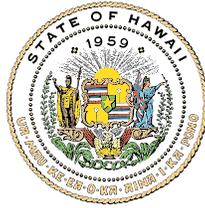


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



KALBERT K. YOUNG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GAIL STROHL
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII'
EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

TESTIMONY BY KALBERT YOUNG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
& ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2606

February 11, 2026

1:00 PM

Conference Room 224 and VIA Videoconference

RELATING TO WILDLIFE.

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees,

While the Board of Trustees (BOT) has not had a chance to review the bill, the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) believes they would have concerns regarding SB 2606 and is thankful for the opportunity to offer comments.

SB 2606 proposes to amend Chapter 88 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to include employees of the freshwater state recreation area wildlife sanctuary corporation (herein after the corporation) to be members of the ERS.

There are concerns whether employees of the corporation would fall under the definition of employees under section 88-21, HRS. It is not clear if these employees would be government (state) employees as the existing bill language under Section 3 explicitly specifies that the "corporation" is not a public (governmental) agency or instrumentality



Employees' Retirement System
of the State of Hawaii

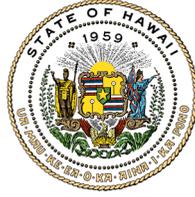
and Section 7(f) states that employees of the corporation shall not be considered officers or employees of the State except for inclusion as ERS members.

Providing benefits to employees who are not entitled to membership would violate the requirement that the corpus be used for the exclusive benefit of members and their beneficiaries pursuant to 88-22.5(a), HRS. This section is to conform plan rules to Internal Revenue Code, amended 1986, to qualify the ERS and its participants for beneficial tax treatment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 2606.

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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

LATE

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

Before the Senate Committees on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
and
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday, February 11, 2026
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2606
RELATING TO WILDLIFE

Senate Bill 2606 seeks to establish the Freshwater State Recreation Area Wildlife Sanctuary Corporation to: (1) establish a wildlife sanctuary within a recreation area that holds a body of freshwater; (2) promote conservation within the recreation area that holds a body of freshwater; and (3) provide grants and other payments to improve conservation within the recreation area that holds a body of freshwater. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) offers the following comments.**

By definition, wildlife sanctuaries fall under the mission and jurisdiction of the Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW). In addition, the freshwater component referenced in this measure suggests potential overlap with responsibilities typically associated with the Department's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). Accordingly, implementation of this proposal would likely require coordination with both DOFAW and DAR to ensure consistency with their respective missions and statutory authorities.

The Department notes that provisions of this measure appear to establish wildlife sanctuary designations on lands that may currently allow public recreational use. Accordingly, the Department stands ready to provide technical drafting assistance should this measure advance to ensure consistency with the recreational mission of the Division of State Parks (DSP) and compliance with the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a source of grant funding for DSP.

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

The Department supports legislation that advances conservation through partnership and collaboration. With greater clarity regarding roles, responsibilities, and interagency coordination, this measure has the potential to contribute positively to conservation efforts, wildlife preservation, and public engagement statewide. The Department emphasizes the importance of ensuring that any corporate entity established under this measure operates in coordination with existing Department statutory authorities.

The Department supports thoughtful efforts to protect wildlife and freshwater resources in alignment with existing missions, land use designations, and legal requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.