **comments** on HB 2490 which establishes a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the preservation of Mantokuji Bay and exempts the Pilot Program from certain regulatory requirements.

OPSD concurs that regional shoreline management is an appropriate approach to address coastal hazards in order to protect beaches, dunes, and access to public resources, and to develop proactive and long-term strategies to reduce the risk of coastal hazards to shoreline properties and infrastructure. OPSD has completed multiple phases of its long-term Regional Shoreline Management Initiative, including developing a potential methodology for delineating shoreline regions for adaptation planning purposes, and consultations with relevant State, County and Federal agencies.

If the committee is inclined to move this measure forward, OPSD will assist DBEDT with planning and stakeholder coordination for the Coastal Resilience Pilot Program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Written Statement of
DR. PATRICK SULLIVAN
FOUNDER & CEO, OCEANIT

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, February 13, 2026
8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 423 and Videoconference

In Support of
HB2490 HD1 RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE

To: Chair Representative Greggor Ilagan, Vice Chair Representative Ikaika Hussey,
and Members of the Committee
From: Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Founder & CEO, OCEANIT
Re: Testimony in Support of HB2490 HD1

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

Oceanit Laboratories, Inc. strongly supports HB2490 HD1, which establishes a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the restoration and preservation of Mantokuji Bay, Paia, Maui.

Oceanit is a forty-year-old Hawaii-based science and engineering firm with deep experience in coastal resilience, infrastructure protection, and environmental monitoring. We have seen firsthand how Hawaii's current parcel-by-parcel regulatory approach fails our coastlines. Sediment transport, wave energy, and shoreline dynamics do not respect property boundaries. When individual landowners harden their shoreline in isolation, they often accelerate erosion on neighboring properties and degrade the very ecosystems that provide natural coastal protection. The result across Hawaii has been decades of piecemeal interventions that make the overall problem worse.

HB2490 HD1 represents a fundamentally better approach. By treating Mantokuji Bay as the natural coastal cell it is, approximately one mile of interconnected shoreline bounded by headlands, this bill enables the kind of comprehensive, science-based intervention that coastal engineers and geologists have long advocated for. The bill's streamlined regulatory framework addresses a real and critical barrier: overlapping state and county jurisdictions and rigid permitting

criteria that were never designed for regional coastal management make it effectively impossible to implement bay-wide solutions under current law.

The urgency is clear. The Mantokuji Bay coastline is retreating at approximately 1.6 feet per year. Ancestral burials at the Mantokuji Temple, the oldest Soto Zen Buddhist temple in the State, have already fallen into the ocean. The Hana Highway, the sole transportation corridor for northeast Maui communities, is increasingly exposed to coastal hazards. These losses are irreversible, and the window for effective intervention is narrowing.

Critically, HB2490 HD1 maintains all federal regulatory requirements, protects traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights under the State Constitution, and preserves marine life and water quality protections. The bill does not eliminate oversight; it consolidates and streamlines it so that meaningful coastal restoration can actually proceed. The annual reporting requirement and five-year sunset ensure legislative accountability and create a replicable model that can inform future statewide coastal management policy.

Proposed Amendment: Native Hawaiian Burial Treatment

We respectfully request one amendment to address concerns raised by the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD). The bill's current inadvertent discovery protocol under Section 2(c)(3) could subject Native Hawaiian burial discoveries to the abbreviated process under HAR §13-300-40, which provides only a two-to-three-day decision window with limited descendant and burial council involvement. SHPD has recommended language consistent with HAR §13-300-33, which provides for Island Burial Council authority over preservation-in-place or relocation decisions, full lineal and cultural descendant consultation, and a 45-day determination period.

We ask the Committee to add a new subsection requiring that any Native Hawaiian skeletal remains discovered during pilot program activities receive the full protections of burial council oversight and descendant consultation, with work stoppage until the burial council renders its determination. This amendment would also clarify that documented burials within the Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission cemetery fall under separate Department of Health jurisdiction. Proposed amendment language has been provided to the Committee for its consideration.

This amendment strengthens the bill by proactively addressing cultural protection concerns while preserving the streamlined framework essential to the pilot program's success.

We strongly urge the Committee to pass HB2490 HD1 with the proposed burial treatment amendment.

LEGISLATIVE BILL VERBAL TESTIMONY

Aloha:.....

I am Eric Moto, president of Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission's administrative board and I stand by my submitted written testimony, but I do want to add further emphasis to my call for assistance and support.

In the past year, a computer science teacher from Maui High School and a handful of his students have conducted drone observations and collected data on the shoreline erosion at Mantokuji Bay. They have completed three observations, and after their latest visit in January I received a text from one of the students asking whether we excavated the portion of shoreline that was noticeably missing. I had to explain that the damage was all due to the winter waves.

The scope and scale of damage is significant and the rapid progression of erosion, as witnessed by the high school student, can seem unbelievable, but it is all very real.

Mantokuji is very grateful to the State and Local officials that approved our temporary sandbag structure allowed under current rules and restrictions, but our property loss and the threats to our temple structures continue. This bill will help Mantokuji to continue to work under the guidance and supervision of our expert coastal engineer consultants, in collaboration with government departments and agencies like DLNR, OCCL, and the Land Board to work on other alternate, safe and sound, nature-based, long-term solutions to not only restore and protect our Mantokuji Bay, but also to serve as a project that can be a model for how to better serve your oceanfront constituents throughout the state suffering similar threats.

I offer a humble please and thank you for your support of House Bill 2490. Mahalo

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025

RE: HB 2490 – RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE

Hearing: 2.13.2026, 8:30am

Position: STRONGLY SUPPORT

My name is Cathleen Murayama, and I am a member of Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission. I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2490, which would establish a pilot program to protect Mantokuji Bay.

My family has been part of the Mantokuji congregation since its founding in 1906. My grandfather, Sokyo Ueoka, was the founding minister of Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission. For over a century, this sacred ground has been the final resting place for our community's ancestors. The sandy beach I grew up cherishing is no longer there to share with my grandsons, 8 years and 2 years.

Today, I watch in horror as the ocean steals what we have always considered eternal. Each year the winter swells continue to claim gravestones that once stood in neat rows and eats away at the bank. This January, it finally claimed an ironwood tree on the bank that is no longer. The remains of our kupuna – our grandparents and great-grandparents – wash into the sea. More than property loss – it is a spiritual crisis that cuts to the heart of who we are as a community.

This crisis extends far beyond our temple. The entire Mantokuji Bay shoreline is eroding – threatening homeowners, the Hana Highway, and the habitat where the endangered sea turtles rest. We learned that protecting just our property will not work. The bay is a single natural ecosystem, and it must be restored as a whole.

We have tried for years to address this through existing regulatory processes, but those processes have not produced a long-term solution – only sandbags holding back the sea. Meanwhile, with every winter swell, the shoreline retreats another foot, then another. We cannot wait any longer!

HB 2490 offers a path forward. It takes a comprehensive, bay-wide approach to coastal restoration while maintaining protections for Native Hawaiian rights and the environment. This is not about just our temple – it is about restoring the entire bay for the benefit of everyone who lives here, visits here, and depends on this shoreline.

I urge you to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Cathleen Murayama
Member
Paia Mantokuj Soto Zen Mission

My name is Roberta Arita and I am a member of the Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission. I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2490 which would establish a pilot program to protect Mantokuji Bay.

My grandfather, Sokyo Ueoka, was the founding minister of Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission. For over a century, the Mantokuji graveyard has been the final resting place for our community's ancestors. The white sandy beach boarding the property which our family and the community enjoyed fishing, swimming, tin boat racing, learning to dive off "diving rock," and picking pipipi and opihi are now just cherished memories of our childhood.

Today, I watch in fear at what the ocean will and has taken from Mantokuji. It has taken rows of graves and the monument of headstones collected after the 1946 tsunami which is only preserved in a black and white photo taken by Ansel Adams, "Buddhist Grave Markers and Rainbow, Maui, Hawaii," 1956. This loss of graves is a crisis that cuts to the heart of who we are as a spiritual refuge and community. When I returned to Maui in 2005, there was 25 feet from the temple to the shoreline. There is now maybe 15 feet. And we are now told we are losing over a foot each year.

This crisis extends beyond our temple grounds. The entire Mantokuji Bay shoreline is eroding, threatening surrounding homeowners, the Hana Highway and the habitat of the endangered sea turtles so protecting just our property will not work. The bay is one natural system and must be restored as one.

We have worked for years to address this through existing regulatory processes, but these costly efforts have not produced a long-term solution. Despite the sandbags, only allowed for a three-year period, the rising ocean continues to erode the shoreline with every winter swell. We are also losing trees and foliage which help to protect the shoreline. We cannot wait any longer. We need your help.

HB 2490 offers a path forward. It takes a comprehensive bay-wide approach to coastal restoration while maintaining protections for Native Hawaiian rights and the environment. This is not about saving just our temple, it is about restoring the entire bay for the benefit of the Paia Community, everyone who lives here, visits here and depends on the shoreline. I urge you to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Roberta Arita

HB-2490-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:15:47 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith Matoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In my many years of living in Paia, Maui, I have seen the drastic effects of ocean erosion of the bay and the threats to the graves and future existence of the temple. Each winter tides brings the ocean closer.

I strongly support HB 2490 which may provide a relief and a way to preserve and restore the bay.

Committee on Economic Development and Technology
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

RE: HB 2490 – RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE

Hearing: Friday, February 13, 2026

Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Ross Matoi. My mother is an Ueoka and my great-great-grandfather founded the Paia Mantokuji church on Maui over 100 years ago.

Growing up, the church was a constant part of our family life. Besides the regular services, there were the Obon festivals, the New Years festivals, blessings, bazaars, and weddings. Then there were the family events: birthday parties, graduation parties, mochi pounding, just to name a few. All were held at the church. I have family members who were married in that church. I also have family members who are buried in the church graveyard.

The first reverend I can remember was my uncle, Shuko Ueoka. Even though he served many years ago, he's the one I have the clearest memories of. Since his passing in 1990, we have had many reverends come and go, but the church was always there.

Anyone who has lived on Maui for any length of time knows the Paia Mantokuji church. They may not know it by name, but they know "the church with the big bell by the sea". They've likely been to our Obon festival during the summer and danced around our wooden Yagura, which is the last of its kind on Maui. If they live in Paia, they will know about the bell that rings 108 times at midnight on New Years. They may have prayed at the church. They may have mourned. The church has become a part of their history as much as they have become a part of its history.

In school we were taught about the history of Hawaii. Most of what we learned came from books. A small fraction came from pictures. The vast majority of that is lost to time because there was no one to help preserve it. This bill is a step to preserve a piece of the history of Maui. Please help us to do so before the Paia Mantokuji becomes another paragraph in a history book.

Sincerely,

Ross Matoi

HB-2490-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:21:36 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grant Matoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Grant Matoi, my family founded the Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission in 1906. Since then, the mission has been a spiritual home for community members and their families.

Today, shoreline erosion is threatening to claim both the church and adjacent graveyard. It pains me to see the very ground being washed away from under the church and gravestones. I plead with this committee to pass HB 2490 so that we can save our interned ancestors and the historic church that watches over them.

Thank You,

Grant Matoi

HB-2490-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 5:14:40 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Priscilla Matoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Priscilla Matoi, I am submitting my testimony in favor of this Bill. I have been a member of the church for several years. During that time I had the best day of my life there, when I got married at the church.

My husband's family founded the church more than a hundred years ago, the cultural significance of the church and the benefits to the community are unique. There is so much historic value of Paia Montokuji Zen Soto Mission and the surrounding Bay. Please help us save the church from further erosion. Thank you