

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY
CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER
AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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

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

**Thursday, March 19, 2026
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3169, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

Senate Bill 3169, Senate Draft 1, proposes to establish a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) for the preservation of Mantokuji Bay. The bill would exempt the pilot program from multiple state and county regulatory requirements and require the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) to conduct a streamlined historic preservation review. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) has significant concerns with this approach and offers the following comments.**

While the Department supports comprehensive coastal resilience planning for Mantokuji Bay, this bill would waive essential environmental and land-use protections and shift substantive shoreline decision-making away from the regulatory agencies charged with protecting public trust resources.

The Department recognizes the urgent and complex erosion issues on the north shore of Maui, which threaten the historic Mantokuji Sōtō Mission in Pā'ia and its associated cemetery. Representatives of the Mission contacted the Department in 2016 regarding erosion at the site. The Department worked with the Mission to review mitigation strategies. In response to the immediate risk to the Mission, the Department issued Emergency Conservation District Use Permit MA 21-02 on August 9, 2020, authorizing the temporary placement of erosion control measures to stabilize the shoreline while long-term mitigation strategies were explored.

Since that time, the Department has remained in regular communication with the Mission's consultants and has conducted site visits. Photos from September 12, 2024, inspection

demonstrating the severity of erosion at the Bay are attached to this testimony. Acknowledging the ongoing and evolving nature of the threat, the Department authorized expansions of the original emergency structure and extensions of both the emergency permit and the associated revocable permit for use of State lands. Both permits are currently set to expire in May 2026.

The Department has not yet received a long-term mitigation plan or permit application for review, despite those being conditions of their Emergency Permit

The Department supports the development of a comprehensive coastal resilience strategy for Mantokuji Bay and agrees that effective remediation should address the bay as a natural coastal cell rather than on a parcel-by-parcel basis. However, the Department does not believe that the State should waive its regulatory oversight over public trust resources by exempting any future coastal resilience plan from compliance with Chapter 183C, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), relating to Conservation Districts; Chapter 205A, HRS, relating to Coastal Zone Management; and Chapter 343, HRS, relating to Environmental Review. These statutes are foundational to the State's responsibility to ensure environmental protection, public participation, and informed decision-making.

Senate Bill 3169, Senate Draft 1, also requires SHPD to conduct a streamlined historic preservation review of the proposed program. This is difficult to commit to without first knowing the scope, scale, and specific impacts of the measures that would be proposed under the pilot program, as well as whether sufficient resources would be available to support such an expedited review.

The Department has no objection to DBEDT taking a coordinating or leadership role in the development of a coastal resilience program for Mantokuji Bay. However, DBEDT is not a regulatory agency, and decisions regarding land use within the Conservation District should remain with the Board of Land and Natural Resources, consistent with existing law and the State's public trust obligations.

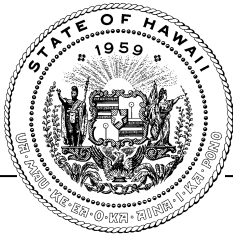
Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



Figure 1 Sandbags used for temporary erosion control at Mantokuji Bay



Figure 2 Turtle resting on the beach fronting the cemetery at Mantokuji Bay



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE, AND THE ARTS

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

in consideration of
SB 3169, SD1
RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE.

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports and offers the following comments** on SB 3169 SD1 which establishes a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the preservation of Mantokuji Bay and exempts the Pilot Program from certain regulatory requirements.

OPSD appreciates the intent of SB 3169 and concurs that regional shoreline management is an appropriate approach to address coastal hazards in order to protect beaches, dunes, and access to public resources, and to develop proactive and long-term strategies to reduce the risk of coastal hazards to shoreline properties and infrastructure. OPSD has completed multiple phases of its long-term Regional Shoreline Management Initiative, including developing a potential methodology for delineating shoreline regions for adaptation planning purposes, and consultations with relevant State, County and Federal agencies.

If the committee is inclined to move this measure forward, OPSD will assist DBEDT with planning and stakeholder coordination for the Coastal Resilience Pilot Program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**TESTIMONY PROVIDING COMMENTS ON SB3169 SD1
RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

House Committee on Water & Land
Hawai‘i State Capitol

Malaki 19, 2026

9:00 AM

Lumi 411

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides **COMMENTS on SB3169 SD1**. We recognize the serious and ongoing erosion impacts affecting Mantokuji Bay, including threats to the historic Paia Mantokuji Soto Mission and adjacent cemetery. We agree that addressing erosion at the scale of an entire coastal cell—rather than through continued parcel-by-parcel responses—is an appropriate and necessary conversation for the State.

Our primary concern, however, is that the measure would exempt the proposed regional coastal remediation program from the statutory frameworks the Legislature has established to govern shoreline management (Section 2, subsection (f)). While the bill does not expressly authorize shoreline hardening, it would exempt the program from provisions that otherwise restrict or carefully regulate such structures. Those laws were developed in response to well-documented cumulative impacts of shoreline armoring and reflect decades of scientific analysis and policy deliberation. Several private parcels within Mantokuji Bay appear to be hardened. Scientific findings consistently demonstrate that individual shoreline armoring can exacerbate erosion on adjacent properties and contribute to long-term beach loss across an entire coastal cell, likely contributing to the serious conditions in the bay. The 2017 *Hawai‘i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report* identifies shoreline armoring as a primary driver of beach loss statewide and emphasizes avoidance, relocation, and managed retreat in areas experiencing chronic erosion.¹ Legislative findings adopted in Act 16 (2020) similarly acknowledge that hardening undermines long-term coastal resilience.

¹ Hawai‘i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. 2017. [*Hawai‘i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report*](#). Prepared by Tetra Tech, Inc. and the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, under the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources Contract No: 64064.

Given this context, we are concerned that exempting a regional program from existing coastal management requirements could undermine the careful balance the State has struck in managing shoreline resources. If a regional remediation effort is to proceed at Mantokuji Bay, it should do so within the established permitting and environmental review framework. Environmental review under Chapter 343 ensures that cumulative impacts and alternatives such as nature-based approaches or managed retreat are fully evaluated before significant shoreline interventions occur. Coastal zone management requirements under Chapter 205A similarly ensure that shoreline development and shoreline protection measures are evaluated for consistency with the State’s policies to preserve beaches, protect coastal ecosystems, and maintain public access and use of shoreline resources. Conservation District protections under Chapter 183C further require careful review of activities within sensitive coastal areas to ensure that uses of public trust lands are consistent with the long-term protection of natural and cultural resources. These legal frameworks were established with these broader considerations in mind and prioritize long-term, sustainable shoreline management over short-term or immediate responses. Creating project-specific exemptions from these essential environmental protection provisions risks setting a precedent for bypassing safeguards in other erosion-prone areas. **Accordingly, OHA recommends removing subsection (f) of Section 2, to ensure that long-term resilience and resource protection remain central to the State’s approach.**

Regarding historic preservation review, OHA supports the amendments in subsection (d) that clarify procedures when Native Hawaiian burials may be encountered and ensure the Island Burial Councils have adequate time to consult with lineal and cultural descendants. OHA also appreciates the inclusion of consultation with our office and additionally requests consultation at the initial stage of the historic review process to ensure consistency with our statutory responsibilities.

OHA remains concerned with the imposed 45-day review deadline for the State Historic Preservation Division. The proposed project is complex and compressing that timeline may compromise the thoroughness of review. We believe the existing 90-day timeline is sufficient and question the necessity of a 45-day timeline. **Accordingly, to effectuate the above requests, OHA suggests amending subsection (c) by deleting lines 10-18 at page 5, and consider replacing it with the following:**

“The applicant shall consult with the office of Hawaiian affairs and provide the office an opportunity to review and comment on the archaeological literature review findings, archaeological monitoring plan, and any effect determinations before the pilot program proceeds.”

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to the careful consideration of our **COMMENTS on SB3169 SD1.**

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers
Kauanoë 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
www.MauiCounty.us

March 17, 2026

TO: Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Water & Land

FROM: Nohelani U'u-Hodgins *Nohelani U'u-Hodgins*
Councilmember

DATE: Thursday, March 19, 2026
9:00 a.m., Conference Room 411

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3169, SD1, RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to establish a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the preservation of Mantokuji Bay; exempts the Pilot Program from certain regulatory requirements; requires the State Historic Preservation Division to conduct a streamlined historic preservation review; requires the inadvertent discovery of Native Hawaiian skeletal remains to trigger certain procedures; requires the Pilot Program to cooperate with the Department of Health to conduct certain activities upon certain discoveries; and requires annual reports to the Legislature.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

Mantokuji Bay is a special place in our community, which faces a coastal erosion crisis that threatens homes, businesses, cultural resources, and critical infrastructure along its one-mile shoreline. The historic Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission, whose annual Obon Festival draws thousands of visitors and generates significant economic activity for Paia's small businesses, is just one of many properties at risk.

March 17, 2026

Page 2

The entire bay is eroding at approximately 1.6 feet per year. Homeowners face property loss. The Hana Highway, a vital transportation corridor, is increasingly exposed to coastal hazards. Endangered sea turtles are losing the beach habitat they depend on. This is not a problem that can be solved one property at a time.

SB 3169, SD1 takes a smart and comprehensive approach. Treating Mantokuji Bay as a single coastal system and streamlining regulatory processes enables the kind of bay-wide restoration that coastal science demands. Importantly, the bill maintains environmental and cultural protections while allowing for timely and effective action.

Protecting Mantokuji Bay protects Paia's economy - its residents, its businesses, its cultural institutions, and the visitors who come to experience this special place.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support of SB 3169, SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.



Written Statement of
DR. PATRICK SULLIVAN
CEO, OCEANIT

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Thursday, March 19, 2026
9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Videoconference

In Support of
SB3169 SD1 RELATING TO COASTAL RESILIENCE

To: Chair Representative Mark Hashem, Vice Chair Representative Dee Morikawa,
and Members of the Committee

From: Dr. Patrick Sullivan, CEO

Re: Testimony in Support of SB3169 SD1

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

Oceanit Laboratories, Inc. strongly supports SB3169 SD1, which establishes a five-year Coastal Resilience Pilot Program for the restoration and preservation of Mantokuji Bay, Paia, Maui. The House has already passed the companion measure, HB2490 HD2, through three committees with broad support. We respectfully urge this Committee to pass SB3169 SD1.

Oceanit is a forty-year-old Hawai'i-based science and engineering firm with deep experience in coastal resilience and infrastructure protection. Hawai'i's parcel-by-parcel regulatory approach has failed our coastlines for decades; sediment transport and wave energy do not respect property boundaries, and piecemeal hardening has made the overall problem worse. SB3169 SD1 takes a fundamentally different approach: treating Mantokuji Bay as the natural coastal cell it is, approximately one mile of interconnected shoreline bounded by headlands, and enabling comprehensive, science-based restoration.

The urgency is clear. The coastline is retreating at approximately 1.6 feet per year. Ancestral burials (cemetery) at the Mantokuji Temple, the oldest Soto Zen Buddhist temple in the State, established in 1906 and listed on the Hawai'i Register of Historic Places. Part of the cemetery has already fallen into the ocean. The Hana Highway, the sole transportation corridor for northeast Maui communities, is increasingly exposed to coastal hazards. UHERO's February 2026 statewide survey found that 63% of policymakers reported the state is underprepared to deal with sea level rise, while nearly 90% of residents want state leaders to act immediately.

SB3169 SD1 balances urgency with protection. Native Hawaiian burial treatment provisions developed in consultation with SHPD ensure Island Burial Council authority, full descendant consultation, and mandatory work stoppage upon discovery of iwi

kūpuna. All federal regulatory requirements are maintained, including Army Corps permits, NHPA Section 106, Endangered Species Act consultation, and Clean Water Act certification. Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution protecting traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights is explicitly preserved.

The pilot program sunsets on June 30, 2031 and annual legislative reporting requirement ensures full accountability. If this model proves effective, it will give the Legislature the evidence base to determine whether the approach should be extended to other threatened coastlines statewide.

We strongly urge the Committee to pass SB3169 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



House Committee on Water & Land

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9 AM Hearing in Conference Room 411 on
SB 3169, SD1 Relating to Coastal Resilience

TESTIMONY

Douglas Meller, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii has major concerns with SB 3169, SD1.

There is no public information and the League has no position concerning planning, design, or funding of the proposed pilot project. However, because Hawaii's normal regulatory procedures and requirements facilitate informed public participation in management of coastal development, we oppose exemption of the project from Chapters 343, 183C, and 205A, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). Moreover, neither the DBEDT nor the OPSD has ever publicly requested to exempt this pilot project from public disclosure and evaluation under Chapter 343, HRS; or from DLNR/BLNR determination of the "regulatory" shoreline under Chapter 205A, HRS; or from DLNR/BLNR Conservation District regulation under Chapter 183C, HRS; or from Maui Planning Commission special management and shoreline setback area regulation under Chapter 205A, HRS.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-3169-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:00:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Moto	Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

Eric Moto, president of the Mantokuji Kyodan, here again humbly asking now for your support of Senate Bill 3169 to give Mantokuji, our expert consultants at Oceanit, and government authorities the opportunity to work on alternative solutions that will restore and preserve our shoreline and allow our historic temple to remain and thrive in our Paia community. Mahalo for your support.

SB-3169-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 1:32:52 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathleen Murayama	Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB3169 SD1. With each passing day of high waves, our temple is in jeopardy.



March 18, 2026

To: Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee

Re: SB3169 (SD1) — Testimony in Strong Opposition

STRONG OPPOSITION TO SB3169 (SD1)

Protection of Hawai'i's Shoreline Public Trust Resources

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

On behalf of the Hawai'i Association for Marine Education and Research (HAMER), we respectfully submit this testimony in strong opposition to SB3169 (SD1). At a minimum, we urge the removal of any provisions that create exemptions from Hawai'i's established coastal protections.

Hawai'i's shoreline is not simply a boundary between land and sea; it is a living system, shaped by natural processes that sustain beaches, reefs, fisheries, and cultural practices. The laws currently in place, including the Coastal Zone Management Act (HRS 205A), Conservation District regulations (HRS 183C), and environmental review requirements (HRS 343), exist because decades of science and experience have demonstrated that poorly designed shoreline interventions cause lasting harm.

This bill proposes to bypass those safeguards. That is not efficiency; it is risk.

I. Shoreline Hardening: A Short-Term Fix with Permanent Consequences

Engineering-based shoreline stabilization approaches — including armoring, groins, and T-head structures — are often presented to property owners as viable solutions. However, the scientific record is clear that these interventions:

- Accelerate erosion on adjacent shorelines
- Disrupt sediment transport systems
- Lead to the permanent loss of beaches

The long-term outcomes are well documented. The Iroquois Point shoreline stabilization project, which installed T-head groins and nourishment cells along O'ahu's south shore, serves as a cautionary example. Monitoring of that project demonstrates that these structures fundamentally altered nearshore habitat complexity and ecological conditions, creating a fragmented system of artificial shoreline "cells" with measurably degraded coral, fish, and benthic communities.

This is not restoration. This is permanent alteration of a public trust resource.



II. Ecological Functions Cannot Be Ignored

Shorelines are not isolated features. They are deeply connected to marine ecosystems, and any decision about shoreline engineering must account for impacts to:

- Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)
- Coral spawning and larval transport pathways
- Sediment transport and beach nourishment processes
- Wave-driven flushing of nearshore waters (temperature regulation and sediment removal)

Scientific literature consistently shows that coastal systems require integrated ecological and geomorphological management rather than isolated engineering solutions. When shoreline armoring disrupts these processes, the consequences cascade: reduced reef health, altered sediment dynamics, degraded water quality, and reduced overall ecosystem resilience.

III. Impacts to Protected Species and Habitat

The shoreline areas affected by policies like SB3169 are not empty space; they are critical habitat. These areas actively support:

- Green sea turtle haul-out zones — a threatened species under federal law
- Hawaiian monk seal haul-out habitat — an endangered species found only in Hawai'i
- Critical nearshore reef ecosystems supporting biodiversity and fisheries productivity

Shoreline armoring and stabilization structures sever the natural connection between land and sea, eliminating the dynamic interface that these species depend upon for survival and reproduction.

IV. Nature-Based Solutions Are the Proven Path Forward

Modern coastal science is unequivocal: effective coastal protection must work with natural processes, not against them. Nature-based solutions, including managed retreat, dune restoration, vegetation stabilization, and sediment management, are increasingly recognized as the most resilient, adaptive, and ecologically sound alternatives available.

Research consistently shows these approaches:

- Maintain healthy sediment dynamics
- Support biodiversity and ecosystem function
- Provide durable long-term coastal protection as sea levels rise



In contrast, hard shoreline infrastructure typically requires continual maintenance, imposes increasing costs, and ultimately fails as sea levels continue to rise — leaving communities more vulnerable than before.

V. The Public Trust Doctrine

Hawai'i's shoreline is held in trust for all the people of this state, present and future. As shorelines migrate landward, a natural process that has occurred for thousands of years, the public trust boundary (mean high wash of the waves) migrates with them.

Shoreline armoring attempts to fix a dynamic system in place, preventing natural beach migration and transferring private risk into public loss. Exempting such projects from environmental review does not protect the shoreline; it protects a single moment in time at the cost of all future generations.

VI. Economic Implications

Healthy shorelines and reef systems are not merely ecological assets; they are economic infrastructure. They underpin Hawai'i's tourism industry, sustain local fisheries, and provide natural coastal protection, reducing the need for costly engineered alternatives.

Degrading these systems through inadequately reviewed shoreline interventions increases long-term costs for communities and governments while simultaneously reducing the natural protections that buffer our coasts from storm events and sea-level rise.

VII. Inadequate Resource Manager Input

Perhaps the most critical concern with SB3169 (SD1) is that it enables significant coastal decision-making driven primarily by engineering perspectives, without requiring adequate consultation with marine resource managers, fisheries scientists, or coastal ecologists.

Effective shoreline management must integrate ecological expertise alongside engineering. This bill, as drafted, does not require that integration.

Conclusion and Request

Hawai'i's shorelines are dynamic, living systems. They have sustained our reefs, our fisheries, and our communities for generations. Overriding the safeguards that protect them is not a solution; it is a risk that future generations cannot afford.



For these reasons, HAMER respectfully urges the Legislature to:

- **DENY SB3169 (SD1) in full**
- **OR, at minimum, remove all provisions that exempt projects from environmental review and establish shoreline protections.**

Mahalo nui loa for your time, consideration, and dedication to protecting the resources that define our islands.

Respectfully submitted,

Hawai'i Association for Marine Education and Research (HAMER)

www.hamer-hawaii.org



Subject: Testimony in Opposition to SB 3169 SD1, or to Delete Section 2(f)

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

My name is Kai Nishiki, Executive Director of Maui Nui Resiliency Hui. Our organization works across Maui to advance shoreline protection, public access, and community-based climate resilience.

First, I want to respectfully acknowledge the deeply painful situation unfolding at the bay fronting Mantokuji Mission in Pā‘ia. Families are witnessing gravestones and the remains of loved ones being exposed and carried into the ocean. For those with loved ones laid to rest there, this is not simply a shoreline management issue—it is a profound cultural and spiritual crisis. The history of Paia Mantokuji Soto Zen Mission and the pain being experienced by its congregation and descendant families deserve compassion, respect, and thoughtful action.

At the same time, we must also acknowledge the physical reality: coastal erosion is occurring and accelerating. The bay fronting Mantokuji Zen Mission is part of a dynamic coastal system shaped by waves, sediment movement, and sea level rise. Ignoring those coastal processes, or attempting to override them without careful study, will not produce lasting solutions.

I appreciate the intent behind this measure to explore regional, bay-wide approaches to shoreline resilience. That is the kind of scale at which Hawai‘i should be thinking. Nature-based solutions, sediment management, dune restoration, and long-term adaptation planning deserve serious consideration. Managed relocation must also be studied as part of any real resilience strategy, as it is the only long-term realistic solution.

However, the exemption language in Section 2(f) is deeply concerning and must be deleted. Amending it to say “may be exempt” still asks legislators to support sidestepping coastal and environmental protections. The bill exempts the pilot program from core legal safeguards, including Chapter 183C, Chapter 205A, Chapter 343, county shoreline setback rules, and certain county building permit requirements. These are foundational protections created to ensure projects affecting Hawai‘i’s shoreline are subject to scientific review, environmental analysis, and public process.

That is especially troubling here because the bill does not present a clearly defined project with meaningful detail, design limitations, or guardrails. It asks the Legislature to grant sweeping exemptions first and sort out the specifics later. That is backwards. If a project cannot meet Hawai‘i’s environmental and shoreline laws, the answer is not to exempt it from those laws.

Granting carte blanche authority for an undefined coastal intervention that could include shoreline hardening is ludicrous.

My greatest concern is the precedent this would set. If the Legislature establishes that shoreline projects can bypass environmental review and coastal protections through special exemptions, similar requests will follow across Hawai‘i. What starts as a pilot at one bay could quickly become a model for sidestepping public process and hard-fought protections statewide.

Importantly, Maui is already showing a better path forward right here in Pā‘ia. The Pā‘ia Youth & Cultural Center is pursuing a managed relocation project through the normal environmental review process: constructing a new facility farther inland, demolishing the shoreline structure, and restoring the dune system. The draft environmental assessment explicitly frames the project as an adaptive pathway of managed relocation. Likewise, the Kapuka‘ulua dune restoration project on Maui’s north shore is focused on restoring dune ecosystems between Lower Pā‘ia Park and Wawau Point as a resilience strategy. These examples point in the right direction: support the natural landward migration of beaches by moving development back, not by trying to engineer the shoreline in place.

There is also a clear and lawful path forward for relocation and removal of at-risk shoreline structures. Multiple funding mechanisms already exist to support this work, including the County of Maui’s Managed Retreat Revolving Fund, which has already been utilized at the Mantokuji property for removal of a fuel tank and crematorium. These tools demonstrate that solutions can move forward within existing frameworks, without the need to bypass environmental and coastal protections. That is exactly why this exemption approach is unnecessary.

The situation in Pā‘ia deserves real solutions. But real solutions require more transparency, more science, more public participation, and a full evaluation of options, including nature-based restoration and managed relocation—not less.

We do not need to bypass the law to achieve resilience—we need to follow it.

For these reasons, Maui Nui Resiliency Hui respectfully urges the Committee to oppose SB 3169 SD1, or at minimum, delete Section 2(f) in its entirety.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kai Nishiki

Executive Director

Maui Nui Resiliency Hui

SB-3169-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:49:50 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bianca Isaki	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Representatives,

Please hold SB3169, which is unlawful social legislation for a specific structure. Like the Superferry, Mantokuji cannot have laws made just for itself. Worse, it sets a terrible precedent for other shoreline properties who will next clamor for their own special exemptions from whichever and historic properties laws.

Yours,

Bianca Isaki, Kane'ohe

SB-3169-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:00:57 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Celia Suzuki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Celia Suzuki, a member of the Paia Mantokuji Soto Mission, and a granddaughter of the founder of the Soto Mission. I am writing in strong support of this measure. It is vital to protect and attempt to do everything feasible to save the shorelines from further erosion of this historic church, as well as of its beautiful and precious surroundings. I am grateful for this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB3169 SD1.

SB-3169-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:50:53 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Orikasa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For three generations, my family has been a part of the Soto Paia Mantokuji Temple. It saddens me to think that the Temple will be damaged or disappear into the ocean. The restoration of Mantokuji Bay is a way to save the Temple.

Please support SB 3169. Thank you, Diane Orikasa

SB-3169-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:32:42 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faith Sodetani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair

& Members of the House Committee on Water & Land

Subj: Testimony in Support of SB 3169, SD1

Dear Chair Hashem & Members of the House Committee on Water & Land:

As a member of the Paia Mantokuji Soto Mission and a granddaughter of its founder, I write in support of SB 3169,SD1 and the proposal for the preservation of Mantokuji Bay. It is so heartbreaking to witness the historic Paia Mantokuji Soto Mission and the associated cemetery wither away and be threatened by erosion issues. Something must be done to preserve these historic sites and I believe SB3169, SD1 may be a step in the right direction.

I respectfully request your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the oppotunity to express my support.

Sincerely,

Faith Sodetani

March 18, 2026

Aloha,

Thank you for allowing testimony on SB3169 which will allow Paia Montokuji an exemption from regulatory requirements.

Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is a waste of time and money. Assuming there will be no changes to the method or scope, what differences in the outcome are expected by this bill?

If there are differences to the method and scope, what are they and will it have negative impacts to the marine ecosystem? Who will be held accountable should there be negative impacts? On the flip side, who can we give credit to for protecting Paia Montokuji and the ocean?

Mahalo,

Paul Hanada
75 year old spear fisherman from Maui