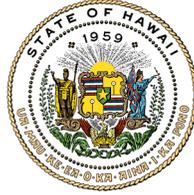


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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 House Committee on  
WATER & LAND

Thursday, February 05, 2026  
09:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2490  
RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE

House Bill 2490 proposes to establish a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) for the preservation of Mantokuji Bay. The bill would exempt the pilot program from multiple state and county regulatory requirements and require the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) to conduct a streamlined historic preservation review. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) has significant concerns with this approach and offers the following comments.**

While the Department supports comprehensive coastal resilience planning for Mantokuji Bay, this bill would waive essential environmental and land-use protections and shift substantive shoreline decision-making away from the regulatory agencies charged with protecting public trust resources.

The Department recognizes the urgent and complex erosion issues on the north shore of Maui, which threaten the historic Mantokuji Sōtō Mission in Pā'ia and its associated cemetery. In response to these immediate risks, the Department issued Emergency Conservation District Use Permit MA 21-10 on May 12, 2021, authorizing the temporary placement of erosion control measures to stabilize the shoreline while long-term mitigation strategies were explored.

Since that time, the Department has remained in regular communication with the Mission's consultants and has conducted site visits. Photos from September 12, 2024, inspection demonstrating the severity of erosion at the Bay are attached to this testimony. Acknowledging the ongoing and evolving nature of the threat, the Department authorized expansions of the original emergency structure and extensions of both the emergency permit and the associated revocable

permit for use of State lands. Both permits are currently set to expire in May 2026. The Department has not yet received a long-term mitigation plan or permit application for review.

The Department supports the development of a comprehensive coastal resilience strategy for Mantokuji Bay and agrees that effective remediation should address the bay as a natural coastal cell rather than on a parcel-by-parcel basis. However, the Department does not believe that the State should waive its regulatory oversight over public trust resources by exempting any future coastal resilience plan from compliance with Chapter 183C, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), relating to Conservation Districts; Chapter 205A, HRS, relating to Coastal Zone Management; and Chapter 343, HRS, relating to Environmental Review. These statutes are foundational to the State's responsibility to ensure environmental protection, public participation, and informed decision-making.

House Bill 2490 also requires SHPD to conduct a streamlined historic preservation review of the proposed program. This is difficult to commit to without first knowing the scope, scale, and specific impacts of the measures that would be proposed under the pilot program, as well as whether sufficient resources would be available to support such an expedited review.

The Department has no objection to DBEDT taking a coordinating or leadership role in the development of a coastal resilience program for Mantokuji Bay. However, DBEDT is not a regulatory agency, and decisions regarding land use within the Conservation District should remain with the Board of Land and Natural Resources, consistent with existing law and the State's public trust obligations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



Figure 1 Sandbags used for temporary erosion control at Mantokuji Bay



Figure 2 Erosion fronting the cemetery at Mantokuji Bay



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

**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846  
Fax: (808) 587-2824  
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

**LATE**

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**  
Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

in consideration of  
**HB 2490**  
**RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE.**

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

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 appreciates the intent of HB 2490 and 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.



**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Meia o Ke Kalana o Maui

**JOSIAH K. NISHITA**  
Managing Director

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

TO: Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor  
John Kaponō'ai Molitau, Director of 'Ōiwi Resources

DATE: February 4, 2026

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB2490, RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure establishing a five-year coastal resilience pilot program for Mantokuji Bay in Pā'ia, Maui. The intent and overall framework of this bill aligns closely with our strategic mission to steward natural and cultural resources through mālama 'āina, cultural integrity, and intergenerational responsibility. This pilot program presents an important opportunity to demonstrate how comprehensive coastal resilience efforts can protect cultural sites, infrastructure, and natural systems simultaneously.

For Maui—where erosion on that increasingly threatens iwi kūpuna, wahi pana, and community access—this measure reflects the type of coordinated, culturally grounded response that communities have long called for.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Natural and cultural resources are inseparable. Mantokuji Bay exemplifies this reality. Accelerated coastal erosion has resulted not only in environmental degradation, but in the loss of iwi kūpuna, damage to wahi pana, and growing threats to the Pā'ia Mantokuji—an irreplaceable cultural and spiritual site with statewide significance.
2. At the county level, the Department has been actively engaged in responding to erosion-related cultural impacts, including coordination on shoreline monitoring, consultation regarding exposed burials, support for the respectful treatment and temporary protection of iwi kūpuna, and guidance on inadvertent discovery protocols during public works, emergency response, and shoreline stabilization efforts.

3. The emphasis on nature-based, hybrid, and adaptive resilience strategies reflects approaches the County supports across Maui, particularly in areas where parcel-by-parcel shoreline hardening has proven ineffective and culturally disruptive.
4. We strongly support the bill's inclusion of cultural safeguards and robust cultural oversight during implementation. Streamlined regulatory processes can be effective when paired with clear cultural guardrails, adequate resourcing, and meaningful consultation. Importantly, the bill preserves Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights under Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, maintains compliance with applicable federal environmental laws, and retains historic preservation protections under Chapter 6E, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.
5. Requirements for archaeological literature review, on-site archaeological monitoring with stop-work authority, and inadvertent discovery protocols for iwi kūpuna reflect best practices consistently advanced by the county in coordination with state and federal partners. These measures are essential to ensuring that urgent coastal interventions do not result in additional cultural harm and that ancestral remains and cultural artifacts are treated with dignity and in accordance with protocol.

We also offer the following **COMMENTS** on this measure to strengthen implementation and ensure alignment with cultural stewardship principles:

- **Formalize county coordination** by ensuring ongoing consultation with county cultural resource staff throughout project planning, implementation, and monitoring phases.
- **Prioritize early cultural consultation**, including engagement with lineal descendants, cultural practitioners, and affected community organizations where feasible.
- **Ensure adequate resourcing** for archaeological monitoring, cultural oversight, and inadvertent discovery response, recognizing that these are core safeguards rather than ancillary costs.
- **Maintain transparency and accountability** by clearly documenting decision-making, monitoring outcomes, and cultural findings in the pilot program's annual reports to the Legislature.
- **Apply an adaptive management framework** that allows coastal measures to be modified in response to environmental data, cultural impacts, or community concerns identified during implementation.
- **Use the pilot to inform statewide policy**, including recommendations for how comprehensive, culturally grounded coastal management approaches may be responsibly replicated in other high-risk coastal areas.

Mahalo for your consideration.

County of Maui Testimony  
HB2490

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:49:11 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Allan Murayama	Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Misdion	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2490.

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:41:38 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Roberta Arita	Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission	Support	In Person

Comments:

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

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 bordering the property which our family and the community enjoyed fishing, swimming, tin boat racing, learning to dive from "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 recovered 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 maybe 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 crisis 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 and damage the bags with every winter swell, which costs us hundreds of thousands to repair. We are also losing trees and foliage which helped to protect the diminishing shoreline. So 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 and everyone who lives here and visits here and depends on the shoreline. Please help by passing this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Roberta Arita, member

Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025

**RE: HB 2490 – RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

**Hearing:** 2.5.2026, 9:00am

**Position: STRONGLY SUPPORT**

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

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



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

Before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Thursday, February 5, 2026  
9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 via Videoconference

In Support of  
**HB2490 RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

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

From: Dr. Patrick K. Sullivan, Founder & CEO, OCEANIT

Re: Testimony in Support of HB2490

Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair and Committee Members:

Testimony in Support for HB2490

On behalf of Oceanit Laboratories, Inc., I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of this measure, which would establish a coastal resilience pilot program for Mantokuji Bay in Paia, Maui.

This issue is personally meaningful to our organization. Through the Oceanit Research Foundation, we have been working directly with the Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission to address the coastal erosion threatening their temple and cemetery. We have walked that shoreline. We have seen the headstones tilting toward the ocean. We have helped install temporary sandbag revetments to buy time while longer-term solutions are developed. And we have sat with temple members as they describe what it means to watch their ancestors' remains wash into the sea.

What we have witnessed at Mantokuji Bay is not an abstract policy problem. It is a cultural and spiritual crisis unfolding in real time.

Climate change is no longer a future threat for Hawaii - it is here. Sea levels are rising. Storms are intensifying. And our shorelines are eroding at accelerating rates. At Mantokuji Bay, the shoreline retreats approximately 1.6 feet per year - and that rate is accelerating. Homes are at risk. The Hana Highway grows more exposed to coastal hazards. Endangered sea turtles are losing critical habitat.

But the most urgent loss is cultural. The Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission has served the Maui community since 1906. Its cemetery is the final resting place for generations of families who helped build this island. Today, headstones that have stood for a century

tumble into the surf. The remains of grandparents and great-grandparents wash out to sea. For the families we have come to know through this work, the grief is profound.

Retreat is not a viable option. You cannot relocate a cemetery filled with ancestral remains. The historic temple structure is too fragile to move. And the families who have lived along this bay for generations should not be forced to abandon their homes when solutions exist.

The challenge is that Hawaii's current regulatory framework makes comprehensive coastal protection extraordinarily difficult. Through our work at Mantokuji Bay, we have seen firsthand how the parcel-by-parcel permitting approach fails to align with coastal science. Bays and beaches function as integrated natural systems. Protecting one property in isolation can actually accelerate erosion on neighboring properties. The temporary sandbags we helped install are holding for now - but they are not a long-term solution. Mantokuji Bay must be addressed as a whole.

This bill takes the right approach. It establishes a time-limited pilot program that enables bay-wide, nature-based coastal restoration while maintaining federal environmental protections and Native Hawaiian rights. It is accountable, with annual reporting and an automatic sunset. And it can serve as a model for other threatened coastal communities across Hawaii.

The economic case is equally compelling. Delay is not neutral - it is costly. Erosion that goes unaddressed does not stabilize; it accelerates as protective features fail. Restoration that might cost hundreds of thousands of dollars today could require tens of millions tomorrow. And the cultural losses - a historic temple, a sacred cemetery, a community's connection to its ancestors - cannot be measured in dollars at all.

Hawaii must develop new tools to address coastal resilience in the face of climate change. This pilot program offers an opportunity to test a comprehensive, science-based approach while protecting an irreplaceable piece of our cultural heritage. Having worked closely with this community, we can attest that they have exhausted every available option under current law. They need this bill.

We urge the committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Cindy Freitas  
makainanqi@gmail.com

**OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED – H.B. 2490**  
RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE / PILOT PROGRAM\*\*

He Mele komo a he mele aloha no na kupuna o ke au i hala Aloha mai kakou.

Aloha,

My name is Cindy Freitas and I'm a Native Hawaiian descended of the native inhabitants of Hawai'i prior to 1778 and born and raised in Hawai'i.

I am also a practitioner who still practice the cultural traditional customary practices that was instill in me by my grandparents at a young age from mauka (MOUNTAIN TO SEA) to makai in many areas.

I respectfully submit testimony **OPPOSING H.B. 2490 UNLESS AMENDED**, due to its serious impacts on the **County of Hawai'i** and the statewide precedent it creates.

H.B. 2490 establishes a coastal resilience pilot program that **exempts projects from foundational environmental and county land-use laws**, including Special Management Area (SMA) permitting, shoreline setbacks, county building permits, Conservation District requirements, and **Chapter 343 environmental review**. While described as a limited pilot, the bill removes essential safeguards **without replacing them with enforceable protections**.

For the **County of Hawai'i** which has the **longest coastline in the State**, extensive cultural coastal landscapes, and ongoing exposure to **erosion, flooding, sea level rise, and lava instability** these exemptions are especially dangerous. SMA review and environmental permitting are among the County's **primary tools** to evaluate coastal risk, protect public access, and safeguard iwi kūpuna and traditional practices.

**Key elements missing from H.B. 2490 include:**

- **County consent and approval authority** before county laws are suspended;
- **Mandatory environmental review** and clear standards for cumulative impacts;
- **Meaningful cultural safeguards**, including required lineal descendant consultation;
- **Climate-based design standards**, such as sea level rise exposure, erosion rates, and failure-mode analysis;
- **Limits on project size, permanence, and coastal armoring**;
- **Public notice, hearings, and appeal rights**;
- **Guardrails preventing expansion of this exemption model to other counties**, including Hawai'i County.

Although labeled a “pilot,” the bill expressly allows the program to inform future statewide policy, creating a pathway for **state-authorized coastal construction without county permits or environmental review** on Hawai‘i Island shifting long-term risk and liability to local communities.

## **REQUIRED AMENDMENTS (OPPOSE UNLESS ADOPTED)**

H.B. 2490 should not advance **unless amended** to:

1. Require **County concurrence and SMA authority approval** before any exemption applies;
2. Restore **Chapter 343 environmental review** for projects with potential cumulative or significant impacts;
3. Mandate **cultural impact assessment and lineal descendant consultation**;
4. Require **science-based climate standards** (SLR-X, erosion rates, design life, failure analysis);
5. Impose **clear limits on scope, scale, and permanence** of coastal structures;
6. Provide **public notice, hearings, and appeal rights**;
7. Prohibit **automatic expansion** of this exemption framework to other counties.

## **CONCLUSION**

Coastal resilience must be built **with counties and communities**, not by bypassing the laws designed to protect them. Without the amendments above, H.B. 2490 weakens coastal protections and sets a harmful precedent for the **County of Hawai‘i**.

For these reasons, I **OPPOSE H.B. 2490 UNLESS AMENDED**.

Mahalo,

Cindy Freitas

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:51:35 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eric Moto	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

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

My name is Eric Moto, and I am the president of the Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission's administrative board. I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2490, which would establish a pilot program to restore and protect our Mantokuji Bay.

My family has been a part of the Mantokuji congregation for four generations spanning many decades. For over a century, this sacred ground has been the final resting place for our community's ancestors and the only temple on Maui of the Soto Shu Buddhist sect.

Today, I watch in desperation as rising sea levels, and stronger and more frequent wave conditions relentlessly claim more and more of the beach and land we have always considered sacred and eternal. Gravestones that once stood in neat rows now tumble into the surf. The remains of our kupuna - our grandparents and great-grandparents - wash into the sea. This is not just property loss, but a spiritual and existential crisis that cuts to the heart of who we are as a community.

And this crisis extends far beyond our temple. The entire Mantokuji Bay shoreline is eroding; threatening neighboring homeowners, the Hana Highway, and the habitat where endangered sea turtles come to rest. We have learned that protecting just Mantokuji's property will not work. The ocean does not respect property lines. The bay is a single natural system connecting all of us and it must be restored as a whole.

Mantokuji has tried for about ten years and spent close to a million dollars to address this crisis through existing regulatory processes, all while fulfilling every requirement and rule and document request. But this process has not produced a long-term solution, only a temporary sandbag structure fighting a losing battle to hold back the sea.

HB 2490 offers a path forward and can serve as an example of how to move forward as you are asked time and again to help save and protect Hawaii's eroding shoreline. It will take 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 all who live here on Maui, visit here, and depend upon this shoreline.

I humbly urge you to pass HB 2490.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Eric Moto, President - Mantokuji Kyodan

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**  
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025

**RE: HB 2490 - RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

**Hearing: 2/5/2026, 9:00am**

**Position: STRONG SUPPORT**

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

My name is Melina Murayama, 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.

Today, I watch in anguish as the ocean claims what we once believed to be eternal. Gravestones that once stood in neat rows now tumble into the surf. The remains of our kupuna, our grandparents and great grandparents, are washing into the sea. This is not simply a loss of property. It is a spiritual crisis that cuts to the very heart of who we are as a community. Even as I write this, and every time I think about the shrinking shoreline of Mantokuji Bay, I am brought to tears. The sacred place of worship that helped shape who I am today may not be here for my children to experience and remember as they grow older.

My eight year old has been counting honu since he was two, and now he teaches his two year old brother to do the same. On our last visit to the temple in January, he was heartbroken to see that the ironwood trees he once climbed to get a view of the honu along the shore had been washed away into the ocean. Even just last month during the holidays, those trees were still there. Now, they are gone.

But this crisis extends far beyond our temple. The entire Mantokuji Bay shoreline is eroding - threatening homeowners, the Hana Highway, and the habitat where endangered sea turtles rest. We have learned that protecting just our property will not work. The ocean does not respect property lines. The bay is a single natural system, 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 temporary sandbags holding back the sea. Meanwhile, 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 saving 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 testify.

Respectfully,

Melina Murayama  
Member  
Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission  
Paia, Maui

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**  
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025

**RE: HB 2490 - RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

**Hearing: 2/5/2026, 9:00am**

**Position: STRONG SUPPORT**

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

My name is Erick Domingo, 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 family has been part of the Mantokuji congregation for over 20 years. My wife grew up at the temple and I have since found a sense of belonging there as well, for myself, and our two children. For over a century, this sacred ground has been the final resting place for our community's ancestors and my in-laws.

Today, I watch in anguish as the ocean claims what we have always considered eternal. Gravestones that once stood in neat rows now tumble into the surf. The remains of our kupuna - our grandparents and great-grandparents - wash into the sea. This is not just property loss. It is a spiritual crisis that cuts to the heart of who we are as a community.

But this crisis extends far beyond our temple. The entire Mantokuji Bay shoreline is eroding - threatening homeowners, the Hana Highway, and the habitat where endangered sea turtles rest. We have learned that protecting just our property will not work. The ocean does not respect property lines. The bay is a single natural system, 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 temporary sandbags holding back the sea. Meanwhile, 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 saving 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 testify.

Respectfully,

Erick Justin Domingo  
Member  
Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission  
Paia, Maui

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:50:53 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
ISABELLE SCHOLL	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 2490.

The Mantokuji temple is an historical site on Maui and the only temple on this island of the Soto Shu Buddhist sect.

The pilot project to protect the bay is strong and would serve as a demonstrator for protecting other bays on Maui.

House Committee on Water and Land  
Thirty-third Legislature, 2026

RE: HB2490- Relating to Coastal Resilience  
Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:00 am  
POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Hasham, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee

My name is Judith Matoi and I am a lifelong member of Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission. I have contributed to and participated in most of the activities and events the Mission has provided for its members and for the community of Maui. Over the years I have been witness to the impact the ocean has had on the life and function of the church. Each year as the ocean nears and the waves hit the walls of the temple and residence eroding the land and cemetery, we wonder how much longer we can be a significant presence in the community. Each year as the gravestones and remains fall into the ocean and the distance between temple and ocean decreases it becomes more urgent.

I strongly support HB 2490 as a possible solution to this dire situation.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**  
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025

**RE: HB 2490 - RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**  
**Hearing: WAL 02-05-26**  
**Position: STRONG SUPPORT**

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

My name is Kevin K. Kimizuka, 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 family has been part of the Mantokuji congregation for 90+ years. My mothers' grandfather was the first officiating minister of the temple when it was built in 1921. This sacred ground has been the final resting place for many of my family members, as well as members of the congregation that were the original residents of Paia and the surrounding areas.

Every Winter, we see gravestones that once stood in neat rows tumble into the surf. The remains of our family members, grandparents, great-grandparents and great-great grandparents wash into the sea.

This crisis extends far beyond our temple. The entire Mantokuji Bay shoreline is eroding - threatening homeowners, the Hana Highway, and the habitat where endangered sea turtles rest. We have learned that protecting just our property will not work. The ocean does not respect property lines. The bay is a single natural system, 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 temporary sandbags holding back the sea. Meanwhile, the shoreline retreats another foot, then another. The most recent surf has come over the "temporary barrier" sandbags and splashed on the back wall of the temple. 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 saving 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 testify.

Respectfully,

Kevin K. Kimizuka  
Member  
Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission  
Paia, Maui

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**  
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

**RE: HB 2490 – RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

**Hearing:** Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:00am

**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**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:12:27 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beckett Hummelke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Beckett Hummelke, and I am a resident of Maui and a student at Maui High.

I have been doing a research project for one of my classes about erosion at the Mantokuji Mission in Paia. From November 2025 to today, their coastline has seen significant damage and will continue to erode unless changes are made.

Please support HB 2490, as it would help prevent his erosion.

Respectfully,

Beckett Humemlke

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:45:36 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Brian Watanabe, and I am a resident of Haiku, Maui. I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2490.

My family connection with Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission goes back generations, to its founding in 1906. My great grandparents, and my grandparents on both sides of the family, were founding members of the temple, and are buried in the cemetery there. My parents, and now myself, were and are active members of the sangha . Through all my many years of association with Mantokuji Mission, I have witnessed many changes to the land the temple and cemetery sit on, but none more distressing than what is happening now. The wide and beautiful white sand beach that fronts the temple has been replaced by a crumbling crag of soil just mere feet away from the temple building itself. With each strong wave, the land erodes even further, so that now we fear for the very existence of the temple itself. I have witnessed our gravesites being washed away into the ocean. It pains me deeply to see gravestones littering the shoreline. In Hawaii, where we have always held deep respect for our ancestors, we must surely do something to help remedy this situation if at all possible.

I am writing to urge you today to give careful consideration to HB 2490, which will create a pilot program to address the erosion crises facing Paia Mantokuji and the surrounding area. Without your support, the harsh reality is that within the next few years, our beloved temple and cemetery will no longer be in existence. It would be to our undying shame if we allow this to happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Brian Watanabe

Haiku, Maui, HI



**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:05:00 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 2490. I have been working with Manotokuji as an Organizational Development consultant for 8 years. The value of this project is immense and includes, cultural, historical, spiritual and environmental benefits for Maui and Hawaii. The opportunity to care for this property, its mission and environmental protection is both critical and unique. Prompt action is very important and we are grateful for consideration of this bill.

Mahalo a nui,

Linda Morgan

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:40:05 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

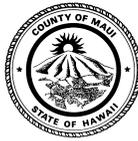
Comments:

My name is Janette from Maui. I am reaching out to respectfully request that your committee pass HB2490. This bill will address important issues related to coastal erosion at Mantokuji Bay. It will be able to protect the structural foundations and the gravestones there. I support this bill because it is important to our community.

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers  
K. Kauano'e Batangan  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

February 4, 2026

TO: Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Water & Land

FROM: Nohelani U'u-Hodgins *Nohelani U'u-Hodgins*  
Councilmember

DATE: Thursday, February 5, 2026  
9:00 a.m., Conference Room 411

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2490, RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to establish a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program for the preservation of Mantokuji Bay, exempt the Pilot Program from certain regulatory requirements, and require the State Historic Preservation Division to conduct a streamlined historic preservation review.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

Mantokuji Bay is a special place in our community, which faces a coastal erosion crisis that threatens homes, businesses, cultural resources, and critical infrastructure along its one-mile shoreline. The historic Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission, whose annual Obon Festival draws thousands of visitors and generates significant economic activity for Paia's small businesses, is just one of many properties at risk.

February 4, 2026

Page 2

The entire bay is eroding at approximately 1.6 feet per year. Homeowners face property loss. The Hana Highway, a vital transportation corridor, is increasingly exposed to coastal hazards. Endangered sea turtles are losing the beach habitat they depend on. This is not a problem that can be solved one property at a time.

HB 2490 takes a smart and comprehensive approach. Treating Mantokuji Bay as a single coastal system and streamlining regulatory processes enables the kind of bay-wide restoration that coastal science demands. Importantly, the bill maintains environmental and cultural protections while allowing for timely and effective action.

Protecting Mantokuji Bay protects Paia's economy - its residents, its businesses, its cultural institutions, and the visitors who come to experience this special place.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support of HB 2490.

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

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:48:04 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Priscilla Matoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Priscilla Matoi, I got married on April 20, 2024 at the Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission. It was the best day of my life, the church was such a wonderful surprise to me. I am from California, and my experience with religious institutions was not a pleasant one. So when I came to Hawaii and started dating my husband 18 years ago, I had no intention of becoming part of a Buddhist church. That changed for me so quickly, the church has such a peaceful presence. I didn't expect to have a huge connection to a place as I do to this church.

When we got engaged I didn't hesitate to tell my (now) husband that I wanted to be married in that wonderful little white church on the side of an ocean cliff. It was the happiest day of my life, and I owe a lot of that to this beautiful place of worship. I implore you to consider how important Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission is to our community, this place is full of history and culture.

Thank you, Priscilla Matoi

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:20:21 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Grant Matoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Grant Matoi, I am writing in strong support of HB2490. As I see the erosion that is happening to the beach mere feet from the church my family founded in 1906, I cannot help but feel a sense of desparation and sadness for the future.

The Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission has been a symbol of resilience and kindness in the community. The missions events such as our Obon festival and Bazaar have been staples that have brought people from all over Maui together. I would hate to see Maui lose such a beacon of happiness especially during the times we are living in.

I would like to see this church be preserved for future generations to find peace and happiness.

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:34:21 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aaron Omuro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Aaron Omuro from District 9. I humbly request that your committee passes HB 2490. Every year, I participate in the Obon festival at Mantokuji Soto Zen. Every year we take photos right on the edge of the cliff, overlooking the water. However year after year, we are more and more weary as we see the cracks forming in the ground, the graves falling into the ocean, and the caution tape preventing us from going any closer. I have memories of walking along the unverified beaches from 12 years ago. Just feet from the cliff is the gravesite of my family ancestors, going back four generations are buried in the cemetery on this site. This church and the surrounding area play a huge role in my life and the lives of many others. Friends and family members who attend church there every Sunday, and the many families who's ancestors lay near mine. It would be devastating to see such a pillar of the Buddhist community on Maui inch closer and closer to the ocean and its ultimate demise. I can not imagine a Maui without such an important church. With this bill, coastal erosion at Mantokuji bay can be managed. And with it, a church, cemetery, cultural gathering place, and a staple of Maui will be saved. The solutions that can be piloted through Mantokuji can help other sites around Maui. I support this bill wholeheartedly and hope you take my testimony into consideration.

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:35:26 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Curtis Omuro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Curtis Omuro and I'm in support of HB2490. As a long time resident of district 9, I have my ancestors grave site located at Mantokuji and have seen the devastation along the shoreline. My mother was born and raised in Paia. Every year during O-bon, I see more coastal erosion. All of the old head stones have either fallen into the ocean or is stacked in a pile. The church is such a mainstay in the Paia community and I would hate to see the effects of the erosion and large storms negatively affect the historic buildings and grounds. We need to protect this historic and important coastal property. This program will also help other communities in the state and other places in the world to come up with future solutions to mitigate the coastal erosion. Please take my testimony into consideration. Thank you.

**HB-2490**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:00:13 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diane Orikasa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2490.