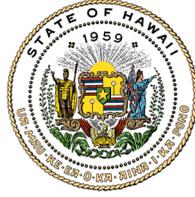


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**Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson**

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

**Monday, March 16, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2544, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO ADMINISTRATIVE FEES**

House Bill 2544, House Draft 1 makes permanent the Department's authority to assess a transaction fee for recording services provided by the Bureau of Conveyances and amends the authorized uses of the Bureau of Conveyances Special Fund. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The Bureau of Conveyances performs highly specialized and critical functions that ensure the integrity, reliability, and accessibility of Hawai'i's land title records under both the Regular System and the Land Court System. Although the work required to process recordings in both systems is similar, current law has resulted in a discrepancy in how fees are assessed. This measure addresses that inequity by establishing a consistent transaction fee structure across both systems.

House Bill 2544, House Draft 1 supports a sound policy of cost recovery by allowing modest user fees to be directed toward sustaining essential services without reliance on additional general fund appropriations. The bill ensures that transaction fee revenues are deposited into the Bureau of Conveyances Special Fund and used for clearly defined purposes, including technology modernization, automation, staff training, operational continuity, and the secure digital preservation of public records.

The Bureau continues to face workforce challenges while managing increasing demand for services. Permanent authority to assess these transaction fees will provide stable and predictable funding to improve efficiency, enhance customer service, and maintain timely recordation services for the public, legal community, and business sector.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

LATE

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 16, 2026

H.B. 2544, H.D.1 – RELATING TO ADMINISTRATIVE FEES

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO **opposes H.B. 2544, H.D.1, page 6 line 2**, which allows the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Bureau of Conveyances (BOC) to utilize transaction fees for certain services rendered by the BOC, to contract with qualified contractors. **We respectfully request an amendment to include a 2-year sunset on the use of qualified contractors.**

The DLNR has had challenges, as have all departments within the executive branch, recruiting for civil service positions. Contracting services is completely violative of the principles of civil service. We have consistently opposed the use of contracting out for services that civil service employees are qualified for and instead continue to advocate for sensible hiring reform.

Instead of outsourcing, which is a 'band-aid' fix, the civil service hiring system must be more flexible and competitive to recruit and retain employees. The State should instead increase the wage of the positions needed in the BOC. This will allow the State to offer a competitive salary along with the robust rights and benefits of a civil service position, eliminating the possibility of patronage hiring. The answer to the challenges faced by the State with recruitment and retention is not contracting services, but substantive reform of the state's hiring practices.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of H.B. 2544, H.D.1.

Respectfully submitted,

On behalf of

Randy Perreira
Executive Director