



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
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Tuesday, March 31, 2026
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, 411

H.R. 62 / H.C.R. 68
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEPARTMENT OF
LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO COORDINATE THE TRANSFER OF SMALL
BOAT HARBORS BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND TO
ESTABLISH A MANAGEMENT TEAM TO DEVELOP TRANSITION PLANS.

House Committee on Water and Land

The Department of Transportation (DOT) strongly supports HR62 and HCR68, which requests the coordination between the DOT and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to transfer authority over small boat harbors back to the DOT. This resolution aligns with the DOT's mission to integrate and manage all aspects of the State's multimodal transportation system.

The resolution recognizes that the administration of small boat harbors was previously transferred from the DOT to the DLNR under Act 272 of 1991. However, it is now acknowledged that returning oversight of these facilities to the DOT will better ensure continuity of operations, personnel alignment, and administrative readiness during the transition period. The establishment of a joint management team, as outlined in the resolution, is critical to ensuring a structured and orderly transfer process.

Furthermore, the resolution emphasizes the importance of developing comprehensive transition and implementation plans, including reworking position descriptions, establishing an organizational structure within the DOT, and addressing operational and personnel-related issues. These requirements reflect the need for careful planning and accountability to maintain uninterrupted public services and responsible stewardship of public resources.

We support the request for the management team to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2027 Regular Session. This timeline ensures adequate preparation and legislative review before any potential statutory changes are enacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HR62 and HCR68.

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

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

Before the House Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Tuesday, March 31, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

In consideration of
**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 68/HOUSE RESOLUTION 62
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEPARTMENT OF
LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO COORDINATE THE TRANSFER OF SMALL
BOAT HARBORS BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND TO
ESTABLISH A MANAGEMENT TEAM TO DEVELOP TRANSITION PLANS.**

House Concurrent Resolution 68/House Resolution 62 requests the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to coordinate the transfer of small boat harbors (SBH) back to DOT and establish a management team to develop transition plans. **DLNR appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.**

The transfer of the SBH and Ocean Recreation & Coastal Areas programs from DOT to DLNR, pursuant to Act 272, Session Laws of Hawaii 1991, resulted in the creation of the DLNR Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR), along the Boating Special Fund to serve as the revenue source for the programs. DOBOR became responsible for fulfilling the thirteen statutory mandates contained in Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Section 200-3, of which only a single mandate contemplates SBH management. However, the transfer to DLNR only came with limited funding and personnel, which left DOBOR severely underfunded and understaffed. As a result, although SBH management is only one of the thirteen statutory mandates, DOBOR needs to dedicate the vast majority of its staff time and funding to SBH management, thereby being forced to neglect the other essential mandates.

Also transferred to DLNR was the deferred maintenance balance (approximately \$300 million at the time of the 1991 transfer) but no additional funding to complete these projects. Although DOBOR has spent hundreds of millions of dollars over the decades since its inception on repair,

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

maintenance and replacement of piers, docks, ramps, roadways, washdowns, and many other projects, the deferred maintenance has since grown to over \$1 billion as of this testimony due to a combination of rampant inflation and cost increases.

DLNR has no objections to forming a management team in collaboration with DOT, to develop transition and implementation plans for the SBH program. DLNR already had a number of preliminary meetings with DOT to discuss a proposed transfer, and we look forward to continuing our productive discussions. DLNR believes that managing the SBH program is a better fit within DOT's mission, and a transfer would allow DOBOR to focus on the remaining mandates in HRS Section 200-3 which better align with DLNR's mission.

DLNR is open to a transfer of the SBH program back to DOT, so long as DOBOR can continue to generate revenues and sustain its operations using the Boating Special Fund. Such a transfer would allow DOBOR to focus on Ocean Recreation Management and public education & outreach, which would include educating the public on boating safety practices, monitoring and regulating commercial ocean operations, enforcing illegal commercial ocean operations, addressing ocean user conflicts, engaging communities to develop administrative rule amendments, and increasing engagement with students in schools to broaden the reach of boating safety messages as well as educate children on boating safety practices as early as possible. DOBOR also oversees the State's vessel registration and titling program, which includes over 14,000 registered vessels.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.