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

**Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND**

**Thursday, February 12, 2026
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2544
RELATING TO ADMINISTRATIVE FEES**

House Bill 2544 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 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.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Water & Land

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 12, 2026

H.B. 2544 – RELATING TO ADMINISTRATIVE FEES

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO opposes H.B. 2544, specifically, allowing 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.

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director