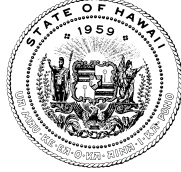


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o  
Hawai'i*

SYLVIA J. LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina  
'o Hawai'i*



KALI WATSON  
CHAIRPERSON, HHC  
*Ka Luna Ho'okele*

KATIE L. LAMBERT  
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR  
*Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele*

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS  
*Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawai'i*

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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
WATER AND LAND  
ON MARCH 19, 2026 AT 9:00AM IN CR 411

**SB1432, SD2, HD1, RELATING TO CHANGES TO RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONCERNING PATIENTS, THE COUNTY OF  
KALAWAO, AND THE KALAUPAPA SETTLEMENT**

March 19, 2026

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports with comments** this bill which 1) establishes the Kalaupapa State Historical Area, 2) authorizes the Department of Health to continue providing services statewide to Hansen's disease patients living in the community, 3) repeals sections of Chapter 326, HRS, and makes associated conforming amendments, to take effect upon the one-year anniversary of the passing of the last patient resident of Kalaupapa, as affirmed in a Governor's proclamation, and 4) requires future planning for the Kalaupapa Settlement to include community organizations, including one selected in consultation with the Molokai community.

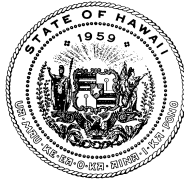
The area commonly known or designated as the Kalaupapa Settlement, described in section 2 of the bill, which proposes a new section to Chapter 6E to create the Kalaupapa state historical area, includes Hawaiian Home Lands. DHHL agrees with the intent of preserving the historical importance of the Kalaupapa Settlement but believes there may be unintentional jurisdictional implications to DHHL's parcel if it is made part of a state historical area and not clearly delineated. Thus, DHHL recommends that SB1432, SD2, HD1, explicitly state that Hawaiian Home Lands identified by tax map key: 6-1-01:01 located in Kalaupapa is Hawaiian Home Lands. The Hawaiian Homes Commission, as codified in the Hawaii State Constitution has exclusive land use and zoning authority for Hawaiian Home Lands. Thus, any land designation changes regarding Hawaiian Home Lands would be subject to Hawaiian Homes Commission approval and beneficiary consultation.

Additional beneficiary consultation on the future of Kalaupapa will be conducted as part of the DHHL Molokai Island Plan update (2026-2027), and the issue of transfer of jurisdiction and control of Kalawao County will be included in that consultation process. At this time DHHL does not have a position on whether Kalawao County should be incorporated into Maui County upon the departure of the Department of Health and would like to gather more comments from its beneficiaries before taking a position.

DHHL intends to continue to participate in all multi-agency transition planning processes for Kalaupapa/Kalawao County and supports full transparency and inclusion of a board member of a County of Kalawao community organization and a representative of a Molokai community organization selected in consultation with the Molokai community.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A, M.P.H  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB1432 SD2 HD1  
RELATING TO CHANGES TO RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
CONCERNING PATIENTS, THE COUNTY OF KALAWAO, AND THE KALAUPAPA SETTLEMENT**

REPRESENTATIVE MARK J. HASHEM, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

1 Hearing Date: March 19, 2026 @ 9:00 am

Room Number: 411

2 **Department Position:** The Department provides comments intended to offer clarification of  
3 the bill's intent and additional background information.

4 The Department supports the intent of this bill that would repeal sections of [HRS §326](#) that  
5 pertain to the Department's role at Kalaupapa after the passing of the final Kalaupapa Registry  
6 Patient and transfer the jurisdiction of Kalawao County to Maui County. However, the  
7 Department recognizes the complex nature of the history and management of Kalawao County  
8 and provides the following information to clarify the fairly complex web of duties,  
9 responsibilities and powers held by various government agencies.

10 **Department Testimony:**

11 While Kalawao County and Kalaupapa have been managed by Hawaiian and Hawai'i  
12 government public health entities for more than 150 years – initially by the Hawaiian Kingdom  
13 and later by U.S. Territorial and State health agencies – DOH's present oversight of this remote  
14 peninsula of land is governed only by HRS law ([HRS §326](#)) and HAR rules ([HAR §11-168](#) and [HAR](#)

1 [§11-169](#)) relating to the care and treatment of persons affected with Hansen's Disease at  
2 Kalaupapa Settlement.

3 In presenting SB1432 initially for consideration, the Department sought to set a future “trigger  
4 date” – sometime after the passing of the last Kalaupapa patient – for the repeal or  
5 amendment of appropriate sections of HRS §326 and other statutes that reference Kalaupapa  
6 Settlement or the county of Kalawao.

7 Separately, at the designated future date, the Department will amend HAR §11-168 as  
8 appropriate and completely repeal HAR §11-169.

9 **Hawaii Revised Statutes §326 - “Hansen’s Disease”**

10 This statute describes the Department’s overall statutory responsibilities and legal authority to  
11 provide care and treatment for those individuals affected by Hansen’s disease in the State of  
12 Hawaii. As per, HRS §326-1, care and treatment is provided to two distinct groups:

- 13 • Group 1: persons who were *institutionalized for segregation by order of the department*  
14 *of health because of Hansen's disease*; and  
15 • Group 2: persons with Hansen's disease.

16 Group 1 is commonly referred to as the “Kalaupapa registry patients” – and includes those  
17 patients that had been forcibly isolated by the government, but chose to continue living at  
18 Kalaupapa after 1969, when the Legislature repealed HRS §326’s previous isolation  
19 requirements (§326-7 to §326-10). When the isolation requirements were repealed in 1969,  
20 [HRS §326-26\(a\)](#) ensured that any patient resident that received care or treatment in  
21 Kalaupapa on or before June 30, 1969 would be “permitted to remain at the facility for as  
22 long as the person may choose.” Today, as per this section, the Department continues to  
23 provide care for the five (5) remaining Kalaupapa registry patients.

1        Group 2 has a much broader membership, as it includes any person in the State of Hawaii  
2        that has Hansen’s disease. In 2025, the active caseload for this group was 240 Hansen  
3        disease patients statewide. All of the individuals in this patient group receive their care and  
4        treatment services through HD Branch’s Hansen’s Disease Community Program either at  
5        their personal residences or in existing health care facilities.

6        While the Department will continue providing care and treatment statewide for those affected  
7        by Hansen’s disease (through the HD Community Program), patient care and treatment at  
8        Kalaupapa will end when the last remaining Kalaupapa registry patient passes.

- 9            • The HRS §326 amendments proposed in SB 1432 SD2 HD1 are designed to repeal  
10           those sections that specifically reference patient care at Kalaupapa and DOH  
11           jurisdiction over Kalawao County.

12        A detailed description of the “future of Kalaupapa Settlement” can be found in the following  
13        resources:

14        **FEDERAL OVERSIGHT OF KALAUPAPA SETTLEMENT**

- 15            • [Public Law 96-565](#) (1980), the law which created Kalaupapa National Historical Park  
16            (KNHP); and
- 17            • the [Kalaupapa NHP General Management Plan](#) (2021), published by the National Park  
18            Service (NPS) after more than six years of continuous public outreach and engagement.  
19            The plan provides broad guidance for the park’s operations over the next 15 to 20 years;  
20            and
- 21            • the [Kalaupapa NHP Superintendent’s Compendium](#) (2025), which is reviewed annually  
22            and revised as necessary, summarizes the locally tailored rules derived from Federal  
23            Regulations that the Kalaupapa NHP Superintendent is authorized to implement – such  
24            as park-specific regulations, areas closed to public use, activities that require permits or  
25            reservations, and detailed rules on visitor use and resource protection.

1           **STATE OVERSIGHT OF KALAUPAPA SETTLEMENT**

2           Both the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) and the Department of Land and  
3           Natural Resources (DLNR) maintain ongoing responsibilities for their lands at Kalaupapa  
4           through long-term agreements with the National Park Service (NPS):

5           **1. DHHL - Land Lease (1991-2041)**

6           DHHL has a lease agreement dating to 1991—lasting through 2041—covering  
7           approximately 1,290 acres of the Kalaupapa Settlement. Under this lease, NPS manages  
8           overall park operations while DHHL retains responsibility for future land use on its  
9           parcel

10           **DHHL Public Participation & Planning Involvement**

11           DHHL actively engages beneficiaries via consultation on [their own long-term](#)  
12           [planning processes](#) and has already led an extensive public engagement process for  
13           beneficiaries regarding the 2021 Kalaupapa National Historic Park General  
14           Management Plan.

15           **2. DLNR - Cooperative Agreement (since 1989)**

16           DLNR and NPS have long collaborated under the terms of a cooperative agreement  
17           governing approximately 9,394 acres at Kalaupapa. Under this partnership, NPS  
18           preserves cultural and natural resources—such as archaeological sites, native  
19           ecosystems, threatened and endangered species, and air/water quality—within DLNR-  
20           managed lands.

21           **DLNR Formal Public Reporting & Review**

22           Together with NPS, DLNR ensures ongoing reporting and public participation  
23           associated with land management activities. These include NEPA-driven public  
24           scoping, environmental assessments, and park planning documents accessible  
25           via NPS’s [PEPC portal](#).

1 The Department believes that it would be inappropriate to insert statutory requirements that  
2 specifically address “planning for the future of Kalaupapa Settlement or the county of Kalawao”  
3 in chapter §326, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

- 4 • HRS §326 relates to the Department of Health’s responsibilities for the care and  
5 treatment of individuals with Hansen's disease. When the last remaining patient on the  
6 Kalaupapa registry passes, the Department’s statutory requirements to provide  
7 treatment and care at Kalaupapa will end.
- 8 • After the Department ends responsibilities for patient care at Kalaupapa, HRS §326 will  
9 continue to serve as the statutory guidance for the Department to provide medical care  
10 and treatment of all individuals affected by Hansen's disease throughout the State of  
11 Hawaii through the Hansen’s Disease Community Program.
- 12 • As described above, the Department of Health will have no future role in the ownership,  
13 management or governance of Kalaupapa Settlement or Kalawao County.
- 14 • The government organizations that own, manage and govern the area beyond the  
15 Department of Health’s involvement are already in place and have established plans,  
16 rules and legal requirements for public input.

17 The Department has worked closely with, and long supported Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa’s  
18 stated mission of “promoting the value and dignity of every individual exiled to Kalaupapa  
19 since 1866.” The Department continues to work with Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa to complete a  
20 contract (ASO LOG NO 25-208 M1) that would fulfill the legislative intent of [Act 230 \(2022\)](#),  
21 which appropriated \$5,000,000 to the Department of Health for the “design, planning, and  
22 construction of the Kalaupapa memorial.” Status updates on these efforts can be regularly  
23 provided to the Legislature upon request and will also be addressed in the Department’s  
24 annual report (as per HRS 326-25.5).

1 While the Department originally proposed an effective date 'one year after the passing of the  
2 last patient,' subsequent discussions have proposed a longer time period. The Department  
3 would be agreeable to an extension of the effective date to two years after the passing of the  
4 last patient

5

## 6 **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

7 In light of the comments listed above, the Department requests the following amendments to  
8 SB1432 SD2 HD1

### 9 **AMENDMENT #1 - SB1432 SD2 HD1 (page 2, line 20 - page 3, line 8):**

10 Accordingly, the purposes of this Act are to:

11 (1) Prepare for changes of responsibilities of the department of health upon the  
12 passing of the last patient resident of the Kalaupapa Settlement;

13 (2) Commemorate and preserve the historical, cultural, and environmental  
14 significance of the peninsula and its residents in Hawaii's history with the establishment  
15 of the Kalaupapa state historical area; and

16 ~~—(3) Provide to the public the opportunity for input on the future of the county of~~  
17 ~~Kalawao; and~~

18 ~~—(4) Require any future planning for the permanent transfer of the powers and duties~~  
19 ~~of the department and any other state agency over Kalaupapa Settlement to other~~  
20 ~~governmental or qualified non-governmental entities, to include a community~~  
21 ~~organization in the county of Kalawao that is designated in P.L. 111-11, title VII, section~~  
22 ~~7108, and a topside community organization from Molokai in the transition planning~~  
23 ~~team.~~

### 24 **AMENDMENT #2 - SB1432 SD2 HD1 (page 50, line 14 – page 51, line 15):**

25 ~~[SECTION 43. Future planning for the permanent transfer of the powers and duties of~~  
26 ~~the department and any other state agency over Kalaupapa Settlement to other~~  
27 ~~governmental or qualified non-governmental entities, shall include a community~~

1 ~~organization in the county of Kalawao that is designated in P.L. 111-11, title VII, section~~  
2 ~~7108 and a topside community organization from Molokai. The topside~~  
3 ~~community shall be selected in consultation with the Molokai community. For purposes~~  
4 ~~of this section, "topside community organization from Molokai" means a community of~~  
5 ~~Molokai outside of the county of Kalawao.]~~

6 SECTION [44]43. For the purposes of this Act, "full- or part-time patient resident of  
7 Kalaupapa" means a person who was institutionalized for segregation by order of the  
8 department of health because of Hansen's disease and who chose to remain at  
9 Kalaupapa or Hale Mohalu after June 30, 1969.

10 SECTION [45]44. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New  
11 statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION [46]45. This Act shall take effect on December 31, 2050; provided that part  
13 II of this Act shall take effect on the ~~one~~ two year anniversary of the passing of the last  
14 full- or part-time patient resident of Kalaupapa as affirmed in the governor's  
15 proclamation, as described in section 25 of this Act.

## 16 CONCLUSION

17 The Department will continue – as has been the practice since 1980 - to transfer our  
18 operational responsibilities to the remaining government organizations that are  
19 designated as landowners and/or have statutory authority for land and operations in  
20 Kalaupapa. The transfer of DOH's remaining operational responsibilities to NPS will  
21 follow the terms outlined in a Cooperative Agreement with NPS (continuous since 1984)  
22 and "A Strategic Plan for Transition at Kalaupapa Settlement" that was created in 1991.  
23 Many non-patient related responsibilities have already been transferred to the NPS.

24 Opportunities for public engagement regarding the future of the Kalaupapa Peninsula  
25 and all areas located within the boundaries of the region that is now designated as the

1 county of Kalawao will be available and guaranteed into the future under existing  
2 federal, state and county laws.

3 This bill does not interfere with the National Park Service's General Management Plan,  
4 any existing cooperative agreements between the National Park Service and other State  
5 departments, or with the existing land lease between the Department of Hawaiian  
6 Home Lands (DHHL) and National Park Service that expires July 14, 2041.

7 Thank you for hearing this measure and for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 3:18:26 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keani Rawlins-Fernandez	Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

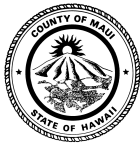
Comments:

Support. Attachment to follow.

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers  
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  
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March 18, 2026

TO: The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
House Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Councilmember 

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1432, SD2, HD1**

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1432, SD2, HD1, relating to changes to responsibilities of the Department of Health Concerning patients, the County of Kalawao, and the Kalaupapa Settlement.

While I am testifying in my individual capacity as the Councilmember from Molokai, the Maui County Council has also taken an official position in Reso 21-190 that supports this action.

I support this measure to repeal sections of Chapter 326, HRS, authorizing the Department of Health to continue providing services statewide to Hansen's disease patients living in the community, and requiring future planning for the Kalaupapa Settlement to include community organizations, including one selected in consultation with the Molokai community.

I do not support the establishment of a Kalaupapa State Historical Area or for the Act to take effect upon the one-year mark of the passing of the last patient resident of Kalaupapa. I respectfully request consideration of the following three amendments:

**1) Amend Page 51, Section 46, lines 11-15 to two years after the Governor's proclamation.**

SECTION 46. This Act shall take effect on (date); provided that parts II and III of this Act shall take effect on the date two ~~one~~ years after the passing of the last full or part-time patient resident of

Kalaupapa as affirmed in the governor's proclamation, as described in section 42 of this Act.

**2) Amend Page 3, Part II, lines 14-20 to Page 4, lines 1-2 to strike section 6E that would create a Kalaupapa state historic area.**

~~§6E—Kalaupapa state historical area. (a) There shall be a Kalaupapa state historical area that shall consist of that portion of the island of Molokai known as Kalaupapa, Kalawao, and Waikolu, and commonly known or designated as the Kalaupapa Settlement.~~

~~(b) The Kalaupapa state historical area is established to preserve the Kalaupapa Settlement, educate the public, commemorate the lives of residents with Hansen's disease and the lives of the people who served them, and recognize the county of Kalawao and its role in the history of Hawaii."~~

**3) Include language that acknowledges unforeseen costs may arise during this unprecedented transition and a commitment that the State will provide funding to cover those costs.**

"Historic area" is not defined within the measure itself, and its framework cannot be found in the current state statute to understand the legal implications. Further, it's unclear which agency would assume this responsibility of the stated purpose to "educate the public, commemorate the lives of residents with Hansen's disease and the lives of the people who served them, and recognize the county of Kalawao and its role in the history of Hawaii," and what entity would fund it.

That concludes my formal testimony on SB 1432, SD2, HD1. The following is background information regarding the transition from the County's end and comments from the Molokai community, which I would like to share as their councilmember.

Our County Administration and I personally have been preparing for this transition for some time. In 2022, we amended the Maui County Charter to enable the area of Kalawao County to be included in Maui County's jurisdiction at the appropriate time.

Section 1-2. Geographical Limits. The islands of Maui, Molokai, Lānaʻi, and Kahoʻolawe ... shall constitute the county, except that portion of the island of Molokai excluded from the county's jurisdiction by state law. (Amended 2022)

Since the last legislative session, our County Administration and I have worked on getting a clear understanding of the responsibilities, and their related costs, that Maui County would be expected to assume as a result of the transition and accepting jurisdiction of Kalawao County.

Mahalo to the state and federal agencies for confirming that most of the responsibilities would remain with them and Maui County would continue to provide support with fire and police. Our Department of Fire and Safety and Department of Police each have a mutual aid agreement with the National Parks Service, both of which are effective through September 22, 2040.

On January 29, 2026, I chaired our Maui County Council committee, Kōmike Aloha 'Āina, meeting in Kaunakakai, Molokai, to provide our community updates on the progress SB 1432, to discuss proposed amendments, including the three listed above, and to hear feedback from testifiers. The Department of Health representatives were supportive of the amendments. Our community provided quite a bit of testimony. I will share some relevant highlights below.

Members of our homestead associations were opposed to the transition of Kalawao County into Maui County. They instead requested that a different state agency replace the Department of Health in managing Kalawao County, or that Molokai become its own county. During our meeting, I asked representatives from the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and the Department of Land and Natural Resources if either agency wanted to assume this responsibility; both declined. I informed the testifiers that passing SB 1432 would not preempt Molokai from becoming its own county at a future time.

Lastly, testifiers expressed concern with the maintenance of the historic structure in the Kalaupapa Settlement, on land held in the Hawaiian Homelands Trust, which is intended to be maintained by the National Park Service. Documents from a meeting held in Kaunakakai on March 25, 2024, outlined the backlog of maintenance work. The community has expressed significant concern about the integrity of these structures being undermined because of this deferred maintenance. The current presidential administration's slashing of the National Park Service's budget creates even more uncertainty about long-term care of these historic structures.

Mahalo again for your consideration.

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 7:59:25 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
SYBIL LOPEZ	Sovereign Council of the Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA) Molokai Mokupuni	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I'm Sybil Lopez, the Molokai Mokupuni Director of the Sovereign Council of the Hawaiian Homestead Association (SCHHA). I OPPOSE SB1432 in its current form and SUPPORT SB2799 as the appropriate amendment to include beneficiaries at the table and responsible for the next step.

Kalaupapa is not just a place — it is a **living legacy** with deep cultural, historical, and trust significance. These decisions will directly impact:

- Future homestead opportunities
- Trust land stewardship
- Cultural and community integrity

**Why We Oppose Absorbing Kalawao into Maui County**

- **Lack of enforcement:** Maui County has inconsistent enforcement, putting sensitive lands like Kalaupapa at risk.
- **Slow permitting:** Projects take months or years—delaying housing and improvements for beneficiaries.
- **Poor stewardship:** Maui County has struggled to effectively manage growth, protect natural resources, and balance development with cultural preservation.
- **Failure to protect the trust:** HHCA lands require fiduciary responsibility—county control does not prioritize beneficiaries.
- **Risk of breach of trust:** Expanding county jurisdiction risks conflicting priorities that do not center the trust or its beneficiaries and puts the State at risk.
- **Loss of beneficiary control:** This removes decision-making from those with rightful ties to the land and undermines long-standing efforts toward **beneficiary-led governance and self-determination.**
- **Kalawao already exists:** It is a legally recognized county under Hawai'i State Law(Hawai'i Revised Statutes)—strengthen it, don't dissolve it.
- **Better path forward:** Start with a Kalaupapa pilot program to build beneficiary-led governance before expanding. This allows beneficiaries to build capacity and prove a model before scaling to the rest of Moloka'i.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to completely **REMOVE THE TRANSFER TO MAUI COUNTY** from **SB1432** and **ADD DHHL'S ROLE** to **SECURE BENEFICIARY'S POSITION**.

We are not against change—we are against rushed decisions that risk our trust, our lands, and our future. Let us do this right, with beneficiaries at the center.



March 18, 2026

To: Representative Mark Hashem, Chair, and Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair,  
Committee on Water and Land

**SB1432, SD2, HD1** -- Relating to Changes of Responsibilities of the Department of Health concerning the patients, the county of Kalawao and the Kalaupapa Settlement  
Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9 a.m. Conference Room 411

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and members of the Committee,

Thank you for hearing SB1432 and giving us the opportunity to learn more about plans for the future of Kalaupapa.

This is the third straight year that bills are being heard regarding the future of Kalaupapa, yet it seems that little is still known except that there is a transition team of government officials who have been meeting for years without meaningful input from the public.

My name is Valerie Monson, Executive Director of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, a nonprofit organization that formed in 2003 behind the leadership of residents (patients) of Kalaupapa who wanted to bring together family members, descendants and friends of the community to make sure their history would be remembered and that their voices would continue to guide the future even after they had passed.

A Kalaupapa transition team of government officials has been meeting for many years, yet we hear such conflicting statements about where they're at in the process.

There are times when we are told planning is still in the early stages, but we also hear that the decision has already been made: that the National Park Service will have full jurisdiction at Kalaupapa, that the United States Federal Government will have complete control of one of Hawaii's most sacred places.

We've also heard that Maui County will assume jurisdiction of Kalaupapa. What is true? We just don't know.

This bill states that Kalawao County -- which compromises the entire Kalaupapa peninsula -- will cease to exist and -- I quote -- "**shall** be and form a portion of Maui County." (emphasis added).

What does Maui County think about this? What does the public think about this?

Two months ago, there was a Maui County Council Committee meeting in Kaunakakai where nearly all Molokai residents who testified opposed Maui County taking over Kalawao County.

In Public Law 96-565, which established Kalaupapa National Historical Park in 1980, Section 109 reads: "At such time when there is no longer a resident patient community at Kalaupapa, the Secretary **shall reevaluate the policies governing the management, administration, and public use of the park in order to identify any changes deemed to be appropriate.**" (emphasis added).

How does that Federal language fit with the State bills?

SB1432 also proposes creating a "Kalaupapa State Historical Area," which is subject to the State's 6-E process that includes special restrictions. According to the bill, the purpose of this historical area is "to educate the public, to commemorate the lives of the residents with Hansen's disease and the lives of the people who served them, and to recognize the county of Kalawao and its role in the history of Hawaii."

Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa has been doing all the above in historical preservation and education for more than 22 years without a special designation. We have taken our programs and exhibits about Kalaupapa to every island, helped more than 1,000 descendants reconnect to their Kalaupapa ancestors and received numerous awards for our work.

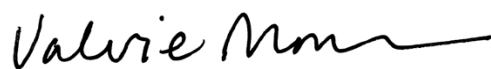
We urge the Legislature to appoint the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa as equal participants in planning the future of Kalaupapa. Remembering the people of Kalaupapa – nearly percent of them Native Hawaiian -- is essential to any community plan about its future.

We appreciate your committee taking this bill up again and hearing testimony about the next phase of Kalaupapa, a community that is very dear to many of us, a community that will live on even when there are no longer any living residents who were isolated under the old laws.

These nearly 8,000 men, women and children who were taken from their families sent to Kalaupapa between 1866 and 1969 will forever live on in the hearts and minds of many of us – and will continue to guide us in other ways.

We respectfully ask to be part of this process.

Mahalo nui loa,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Monson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Valerie Monson, Executive Director



**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 9:51:55 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
De MONT Kalai Manaole	Hoomana Pono LLC	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

We **STRONGLY OPPOSE** this measure that continues to erode the Right to Self-Determination by our Lāhui on the INDEPENDENT NATION OF MOLOKA'I!

Moloka'i was long ago designated to be the Fourth Judicial District for the State of Hawaii. That long ago promise has been denied to our Lāhui on Moloka'i.

This bill is another blatant slap in the face of the people of Moloka'i. If Maui want to "Honor" the Historical significance of Kalaupapa, go build a monument on Maui. Otherwise, enough with the constant attempts to control Moloka'i.

Please defer this bill INDEFINITELY!

The Association of Hawaiians for Homestead Lands (AHHL) is a national waitlist governed association founded in 2009, a member of the Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA). The AHHL is a Homestead Beneficiary Association (HBA) registered with the U.S. Department of Interior, meeting the federal definition under 43 CFR Part 48.6. Dedicated to *Ending the Hawaiian Home Land Waitlist* by pursuing reforms and delivering services that create success for native Hawaiians to homestead and build mercantile businesses.

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kainoa MacDonald, Chair of the Association of Hawaiians for Homestead Lands (AHHL), and an HHCA beneficiary. On behalf of AHHL and the beneficiaries we serve across our islands, I respectfully **OPPOSE SB1432 in its current form** and **SUPPORT SB2799 as the appropriate and responsible path forward.**

We strongly urge the Legislature to **REMOVE any language that enables transfer of Kalawao County governance to Maui County** and **ADD clear provisions that secure the role of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) in protecting beneficiary interests.**

On February 11, 2026, Moloka'i Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) homestead leaders, beneficiaries, and community members convened to discuss the future of Kalawao County and Kalaupapa. Representatives from Ho'olehua, Kalama'ula, Ualapu'e, Kapa'akea, and individuals with direct ties to Kalaupapa participated.

The message was clear and unified: **Planning, consultation, and trust protections must come first.**

While we recognize that the Department of Health has a responsibility to prepare for the eventual passing of the last patient at Kalaupapa, that responsibility must be **limited to planning and continuity of care**—not used as a pathway to premature governance decisions.

Kalaupapa is not just a place — it is a living legacy, rooted in 'ike kūpuna, sacrifice, and the enduring resilience of our people. It carries deep cultural, historical, and trust significance that cannot be separated from the responsibilities established under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act.

As such, any decisions regarding its future must not interfere with or pre-determine the responsibilities, processes, and authority of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, its Island Commissioners and beneficiaries. The State has a fiduciary obligation to ensure that trust considerations are not bypassed, diminished, or decided through indirect governance actions.

Decisions of this magnitude must be informed, transparent, and grounded in the voices of HHCA beneficiaries and families most directly impacted, with full respect for trust protections and proper process. SB1432 should be amended to clearly state that **no transfer of governance, jurisdiction, or land authority shall occur without separate legislative approval following meaningful consultation and completion of a trust-informed planning process.**

Me Kealoha nui,

***Kainoa Lei MacDonald***

*Chair/President Association of Hawaiian Homes Association  
Registered Dept. of Interior Homestead Beneficiary Association*

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2026 5:56:39 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lauae kekahuna	'O Maku'u ke kahua	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:46:07 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1432 SB RELATING TO CHANGES TO RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONCERNING PATIENTS, THE COUNTY OF KALAWAO, AND THE KALAUPAPA SETTLEMENT.

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 8:47:53 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kilia Purdy-Avelino	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kilia Purdy-Avelino, an HHCA beneficiary and 4th generation homesteader of Ho'olehua, Molokai and active member of our Homestead Beneficiary Association, Ho'olehua Homesteaders Association. I OPPOSE SB1432 in its current form and SUPPORT SB2799 as the appropriate with amendment to include beneficiaries at the table and responsible next step.

Why We Oppose Absorbing Kalawao into Maui County

- Lack of enforcement: Maui County has inconsistent enforcement, putting sensitive lands like Kalaupapa at risk.
- Slow permitting: Projects take months or years—delaying housing and improvements for beneficiaries.
- Poor stewardship: Maui County has struggled to effectively manage growth, protect natural resources, and balance development with cultural preservation.
- Failure to protect the trust: HHCA lands require fiduciary responsibility—county control does not prioritize beneficiaries.
- Risk of breach of trust: Expanding county jurisdiction risks conflicting priorities that do not center the trust or its beneficiaries and puts the State at risk.
- Loss of beneficiary control: This removes decision-making from those with rightful ties to the land and undermines long-standing efforts toward beneficiary-led governance and self-determination.
- Kalawao already exists: It is a legally recognized county under Hawaii State Law (Hawaii Revised Statutes)—strengthen it, don't dissolve it.
- Better path forward: Start with a Kalaupapa pilot program to build beneficiary-led governance before expanding. This allows beneficiaries to build capacity and prove a model before scaling to the rest of Moloka'i.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to completely REMOVE THE TRANSFER TO MAUI COUNTY from SB1432 and ADD DHHL'S ROLE to SECURE BENEFICIARY'S POSITION.

Kalaupapa is not just a place — it is a living legacy with deep cultural, historical, and trust significance. Any decisions about its future must be informed, transparent, and grounded in the voices of the beneficiaries, families who are most directly impacted.

“We are not against change—we are against rushed decisions that risk our trust, our lands, and our future. Let us do this right, with beneficiaries at the center. We are asking to strengthen SB1432 so it protects beneficiaries through required consultation and ensures a responsible transition.

Mahalo nui,

Kilia Purdy-Avelino

Ho'olehua Homesteader, Molokai

**TESTIMONY OF DEGRAY VANDERBILT**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 19 9 a.m. CONFERENCE ROOM 411**

**REGARDING SENATE BILL 1432 RELATING TO THE KALAUPAPA SETTLEMENT**

Aloha Chair Hashem , Vice-Chair Morikawa and members of the House Committee on Water and Land

My name is DeGray Vanderbilt. I testifying as an individual. For a number of years, I have continued to serve on the Board of Directors of Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa. a non-profit organization conceived and fostered by Kalaupapa residents. In past years as a resident of Molokai, I had the pleasure of serving as Chair of the Molokai Planning Commission.

Mahalo for providing me with this opportunity to comment on SB1432. The Bill calls for much needed accountability on the transition plan and its fiscal impacts.

Last session, the Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM) heard a similar bill— SB1432. At that hearing, Gloria Marks, a Kalaupapa resident and long-time member of the Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa Board of Directors, who has since passed away, testified and raised several pertinent points, which are very relevant to SB1432.

Gloria wrote the following: *“Ka ‘Ohana has Congressional authority to operate at Kalaupapa. We are on the same level as government agencies, which continue to dismiss our status. Ka ‘Ohana was conceived of and formed by patient residents at Kalaupapa. Certainly, Ka ‘Ohana must be at the table when the future of Kalaupapa and its legacy are being determine.”*

Ka ‘Ohana also supports a topside community organization and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs being formal members of the group handling on-going discussions about the future transition process at Kalaupapa when there is no longer a patient community there.

As such, I request the following considerations for amending Sections 1,2 and 3 of SB1432, SD2, HD1:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the population of former Hansen's disease patients residing at Kalaupapa in the county of Kalawao is aging. There are currently seven individuals on the Kalaupapa registry who receive services from the State. ~~Four~~ Three of them are full-time residents at Kalaupapa. ~~All~~ The average age of these patients residents are age eighty-three years or older. Is over 90.

The legislature finds that the county of Kalawao consists of that portion of the island of Molokai commonly known as the Kalaupapa Settlement and that the county of Kalawao is under the jurisdiction and control of the department of health and governed by the laws and rules relating to the department and the care and treatment of persons affected with Hansen's disease. After the passing of the last full- or part-time patient resident at Kalaupapa, the department of health will no longer provide patient care there but intends to complete environmental remediation work.

The legislature further finds that there are many other stakeholders that care about the future of the Kalaupapa Settlement and the preservation of the historical, cultural, and environmental significance of the county of Kalawao. This Act reflects preliminary sentiments expressed by some Maui county residents that the county of Kalawao be reunited with the county of Maui. A transparent process and opportunity for more extensive public input regarding the transfer of jurisdiction and control of Kalawao county, ~~and also Kalaupapa becoming a proposed State Historical area,~~ is required.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

(1) Prepare for changes to responsibilities of the department of health upon the passing of the last patient resident of the Kalaupapa Settlement;

~~(2) Commemorate and preserve the historical, cultural, and environmental significance of the peninsula and its residents in Hawaii's history with the establishment of the Kalaupapa state historical area;~~ As part of on-going discussions on the transfer of powers and duties of DOH when there is no longer a patient community at Kalaupapa, include discussions on the future jurisdiction of Kalawao County and the proposal for Kalaupapa to become a State Historical Area, and

~~(3) Provide to the public the opportunity for input on the future of the county of Kalawao; and~~

~~(4)~~ (3) Require any future planning for the permanent transfer of the (powers and duties of the department of health and any other state agency over Kalaupapa Settlement to other governmental or qualified non-governmental entities, to include Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, a community organization in the county of Kalawao conceived and fostered by Kalaupapa patient residents that is designated in P.L. 111-11, title VII, section 7108, and a topside community organization selected in consultation with the Molokai community, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

## PART II

SECTION 2. ~~Chapter 6E, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ "§6E- **Kalaupapa state historical area.** (a) As part of on-going discussions regarding the transfer of the department of health's powers and duties when there is no longer a patient resident community at Kalaupapa there shall may be a Kalaupapa state historical area that shall consist of

that portion of the island of Molokai known as Kalaupapa, Kalawao, and Waikolu, and commonly known or designated as the Kalaupapa Settlement.

(b) The Kalaupapa state historical area ~~is~~ may be established to preserve the Kalaupapa Settlement, educate the public, commemorate the lives of residents with Hansen's disease and the lives of the people who served them, and recognize the county of Kalawao and its role in the history of Hawaii."

SECTION 3. ~~Chapter 326, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:~~

~~"§326-~~ County of Kalawao; ~~cessation; county of Maui.~~ The county of Kalawao that consists of that portion of the island of Molokai known as Kalaupapa, Kalawao, and Waikolu, and commonly known or designated as the Kalaupapa Settlement, ~~shall~~ may cease to constitute a county by itself and ~~shall may~~ be and form a portion of the county of Maui ~~or another jurisdiction, subject to on-going discussions regarding the transfer of the department of health's powers and duties when there is no longer a patient resident community at Kalaupapa.~~"

**Justification to consider above amendments :** In its testimony earlier this week before the Water and Land Committee regarding SB2799, the department of health stated in KALAUPAPA TRANSITION UPDATE of AUGUST 2023,, A COLLABORATIVE SUMMARY OF DOH, DHHL, and DLNR the following: "The final transition decisions will be determined by who will take over

jurisdiction of Kalawao County and how the Kalaupapa State Historic Park will continue to operate without DOH involvement or control. These higher-level decisions will require community engagement, executive direction, and interagency dialogue and collaboration.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify

Respectfully submitted

*DeGray Vanderbilt*

DeGray Vanderbilt

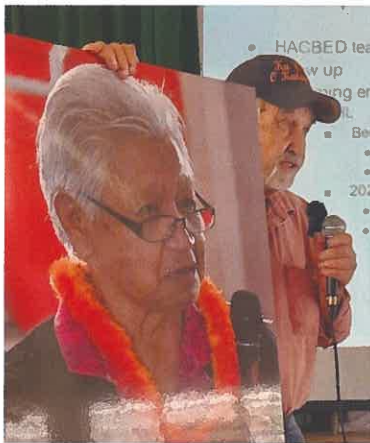
# Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa



"E Ho'ohanohano a E Ho'omau. . .  
 . . . To Honor and To Perpetuate"

## The Future of Kalaupapa

*Will the Voices of the  
 People Finally Be Heard?*



DeGray Vanderbilt, a Board Member of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, addresses an "informational briefing" by government agencies held in Kaunakakai recently about plans for Kalaupapa while holding a photo of the late Pauline Chow, longtime Vice President of Ka 'Ohana. Vanderbilt said the public has not been included in the years of planning for the future of Kalaupapa.

Photo: Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa



Over the past 21 years, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa has held regular meetings to talk about various issues, including the future of Kalaupapa. All events open with pule to help everyone approach the discussions with aloha and respect for one another. Photo: Wayne Levin

In the mid-1990s, Kalaupapa leader Bernard K. Punikai'a was worried: what would the future of Kalaupapa look like when there were no longer any residents (patients) still living? Who would be planning the future? Who would be making the decisions?

Bernard's concern about the future was the driving force to form Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa. It was Bernard's vision that family members and longtime friends join with Kalaupapa residents to make sure the future was planned as the residents wished, that their voices would be heard. Bernard's greatest fear was that the future of Kalaupapa would be shaped by newcomers who had little or no understanding of the history or the people.

Could Bernard's biggest fear become reality?

*Continued on page 10*

# A Message from Our President

## Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa Board of Directors

Charmaine Woodward  
*President*

DeGray Vanderbilt  
*Secretary*

Gloria Marks  
*Director*

Sister Davilyn Ah Chick  
*Director*

Lorna Catalani  
*Director*

Kehaulani Lum  
*Director*

Monica Lee Loy Morris  
*Director*

Valerie Monson  
*Executive Director*

### IN MEMORIAM

Bernard K. Punikai'a  
*Chairman of the Board, 2004-2009*

Kuulei Bell  
*President, 2004-2009*

Clarence "Boogie" Kahilihiwa  
*President, 2009-2021*

Pauline Chow  
*Vice President, 2008-2024*

Our masthead was designed  
by Kalaupapa artist  
Henry Nalaelua.

Newsletter editor:  
Valerie Monson

Design:  
Yellowbird Graphic Design

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www.kalaupapaohana.org  
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*Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa President Charmaine Woodward and Vice President Pauline Ahulau Chow feed Pauline's cats at her home in Kalaupapa in this photo from 2019. Photo: Valerie Monson*

In less than a month, our 'Ohana went from laughter and singing to loss and sorrow. On August 25, as the final event of our four-day tribute to Queen Kapi'olani, we gathered outside the Kalaupapa Care Home to celebrate the upcoming 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Pauline Chow, our dear friend and longtime Vice President of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa. Four weeks later, we learned she had died. I am writing this column with a broken heart — and a growing sense of urgency: we must inspire more descendants to join our 'Ohana to carry on the legacies of our kūpuna.

Fifteen years ago was the first time I set foot in Kalaupapa. There were still 20 residents living in Kalaupapa town; it was a different community. I sat and learned from them all, listening to their stories and hearing stories about my own tūtū Kamahana. When I joined the Board of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa a year later, Auntie Pauline became my "shoulder" partner who I usually sat next to during our meetings.

With Pauline's passing, we have just seven residents remaining who have the right to live at Kalaupapa — four of them live in the settlement.

There is so much to do at Kalaupapa — not only now, but far into the future. I think of the stirring words of "E Na Kini" by Kalaupapa musician Ernest Kala:

*"E nā kini o ka 'āina e ala mai, a e ala pū. E nā mamo o Hawai'i nei e ala mai, (a e ala pū)."*

"Oh people of the land rise up, and rise up, Oh Hawaiian descendants rise up (and rise up together)."

Our Kalaupapa community will soon change forever. The voices and legacy of our kūpuna will be carried on and echoed by each of us, the people of the land, their descendants.

Our time to rise up and take action is now tasked with building 'ike on the imminent future of the sacred places of Kalawao, Makanalua, and Kalaupapa. Know your history, share your stories, attend meetings and make the voices of our ancestors known. Let's hui together to perpetuate and honor the legacy of our kūpuna. who have gone before us so more 'ohana can heal and continue the legacy of the people of Kalaupapa.

Aloha nō,

Charmaine Woodward, President

# Pauline Chow: Wisdom and Aloha

## *Aloha 'Oe to a much-loved kūpuna*

**PAULINE AHULAU CHOW**, a strong Hawaiian wahine and the longtime Vice President of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, died September 22, 2024, less than a month after her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The 'Ohana Board paid tribute to Pauline at their next meeting. Director Sister Davilyn Ah Chick offered thanks to God.

"Thank you very much for Pauline's life and all the years she was part of our Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa Board of Directors and all the years she willingly shared her many God-given talents and abilities," said Sister Davilyn.

Pauline grew up on Hawai'i Island. Adventurous and brave, she landed a job before she was 25 that took her across the US Mainland and to Puerto Rico.

But she also experienced more than her share of sadness. Both parents died by the time she was 5 years old, and her three sisters were — one by one — diagnosed with leprosy and taken away, all of them eventually going to Kalaupapa.

Pauline realized that she had the disease in 1960 and willingly went to Hale Mohalu. There she met George Chow, her future husband. They transferred to Kalaupapa where Pauline became known for her love of music — she was called the Juke Box of Kalaupapa — and her love of words which made her a fierce Scrabble player.

A devout Catholic, Pauline was selected in 2012 as the only Kalaupapa resident to receive Holy Communion from Pope Benedict during the canonization ceremonies for Mother Marianne Cope in Rome.

Pauline was proud of her heritage and loved to share her knowledge of Hawaiian history, culture and language. Debbie Collard, a former nurse at Kalaupapa, was greatly influenced by her time with Pauline.



*Pauline Ahulau Chow sits on the porch of her Kalaupapa home in this 2014 photo, holding a picture that she always kept on display in her living room of her sister, Frances Galarse, with Frances' husband, Januario Galarse, and Gwen, the niece of Frances and Pauline. Photo: Wayne Levin*

"Pauline gave me a true appreciation of what it meant to be Hawaiian," recalled Debbie. "She knew I was *hapa* — as she would say — but made me proud of where I came from and made me want to continue to educate myself on the history, language and music."

Mahalo, Pauline, for your life of strength, wisdom and aloha.

# Honoring a Queen Who

## Our 'Ohana Remembers the 1884 Visit of Queen Kapi'olani to the Settlement



*Queen Kapi'olani, then-Princess Liliu'okalani and others visited the settlement on July 21-22, 1884 to learn about the needs of the community. Hawaiian history professor Colette Higgins believes the Queen is in this photo, sitting side-saddle on the horse on the far right, next to the rock wall. Photo: Hawai'i State Archives*

In the summer of 1884, a ship suddenly appeared — unannounced — off the shores of Kalaupapa with a surprise guest on board: Queen Kapi'olani. With her was then-Princess Liliu'okalani and other dignitaries from Oahu. Word swept across the peninsula: their Queen was at Kalaupapa!

The two-day visit would change the course of the settlement. This was to be no ceremonial appearance by Kapi'olani. She was there to work: to hear her people and to address their concerns, to make life better for them. She would not fail.

This past August, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa commemorated the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this historic visit by the Queen

and her party. Over four days, Ka 'Ohana held educational programs for the community along with other activities to remember this often-forgotten event.

"There were times when I felt that the Queen herself was among us," said Ka 'Ohana President Charmaine Woodward whose great-grandparents were sent to Kalaupapa.

The Queen was vividly brought to life by Hawaiian history professor Colette Higgins who, for nearly 25 years, has made it her mission to delve into the life of Kapi'olani and share her lesser-known story with the world.

But of the countless times that Colette has made these kinds of presentations, walking in the Queen's footsteps

# Changed Kalaupapa

at Kalaupapa with Charmaine and other descendants made history feel like it was unfolding in real time.

“This is probably as close as I’m going to get to the way that Kapi’olani would have experienced it, right?” said Colette. “Because the descendants have discovered stories of their family members, it makes for a different experience, just being with them.

“This is where their ancestors lived, this is where they walked. For me, being with the descendants added a whole different dimension to it.”

The descendants — Charmaine, Desiree McKillip, Georgette Kealoha, Tehani Hinkley, Lopaka Ho’opi’i and his son, Loa’a — brought along the spirit of their ancestors.

“This is our roots, this is our beginning,” said Desiree whose great-grandfather, M.K. Makaena, was sent to Kalaupapa in 1889. “To think we are walking the grounds where our great-grandfather walked is just so very emotional. And even though he was not here when the Queen visited, it’s like he’s here with us.”

Kapi’olani visited every house on the peninsula and those in the hospital, asking about the problems they faced, asking what they needed.

***She was there to work:  
to hear her people and to  
address their concerns, to  
make life better for them.***

*She would not fail.*

The Queen traveled the rugged peninsula on horseback and, as Colette pointed out, she rode side-saddle. Nearly 50 years old at the time, Kapi’olani showed incredible stamina and strength, even navigating the rocky shoreline into remote Waikolu Valley to see the area that could be the source of fresh drinking water to the Kalaupapa side of the peninsula.

When she returned to Honolulu, Kapi’olani wasted no time. She arranged for pipes to be shipped to construct a potable water system to connect Waikolu with Kalaupapa, enabling nearly everyone to move from cold, wet Kalawao to the warmer climate of Kalaupapa.

The Queen also sent lumber to build much-needed housing and organized individual packages of personal items to be sent to each person at Kalaupapa. She established the Kapi’olani Home for Girls in Honolulu to care for girls born at Kalaupapa.

The summer of 1884: an often-forgotten time at Kalaupapa when a Queen listened to the people and took action to help, a time that came alive in the summer of 2024, thanks to Colette Higgins and the descendants of Ka’Ohana O Kalaupapa.



Colette Higgins has spent nearly 25 years researching the life of Queen Kapi’olani and bringing to light her mostly unknown story and impressive accomplishments. Photo: Valerie Monson



During the four days of events organized by Ka’Ohana O Kalaupapa to honor Queen Kapi’olani, Colette Higgins presented two narrated slide shows for the community. Both programs were held in St. Francis Hall at Kalaupapa. Photo: Valerie Monson

## TO LEARN MORE:

See the webinar about Queen Kapi’olani and Kalaupapa by Colette Higgins on the website at: [www.kalaupapaohana.org](http://www.kalaupapaohana.org)



Norma Todd places a lei on the tombstone of her great-grandfather, Pin Kau Ching, who is buried in the Chinese Cemetery outside of Kalaupapa town. Photo: Valerie Monson



Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa held four community events at Kalaupapa this year, including three educational programs, meals, singalongs and discussions. A narrated slide show about "The Living Tombstones of Kalaupapa" was attended by nearly 30 Kalaupapa residents, workers and guests in July. Photo: DeGray Vanderbilt



Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa commemorated Kalaupapa remembrance day to honor the first 12 people sent to the island. One of the events was a walk to Kalawao where we thought of our ancestors. Photo: Valerie Monson



Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa invited the community to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Vice President Pauline Chow during the Queen Kapi'olani weekend in August. Sadly, Pauline unexpectedly died a month later. Photo: Anne Farahi



Pauline Chow's Birthday Party  
Photo: Charmaine Woodward



From right: Kalaupapa resident John Arruda, Ka 'Ohana Board Member DeGray Vanderbilt, St. Louis School Principal Timothy Los Banos and St. Louis alumni Ryan Hurley at Kalaupapa. Photo: Valerie Monson

## In 2024, Ka 'Ohana ra after years of COVID re

One of the hardships that resulted from the COVID-19 restrictions, was the strict limitations on visitors at Kalaupapa. Unable to conduct our face-to-face programs with the Kalaupapa community or help descendants visit the land of their ancestors, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa had to retool our outreach to virtual activities only.

In 2024, things began getting back to normal . . . although a new normal. Ka 'Ohana was excited to hold four community events at Kalaupapa, brought in descendants who had never before visited the land of their ancestors and organized a birthday celebration for Kalaupapa resident and Ka 'Ohana Vice President Pauline Chow.

But challenges remain. Ground transportation for bigger groups is

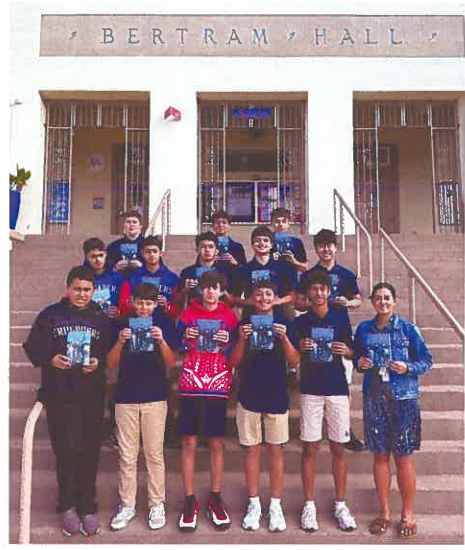
# LAUPAPA



... at Kalaupapa on January 6 with a laupapa on that day in 1866. Included with the only journey of those first 12 individuals.



Antone Aku, whose great-uncle is buried at Kalaupapa, presented plumeria blossoms at the ahū of the Kalaupapa Memorial. Photo: Valerie Monson



To observe Kalaupapa Month last January, the students of Kumu Kawai Bluhm read "The True Story of Kaluaikoolau as Told by His Wife Piilani." Photo: Courtesy St. Louis School

## ped up activities rictions

difficult because of the scarcity of large vans available to the community. Two smaller vans are privately owned, including one by Ka 'Ohana which was purchased to replace the bigger, older vehicle which fell into disrepair during the COVID years. There is also less visitor housing available.



St. Francis Church always welcomes families from Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa to Sunday Mass. Photo: Valerie Monson



One of the highlights of any visit to Kalaupapa is taking in the view from the overlook on the edge of Kalawao, looking toward Waikolu Valley, the towering pali of the North Shore of Molokai and the islets of Mōkapu and 'Okāla. Photo: Charmaine Woodward.

This means it's not yet possible to return to the days of the large annual gatherings Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa once hosted. Ka 'Ohana appreciates the Department of Health working with us to streamline the process for descendants to visit the settlement under the supervision of 'Ohana leaders.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Kalaupapa community on moving forward in whatever ways we can with respect to the wishes of the residents.



Ka 'Ohana holds educational presentations at our Kalaupapa house whenever we can. Photo: Charmaine Woodward

# The Kalaupapa Memorial

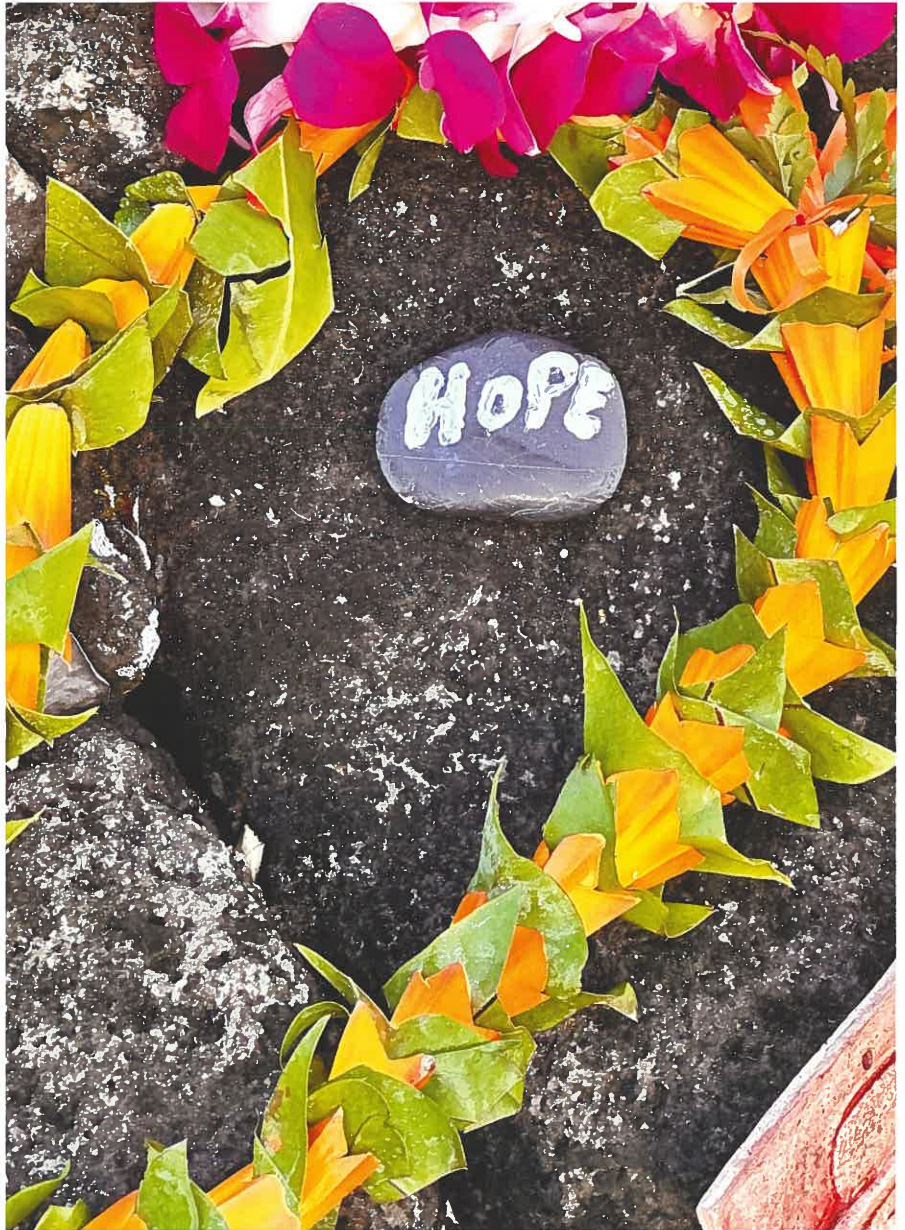
## WE MUST PERSEVERE

In the summer of 2022, the Kalaupapa Memorial reached a milestone when the State Legislature unanimously approved \$5 million to plan and build this long-awaited dream of the people of Kalaupapa. Governor David Ige signed the legislation into law.

More than two years later, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa is still waiting for the first distribution of the funds to be released. This past October, the State Department of Health gave Ka 'Ohana a 63-page draft contract to review and accept. As this newsletter was being written, our 'Ohana leaders and attorneys were appraising the contract. We are hoping this is the start of a path forward.

Ka 'Ohana has also been presented with new requirements by the National Park Service and the Department of Land and Natural Resources before the Memorial can be built. Leaders of Ka 'Ohana have been involved in numerous meetings to satisfy these prerequisites — and get the Memorial constructed.

It has been exhausting and, at times, frustrating, but we must continue to persevere and rest assured that the spirit of the people who will be remembered on the Memorial will prevail. We look forward to continued progress with the government agencies so we can dedicate the Memorial while there are still residents living at Kalaupapa.



*This "Hope" rock rests upon the ahu at the site of the Kalaupapa Memorial. The stone was painted by Pi'olani Motta, a staunch supporter of the Kalaupapa Memorial who has family members buried at Kalaupapa. Pi'olani died in 2020. Photo: Charmaine Woodward*

# John Arruda: Strong and Active at 100

Kalaupapa resident John Arruda proved, yet again, that he is one-of-a-kind: On April 12, 2024, surrounded by family, friends and a congratulatory video from the Governor, John celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

He is believed to be the first person to turn 100 after being sent to Kalaupapa.

John, who grew up on Kauai, was ordered to Kalaupapa at the age of 21 in 1945 because he had leprosy. In an interview with Valerie Monson, he recalled that first day as clearly as yesterday.

"You look at the cliff, the ocean — and you have no one," said John. "I remember thinking 'You've got to take care of yourself because no one else is going to take care of you.'"

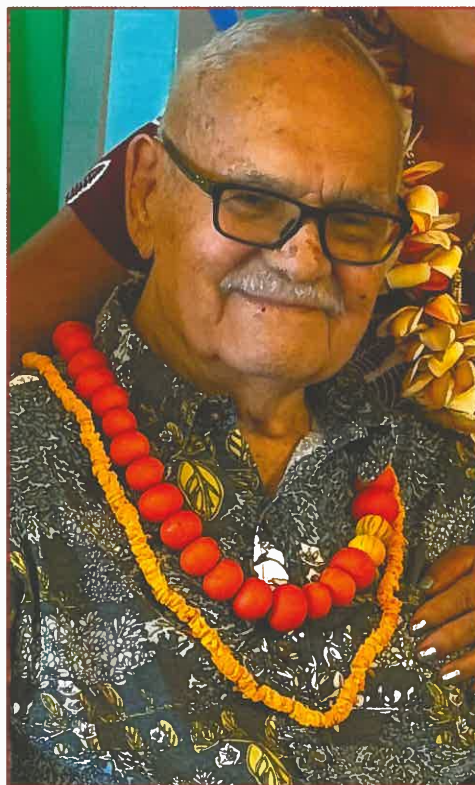
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*“You just have to accept what’s happened to you, . . . You have to accept it and move forward.”*

John has done just that. He exercises every day, watches what he eats, remains positive and appreciates the good genetics of his long living 'ohana. As a result, he still lives independently in his home at Kalaupapa, drives his pickup anywhere he wants, stays in touch with family and friends — and looks 25 years younger than what his birth certificate says.

The key to his good life happened during those first few years at Kalaupapa. Young John had to rely on his mental strength and faith, acknowledging the new reality that he could not change. He had to find new hope.

"You just have to accept what's happened to you," Arruda continued during his interview with Valerie. "You have to accept it and move forward."



John Arruda at his birthday party. Photo: Debbie Piper

That's what I did because . . . you have to. You do other things. You play sports, you go to church, you have your friends."

Arruda's life is a lesson for all of us: accept the adversities and heartbreaks that we all face at some point. After releasing the pain or anger, accept what you can't change and find a way to move forward.

At age 100, John Arruda is grateful and filled with grace.

"I'm one of the lucky ones," he said softly. "I thank God for my life, I thank my family, I thank my friends. I give thanks for Kalaupapa."

# The Future of Kalaupapa: Will the



A longstanding tradition of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa is our Circle of Remembrance, held at most of our events at the future site of the Kalaupapa Memorial where Kalaupapa residents, descendants and friends hold hands and speak aloud the names of loved ones at Kalaupapa who have died. Photo: Wayne Levin

Continued from page 1

Even though Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa has held numerous discussions about the future of Kalaupapa since organizing in 2003 and even developed a 28-page Position Paper with ideas to manage the land and preserve the history, plans about the "transition" of Kalaupapa have been limited to a transitional planning team consisting solely of government officials who are mostly meeting in Honolulu.

Leaders of Ka 'Ohana and descendants of Kalaupapa have not been consulted about the future of Kalaupapa—requests to join the government leaders on the transition team have been denied. The upper Molokai community which has a longstanding interest in what happens at Kalaupapa has not been included — neither have the Hawaiian homestead beneficiaries who have thoughts on opening up homestead lands on the peninsula.

There are now just seven individuals who have the right to live at Kalaupapa — those people who were affected by leprosy/Hansen's disease. Four of them still live in the settlement .

In early October, leaders of the State Department of Health, Kalaupapa National Historical Park, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands and the Department of Transportation held an "informational briefing" in Kaunakakai where they heard the frustrations of the public.

"My takeaway is that the community has demanded to have a space at the table of decision-making," Maui County Councilwoman Keani-Rawlins Fernandez told *Hawai'i News Now* after the meeting.

Rawlins-Fernandez and State Representative Mahina Poepoe intend to make that happen. The two



During a leadership workshop several years ago, participants described how the values and objectives of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa would lead to our collective kuleana to remember the people of Kalaupapa. Photo: Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa



Kalaupapa residents have long provided the heart, soul and wisdom behind our 'Ohana during our many discussions over the years: (from left): Winnie Harada (sitting), Pauline Chow, and John Arruda with Noelani Kauahikaua, Pauline's relative (in the middle). Photo: Wayne Levin

# Voices of the People Finally Be Heard?



Monica Bacon, great-great niece of Kalaupapa unsung hero Ambrose Hutchison, leads a discussion about the Kalaupapa Memorial at the 2016 annual meeting. 'Ohana meetings and events are always open to anyone at Kalaupapa and invited guests. Photo: Wayne Levin



Lopaka Ho'opi'i, whose father was born at Kalaupapa, makes a point during a session of an annual meeting. Lopaka would like to see Kalaupapa opened to homesteading in the future. Photo: Wayne Levin

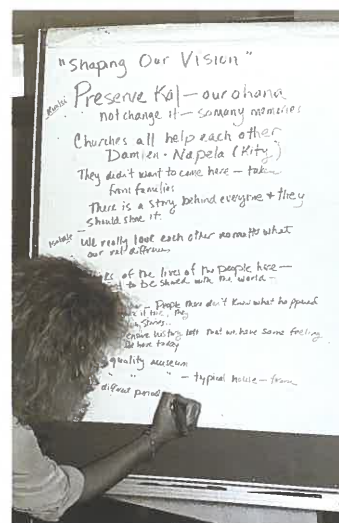
elect Molokai leaders announced they would form a Working Group that will include other voices to discuss the future of Kalaupapa — finally giving many knowledgeable members of the community a chance to weigh in. Government officials will be welcome to join.

The Working Group is expected to have its first meeting before the end of the year. There are numerous questions about the future of Kalaupapa that have yet to be discussed:

- Although Kalaupapa National Historical Park was established in 1980, what happens when the State Department of Health leaves following the death of the last resident (patient)? Will the federal government be in full control of Kalaupapa with possibly no accountability to anyone else?
- Will a local, non-government group have a leading role to provide oversight of government operations at Kalaupapa and be involved in shaping policies?
- Will homesteading be permitted on the nearly 1,300 acres of Hawaiian Homelands at Kalaupapa?
- If the federal government leaves, where will the money come from to manage Kalaupapa, maintain the buildings and provide support for a new community? Will Kalawao County continue or will the peninsula become part of Maui County?
- How will tourism be handled?
- Will the lands of Kalaupapa be returned to the Hawaiian people?

All these questions need to be vetted. Since 2003, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa has urged government leaders to not only discuss these issues with the community, but to listen to them for guidance and direction. In fact, the theme of the 2004 annual meeting of Ka 'Ohana was "We Want to Be Part of the Process."

Finally, that might happen.



In 2005, Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa devoted its annual meeting to gathering thoughts and ideas about the future of Kalaupapa. This two-day discussion led to the National Park Service's decision to develop a General Management Plan for the future of Kalaupapa. Photo: Wayne Levin



Aina Akamu, whose grandparents were sent to Kalaupapa and are buried there, leads a Remembrance Ceremony at the ahu which will become the piko (center) of the Kalaupapa Memorial. Photo: Wayne Levin

# Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa

"E Ho'ohanohano a E Ho'omau. . .

. . . To Honor and To Perpetuate"

P.O. Box 1111

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Aloha 'oe Pauline Chow



## Mele Kalikimaka from Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa

### Peace On Earth



**S**anta Claus takes a break from his annual visit to Kalaupapa to relax by the ocean while sending thoughts of good will and peace to all.

Photo: Valerie Monson

### Support Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa

Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and relies on donations from supporters like you to enable our programs to grow. Your tax-deductible contributions will help us reconnect more descendants to their Kalaupapa ancestors, continue and expand our educational programs, establish the Kalaupapa Memorial and more. Please consider a donation to the 'Ohana.

Mahalo in advance.

Send your donations to:

**Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa**

PO Box 1111

Kalaupapa, Hawaii'i 96742

Or donate by visiting our 'Ohana website

[www.kalaupapaohana.org](http://www.kalaupapaohana.org)



Mahalo to GOG Hawaii Foundation for their generous support with the production costs of this newsletter.



## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB1432 (WITH AMENDMENTS) IN SUPPORT OF SB2799

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthias “Sumu” Asano, an HHCA beneficiary from Kapa’akea, Moloka’i. I am a current Lessee on Kapa’akea Homestead and am also a current seat holder on our Homestead Association Board. I OPPOSE SB1432 in its current form and SUPPORT SB2799 as the appropriate with amendment to include beneficiaries at the table and responsible next step.

### Why We Oppose Absorbing Kalawao into Maui County

- **Lack of enforcement:** Maui County has inconsistent enforcement, putting sensitive lands like Kalaupapa at risk.
- **Slow permitting:** Projects take months or years—delaying housing and improvements for beneficiaries.
- **Poor stewardship:** Maui County has struggled to effectively manage growth, protect natural resources, and balance development with cultural preservation.
- **Failure to protect the trust:** HHCA lands require fiduciary responsibility—county control does not prioritize beneficiaries.
- **Risk of breach of trust:** Expanding county jurisdiction risks conflicting priorities that do not center the trust or its beneficiaries and puts the State at risk.
- **Loss of beneficiary control:** This removes decision-making from those with rightful ties to the land and undermines long-standing efforts toward **beneficiary-led governance** and **self-determination**.
- **Kalawao already exists:** It is a legally recognized county under Hawaii State Law(Hawaii Revised Statutes)—strengthen it, don’t dissolve it.
- **Better path forward:** Start with a Kalaupapa pilot program to build beneficiary-led governance before expanding. This allows beneficiaries to build capacity and prove a model before scaling to the rest of Moloka’i.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to completely REMOVE THE TRANSFER TO MAUI COUNTY from SB1432 and ADD DHHL’S ROLE to SECURE BENEFICIARY’S POSITION.

Kalaupapa is not just a place — it is a living legacy with deep cultural, historical, and trust significance. Any decisions about its future must be informed, transparent, and grounded in the voices of the beneficiaries, families who are most directly impacted.

“We are not against change—we are against rushed decisions that risk our trust, our lands, and our future. Let us do this right, with beneficiaries at the center. We are asking to strengthen SB1432 so it protects beneficiaries through required consultation and ensures a responsible transition.

Mahalo nui,



Matthias “Sumu” Asano

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 2:10:42 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mahealani P	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Hashem, and members of the Water and Land Committee.

Mahalo for hearing this bill.

If this is something the community of Moloka'i wants, then a discussion can be held. There hasn't been much outreach for community input, from what I can see. However, no decision should be made until the voices of those who will be impacted directly are heard. I understand that this is a special circumstance as it involves resolving a County and the significant cultural history surrounding Kalaupapa. My comments would be to talk to the community, gather feedback, and allow people to share their voices. As you know, the history is deep, and the need for protecting this place is evident to the people of Molokai. I mahalo you all for your work on this and appreciate you for trying to address this ahead of time. All I ask is that you continue this discussion and respect the culture, the people, and the history of Kalaupapa.

Mahalo!

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 2:13:11 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kahealani W.	Individual	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Hashem, and members of the Water and Land Committee.

Mahalo for hearing this bill.

If this is something the Moloka'i community wants, a discussion can be held. There hasn't been much outreach for community input, as far as I can tell. However, no decision should be made until the voices of those who will be impacted directly are heard. I understand that this is a special circumstance as it involves resolving a County and the significant cultural history surrounding Kalaupapa. My comments would be to talk to the community, gather feedback, and allow people to share their voices. As you know, the history is deep, and the need for protecting this place is evident to the people of Molokai. I mahalo you all for your work on this and appreciate you for trying to address this ahead of time. All I ask is that you continue this discussion and respect the culture, the people, and the history of Kalaupapa.

Mahalo.

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 10:13:10 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Kahawaiolaa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

NOTICE

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB1432 (WITH AMENDMENTS) IN SUPPORT OF SB2799

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Patrick Kahawaiolaa , an HHCA beneficiary from Hawai'i island and the Ikuha'i of a newly formed entity representing native Hawaiian Kupuna beneficiaries on the wait list and others already with an award called Komike O Kūpuna Ainahoopulapula, KOKA...

I OPPOSE SB1432 in its current form and SUPPORT SB2799 as the appropriate and responsible next step.... and my reasons are as follows:

It is Categorically undeniable that tge lands of Kalawao County is A designated Hawaiian homelands under a unique legal arrangement where the state Department of Health (DOH) Retain jurisdiction to manage care for the remaining leprosy (Hansen disease), until the last patient passes away...

The Peninsula is legally classified under the Hawaiian Hones Commission Act, as Land set aside for native Hawaiians, as defined, pursuant to HHCA 1920 as amended, July 9, 1921 (42, 42 stat 108), 67th Congress...

So therefore I must Stronhly OBJECT... to the alienation of our trust lands to the national Park service and Mau County...

the Hawaiian homes. Commission is the exclusive authority over those lands and if this measure moves forward, I would clearly request that the consent of the United States. Congress be brought forward to the beneficiaries. That's such consent by the United States Congress through its Dept. Of Interior transferring these lands to the national Park service in Maui County...

On February 11, 2026, Moloka'i HHCA homestead leaders, beneficiaries, and community members convened to discuss the future governance of Kalawao County and Kalaupapa. Participants included representatives from Ho'olehua, Kalama'ula, Ualapu'e, Kapa'akea, and individuals with direct ties to Kalaupapa. There was a clear and unified message:

Although it is understood that Dept. of Health must provide a plan forward to address the last patient's passing. There MUST be priorities in planning, consultation, and trust protections.

SB1432, as currently written, moves toward governance changes without: Required HHCA beneficiary consultation, a comprehensive, publicly reviewed transition plan...without either of these steps...This raises serious concerns for beneficiaries, as these decisions directly affect decision making. and may be in violation of the mandatory rule making procedure pursuant to HRS CHAPTER 91, Administrative Rulemaking...

I respectfully urge the Legislature to amend SB1432 to include:

1) That the Hawaiian Home Commission (HHC) through their EXCLUSIVE powers over land uses on trust lands, the Department of the Interior (DOI), and after Consulting with their beneficiaries, then and only then the Hawaiian Homes Commission... invite the National Park Services to stewardship a requirement that the Hawaiian Home Commission shall invite "others" to be a full partner in all planning...

2) Future homestead access and availability

3) Cultural and community integrity

4) A clear provision that final transfer of governance shall require separate legislative authorization, like the CONSENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

Kalaupapa is not just a place — it is a living legacy with deep cultural, historical, and trust significance. Any decisions about its future must be informed, transparent, and grounded in the voices of the beneficiaries, families who are most directly impacted....

HHCA beneficiaries are not opposing progress —We are asking to strengthen SB1432 so it protects beneficiaries through required consultation and ensures a responsible uses of our trust lands...

I can be reached at (808) 937-8217

E Hana Pono... Mai Pono Hana...

Do what is Right...Do not just do it

Patrick Kahawaiola'a, A

**SB-1432-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2026 8:34:42 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laa Poepoe	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

testimony sb1432:

comments

1. The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) and the Admission Act create a "limited purpose" trust. Using trust land or funds to provide municipal services (police, fire, trash) to the general public (non-beneficiaries, National Park staff, tourists) is a likely breach of fiduciary duty.

Courts generally rule that trust assets must be used *exclusively* for the benefit of the native Hawaiian beneficiaries. Forcing DHHL to act as a county government creates an inherent conflict of interest between its duty to beneficiaries and its duty to the general public.

2. While Kalawao is legally a county under HRS §326-34, it only exists because the Department of Health (DOH) acts as its "board of supervisors."

To "strengthen" it as an independent entity, the State would have to grant it taxing authority. Since the land is mostly State-owned or Trust land, there is no private property to tax. Without a tax base, the "county" cannot legally exist as a self-sustaining political subdivision under the Hawai'i State Constitution.

3. There is a narrow legal argument that County zoning could interfere with DHHL's right to develop homesteads.

The Hawai'i Supreme Court generally finds that while DHHL is exempt from some county codes for *homesteading purposes*, the land itself still sits within the broader geographic jurisdiction of the State and County for law enforcement and general safety. Moving jurisdiction to Maui County does not "remove" the land from the Trust; it simply changes who provides the police and fire trucks.

4. Hawai'i law does not currently recognize a "Pilot County."

Creating a new form of "beneficiary-led governance" that bypasses the existing County structure would likely require an amendment to the State Constitution (Article VIII). Furthermore, if this governance excludes non-Hawaiians from voting or participation in municipal decisions, it would face immediate challenges under the 14th Amendment (Equal Protection Clause) and the Voting Rights Act, similar to the *Rice v. Cayetano* ruling.

5. From a legal standpoint, it is always defensible to ask the Legislature to choose one bill over another. However, SB2799 does not solve the technical "municipal gap" that occurs when the DOH leaves. It advocates for beneficiary "at the table" status, which is a policy preference, not a legal requirement for county integration.