



*He Lawai'a no ke kai papa'u, he pōkole ke aho; He Lawai'a no ke kai hohonu  
he loa ke aho" "A fisherman of shallow seas uses a short line; a fisherman  
of the deep sea uses a long line."*

## **KALANIHALE**

April 5, 2026

### **TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HCR179**

#### **Urging the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee to Follow Its Adopted Rules of Practice, Fulfill Its Statutory Duties, Including Complying with the Sunshine Law, Conduct a Performance Review of Its Executive Director, and Establish Policies to Assure Consistent Standards of Administrative and Managerial Accountability**

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is **Kaimi Kaupiko**, and I submit this testimony in **strong support of HCR179**.

I support this resolution because if the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee is to carry the responsibility of representing Native Hawaiian traditional and customary resource management within state government, it must operate with integrity, transparency, accountability, and consistency. The purpose of the 'Aha Moku system is too important to be undermined by failures in governance or public process.

HCR179 appropriately recognizes the origins and intent of the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee. The resolution recounts the puwalu gatherings beginning in 2006, where kūpuna, cultural practitioners, educators, fishers, farmers, community leaders, and others called for the integration of traditional Hawaiian land and ocean practices into state governance and resource management. It also recognizes that Act 288, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2012, established the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee to advise the State on Native Hawaiian traditional and customary resource management practices. That kuleana is significant and deserves to be honored through real compliance with law and proper public accountability.

This resolution is necessary because it raises serious concerns that cannot be ignored. As stated in the measure, the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee reportedly adopted Rules of Practice and Procedure in 2016, yet the Executive Director has acknowledged that the Committee does not follow those rules. The resolution further notes there is no publicly available record that those rules were repealed, amended, or formally discontinued. It also identifies the lack of publicly available agendas, minutes, reports, administrative records, and regular publicly noticed meetings, raising concerns about compliance with the Sunshine Law, oversight of the Executive Director, budgetary accountability, and the committee's ability to fulfill its statutory duties.

These are not small concerns. When a public advisory body receives state funding, is expected to represent Native Hawaiian interests and knowledge systems, and issues positions in its name, it must do so through lawful, transparent, and properly noticed public meetings. HCR179 rightly urges the Committee to comply with the Sunshine Law, hold regular meetings, ensure transparency in decision-making, provide oversight of its Executive Director, submit required reports in a timely manner, and adopt appropriate administrative and managerial policies for

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effective governance. It also urges that advisory positions be adopted only through properly noticed public meetings and asks for a formal performance review of the Executive Director.

For many of us who care deeply about 'ike kūpuna, community voice, and responsible stewardship of 'āina and kai, accountability does not weaken the 'Aha Moku system — it strengthens it. If the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee is to fulfill its mandated purpose and maintain the trust of the Native Hawaiian community and the public, it must operate in a way that reflects the values it is meant to uphold. Transparency, public participation, lawful process, and administrative integrity are not barriers to Native Hawaiian governance. They are necessary conditions for credibility and trust.

As someone who cares deeply about community-based stewardship and the proper place of Native Hawaiian knowledge in public decision-making, I believe HCR179 is a needed and reasonable measure. It does not diminish the purpose of the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee. It calls on the Committee to live up to that purpose.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Legislature to adopt **HCR179**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Me ka ha'aha'a,**

**Kaimi Kaupiko**



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

TESTIMONY  
IN SUPPORT FOR HCR179  
RELATING TO THE AHA MOKU ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

HOUSE COMMITTEE on JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
Hawai'i State Capitol

April 7, 2026

2:00 p.m.

Room 325

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and members of the committee,

Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN) is in **STRONG SUPPORT for HCR179**, which urges the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee to follow its adopted rules of practice, fulfill its statutory duties, including complying with the Sunshine Law, conduct a performance review of its Executive Director, and establish policies to assure consistent standards of administrative and managerial accountability.

HKN has a unique relationship with the 'Aha Moku and encourages this legislation's support in ensuring the voices of Native Hawaiians are upheld. We take the 'Aha Moku very seriously as it plays a vital role in assisting and advising the State to uphold its statutory obligations held within the 1959 Admission's Act, Article XII, Sec. 7, and many other policies that relate to the betterment of the conditions of Native Hawaiians. The 'Aha Moku has the potential to effectuate policies and laws to support struggling Native Hawaiian communities in far rural reaches. One of its many purposes is to identify and organize skilled individuals that hold Traditional Ecological Knowledge as well as traditions, customs, and practices.

HKN relies on the success of 'Aha Moku and a functioning 'Aha Moku Advisory Council (AMAC). As a Community-based Conservation Management organization that implements traditional methodologies, we would require the 'Aha Moku to demonstrate the highest and best level of transparency and accountability and perform its purpose to ensure the continuum of Native Hawaiians. HKN further supports this resolution to reaffirm the BLNR Chair's duties to conduct a performance review of the Executive Director and the AMAC.

HKN would like to thank this committee for hearing this measure and the opportunity to provide a voice. We strongly urge this committee to pass HCR179.

Mahalo Nui,

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen  
Executive Director | CEO

**HR-169**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 5:49:08 PM

Testimony for JHA on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Kaikea Nakachi, and I am a Native Hawaiian researcher, photographer, and kahu manō and aloha ‘āina practitioner. I am in strong support of place-based governance based on traditional and customary practices and therefore strongly support this resolution directing the ‘Aha Moku Advisory Council to achieve compliance with its Rules of Practice and all statutory requirements, including the Sunshine Law. The ability of ‘Aha Moku to support and guide place-based governance and rulemaking is important to me and the work I do. I support increased compliance, transparency, and accountability in ‘Aha Moku and all aspects of government. I believe this resolution will help course correct if there are deficiencies and allow us to move forward more efficiently and effectively.