

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

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

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

Before the House Committee on  
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Wednesday, March 25, 2026  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 3247, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senate Bill 3247, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1 establishes a temporary Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources; requires the Royal Mausoleum Working Group to submit reports to the Legislature; and sunsets the working group on 12/31/2027. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) provides the following comments.**

The Department's Division of State Parks (State Parks) has been working with the Ali'i Trusts since at least 2005 to more systematically care for all the structures at Mauna 'Ala and the surrounding landscape. These initial efforts were also supported by Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs. These collaborations, most resulting from ongoing discussions at meetings and inspections at Mauna 'Ala, continued until 2014 when a Memorandum of Understanding was finalized to define the respective responsibilities of the Department and the following Ali'i Trusts: Lunalilo Trust; Queen Lili'uokalani Trust; the Queen's Health Systems; the Estate of Bernice Pauahi Bishop; the Charles Reed Bishop Trust; and the Abigail K. K. Kawānanakoa Foundation. The Caretaker at the time, William (Uncle Bill) Maioho, played a major role in initiating these collective efforts and guiding them through.

The Memorandum sets out the primary responsibilities of the Trusts, mostly over the tombs and crypts of their benefactors. State Parks is responsible for the grounds and other structures. Over the last 21 years, these joint efforts have made a significant difference in preserving these irreplaceable structures and their setting.

Given the Memorandum's ongoing role in guiding Mauna 'Ala's stewardship, the Department respectfully requests that the bill's proposed working group include at least one (1) member representing the abovementioned Ali'i Trusts and one (1) member from the Department. These perspectives are key to assisting with developing long-term management plans as well as advising on repairs and maintenance at Mauna 'Ala.

The Department appreciates the continued discussions and interest in ensuring long-term stewardship of Mauna 'Ala.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 3247 SD1 HD2**  
RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana ‘Imi Kālā  
(House Committee on Finance)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i  
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

‘Apelila 2, 2026

2:00 PM

Lumi 308

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Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB3247 SD1 HD2**, which would establish a temporary Royal Mausoleum Commission within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to ensure respectful stewardship, preservation, and appropriate management of Mauna‘ala.<sup>1</sup>

Mauna‘ala (also known as the Royal Mausoleum State Monument) is a uniquely sacred wahi pana and the final resting place of Hawaiian royalty, including ali‘i from the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties. Historically, the care of Mauna‘ala has been understood as a sacred lineal kuleana (responsibility), rooted in traditions that pre-date the State of Hawai‘i. Since 1865, many of the Mauna‘ala kahu (curators) have been descendants of High Chief Ho‘olulu and Hoapili, who were entrusted by Kamehameha I with the care of his remains, and whose descendants were later entrusted by the Kamehameha line to serve as kahu of Mauna‘ala.

In 2024, DLNR’s selection of a new Mauna‘ala curator generated significant concern across the lāhui because the appointment was viewed as a departure from long-standing cultural practice. At the time, leaders of the royal societies and the

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling *Mauna‘ala* is used here as a single word, reflecting historical orthography found in Hawaiian language newspapers.

Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs (AOHCC) requested to be included in the selection process to provide their vital cultural and historical insight but were ultimately left out.

The continuity of the care of Mauna‘ala is a deeply sacred and important trust responsibility to Native Hawaiians, and it requires cultural ‘ike (knowledge) of mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogy), protocol, and a spiritual kuleana that is transmitted intergenerationally and cannot be replicated through standard state management processes alone.

Establishing a Royal Mausoleum Commission that includes representation from the ali‘i trusts, royal societies, the AOHCC, and lineal descendants, is a culturally appropriate mechanism to help ensure that the continuity of care and cultural protocol are meaningfully considered in stewardship and decision-making for Mauna‘ala going forward.

**OHA supports the proposed management structure of SB3247 SD1 HD2 and respectfully requests inclusion of the AOHCC and OHA as members of the Royal Mausoleum Commission.** The AOHCC was formed prior to statehood by Prince Kūhio and has a vested interest in the stewardship of Mauna‘ala as a representative of the broader Native Hawaiian community. As the constitutionally established entity charged with protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians, OHA brings broad experience engaging with diverse Native Hawaiian communities, organizations, and state agencies through its advocacy efforts to help ensure the protection of wahi pana and iwi kūpuna. OHA may be included as a nonvoting member, and its participation would serve to augment the foundational perspectives of ali‘i trusts, royal societies, lineal descendants, and other cultural practitioners by providing a broad trust and consultation framework to support the culturally grounded stewardship of Mauna‘ala.

Accordingly, OHA recommends inserting the following at line 1, page 4:

“(10) The chairperson of the board of trustees of the office of Hawaiian affairs, or the chairperson’s designee.

(11) One representative of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs”

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges the committee to **PASS SB3247 SD1 HD2**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.



April 2, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS  
To the House Committee on Finance  
In Support of

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**SB 3247 SD1 HD2- RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs submits testimony in **support** of SB 3247 SD1 HD2, which establishes a Royal Mausoleum Commission within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, and outreach of Mauna ‘Ala, and requires the Royal Mausoleum Commission to report annually to the Legislature.

Our connection to this place is profound as the founder of our Hawaiian Civic Club movement, Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana‘ole rests here. Further, members of our O‘ahu Hawaiian Civic Clubs clean and care for the chapel on a monthly basis. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is one of a handful of organizations with direct cultural and familial ties to Mauna ‘Ala, committed to honoring, preserving, and advocating for the respectful stewardship of this sacred site.

Since the transfer of Mauna‘ala to the state in 1967, cultural practitioners, ali‘i trusts, and Native Hawaiian organizations have consistently raised concerns about state management decisions and the integration of traditional practices in the care of and access to the site. SB3247 SD1 HD2 establishes a commission, including representatives from several Native Hawaiian organizations to ensure decisions about Mauna ‘Ala management incorporate Native Hawaiian perspectives.

The Association respectfully requests consideration of an amendment to expand the membership of the proposed Commission to include a representative of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs. While the Association represents a network of Hawaiian Civic Clubs rooted in Hawai‘i with additional clubs across the continental United States, the ongoing volunteer mālama of Mauna ‘Ala is carried out primarily by O‘ahu-based civic clubs and members who maintain longstanding stewardship relationships with this sacred

place. Representation from the Association would help ensure that the perspectives of those who actively care for Mauna ‘Ala are reflected in the Commission’s work.

Requiring submission of a report and any policy recommendations prior to each legislative session establishes timelines for action and accountability and encourages timely appointment of members, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and steady progress toward a long-term stewardship and management plan for Mauna ‘Ala.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit confederation of 60 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,500 members located across Hawai‘i and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this measure with our requested amendment.



## ROYAL ORDER OF KAMEHAMEHA I

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

SENATE BILL 3247 SD1 HD2 RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
Thursday, April 2, 2026, 2:00 PM  
Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Finance Committee.

On behalf of Ali'i Sir Alike Desha, Ali'i Nui of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Ali'i Sir Arthur Aiu, Ali'i Aimoku of Moku O Hawai'i Chapter 1 (Honolulu), and the entire Royal Order, the Royal Order of Kamehameha I is in STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 3247 SD1 HD2 Relating to Hawaiian Affairs and specifically to establishing a Royal Mausoleum Commission within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

The Royal Order of Kamehameha I was established by King Kamehameha V in 1865 to honor his grandfather King Kamehameha I. Today, the organization continues to guard, maintain, and preserve the rituals and the memory of the ruling Chiefs of Hawai'i.

When established, the Royal Mausoleum Commission will exercise policy making authority, develop and implement a management plan, and provide advice to the state regarding the Royal Mausoleum. This would ensure the preservation, proper operation, and management of Mauna 'Ala as determined by the host culture of Hawaiians represented by Native Hawaiian organizations including the Royal Order. This would go a long way to establishing proper protocols governing access by visitors, researchers and practitioners, ceremonial and ritual practices, curation and interment of remains, and for the selection of

an official *Kahu* to ensure continuity of traditional practices. This will raise the level of collaboration on such an important historical and cultural matter with the aim of being *pono*.

In summary, SB 3247 SD1 HD2 represents a thoughtful, culturally grounded approach to honoring and safeguarding one of Hawai'i's most sacred cultural sites. By creating an inclusive and knowledgeable Commission positioned to oversee Mauna 'Ala, this measure strengthens both cultural preservation and ensures stewardship by the host culture for future generations.

For these reasons, the Royal Order of Kamehameha I respectfully urges the Committee on Finance to PASS SB 3247 SD1 HD2.

Mahalo.

Ali'i Sir Keith Ridley

Kaka'olelo, Chapter 1

**SB-3247-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 9:43:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Jay Kaleimamahu Crowningburg Maioho	Kia' Iwi Alaka'i Ho'olulu Ohana	Support	In Person

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB3247 HD2 (WITH CLARIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENT)  
RELATING TO MAUNA ALA

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully support SB3247 HD2 and the establishment of a Royal Mausoleum Commission to guide the stewardship of Mauna Ala.

This measure reflects a necessary step toward restoring culturally grounded governance for one of the most sacred places in Hawaii.

I offer two focused clarifications for the Committee's consideration:

1. Inclusion of Hawaiian Civic Clubs as a Voting Member

As currently structured, the commission membership identifies specific organizations and lineal descendant representation , but does not clearly include the Hawaiian Civic Clubs as a voting member.

The Hawaiian Civic Clubs have long served as a unified and organized voice of the lahui, with a sustained role in cultural preservation, policy engagement, and community leadership. Their inclusion as one designated voting member would strengthen the balance, legitimacy, and statewide representation of the commission.

I respectfully request that the bill be amended to include one representative of the Hawaiian Civic Clubs as a voting member.

2. Clear Affirmation of the Ho'olulu Line as the Kahu Family

The bill recognizes both the presence of a Ho'olulu descendant and the role of the Kahu responsible for the care of the iwi kupuna . However, it stops short of clearly connecting these two.

At Mauna Ala, the role of Kahu is not simply administrative or appointive. It is a lineal responsibility tied to the Ho‘olulu family, whose kuleana has historically been to care for the iwi kupuna and uphold the protocols of this sacred place.

For clarity, continuity, and to avoid future ambiguity, I respectfully request that the bill explicitly affirm that:

The Kahu of Mauna Ala shall be selected from the Ho‘olulu Kahu family, consistent with traditional and historical practice.

This is not an expansion of authority, but a clarification of what has long been understood and practiced. Family Identifies, Community Affirms, Government Supports

Conclusion

SB3247 HD2 is a strong and necessary measure. With the inclusion of a Hawaiian Civic Clubs voting seat and clear alignment of the Kahu role with the Ho‘olulu family, this bill can fully achieve its purpose.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**TESTIMONY OF THE 'AHA HĪPU'U**  
ON S.B. 3247, S.D.1, H.D.2  
RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS



Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The 'Aha Hīpu'u respectfully submits comments on S.B. 3247, S.D.1, H.D.2.

'Aha Hīpu'u is a collaborative body representing three royal benevolent Hawaiian societies: the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, established in 1865 by King Kamehameha V; 'Ahahui Ka'ahumanu, founded in 1864 to perpetuate the legacy and service of Queen Ka'ahumanu; and Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i, established in 1918 with roots tracing back to the Hale Nauā of King David Kalākaua. Together, these organizations carry forward the 'ike, traditions, and genealogical connections of Hawai'i's ali'i and hold a shared kuleana to preserve and protect places of deep cultural and historical significance, including Mauna'ala.

We strongly support the intent of this measure to strengthen the stewardship, preservation, and management of Mauna'ala, a wahi pana of the highest order and the sacred resting place of our ali'i. The Legislature's recognition of the importance of Mauna'ala and the need for culturally grounded stewardship is both appropriate and necessary.

We respectfully offer the following recommendations to strengthen the measure.

**Commission Composition**

We recommend that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs be added back as a member. Founded in 1918 by Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, the Association brings longstanding credibility, statewide representation, and a direct connection to the lāhui that is essential in decisions involving Mauna'ala.

Additionally, we recommend that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) be added back as an advisory, non-voting member, similar to the role of the Department of Land and Natural Resources as contemplated in the measure. OHA's statutory and fiduciary responsibilities make its advisory participation both appropriate and beneficial to the overall deliberative process.

Mauna'ala is a sacred place of remembrance, genealogy, and responsibility. The structures we create today must reflect that reality and ensure that stewardship remains grounded in 'ike, kuleana, and connection to the lāhui.

'Aha Hīpu'u believes this measure is an important step forward. With these refinements, it can more fully reflect the voices, traditions, and responsibilities of those entrusted with the care of Mauna'ala.

Mahalo for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

LEIMOMI KHAN, Chair



Nawahineokala‘i Lanzilotti  
Testimony in Opposition of SB 3247 SD1 HD 2  
House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, April 2, 2026 • 2:00 pm

Aloha kākou– Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee.

My name is Nawahineokala‘i Lanzilotti–I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaiian Organization ‘Ahaui Ka‘iulani in **strong opposition** to SB 3247 SD 1 HD2.

We are deeply concerned with the establishment of a State commission given the authority to set future policy and cultural guidance of Mauna ‘Ala. Our opposition remains, on the grounds that that this bill: 1) introduces bureaucracy redundant to the responsibilities already in place for the stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala; 2) lacks the spiritual, historical, and cultural understanding of Mauna ‘Ala to establish such an authority; and 3) demonstrates excessive Legislative overreach into Hawaiian customary practices.

### **1. Bureaucratic Redundancy**

Section 1, paragraph 3 states that

The legislature believes that a permanent body dedicated exclusively to the protection and management of Mauna ‘Ala will provide the necessary cultural guidance, policy continuity, and community oversight to safeguard the site for future generations.

**There already exist permanent bodies dedicated to the exclusive protection of protocols and management of Mauna ‘Ala.** First, members of the Benevolent Societies have advised and vetted the caretaker (Kahu), served themselves as the caretaker (Kahu), or, in more recent times entered into contracts with DLNR to carry out renovations of the grounds. Second, the group of

ali'i Trusts, under the name Mālama Mauna 'Ala, entered into an MOU with DLNR in 2013 to provide financially for future needs of Mauna 'Ala.

Next, in Section 2, regarding responsibilities in the amended Chapter 6E(c)(2) of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes, it is stated that the commission will establish protocols governing:

- (A) Access by visitors, researchers, and practitioners;
- (B) Ceremonial and ritual practices;
- (C) Curation and interment of remains; and
- (D) Selection of the official kahu or curator of Mauna 'Ala to ensure continuity of traditional practice

**(A +B) Determining access and rites are the responsibility of the caretaker (Kahu); (C) Curation and interment is unnecessary because all of the ali'i crypts are full and closed; and (D) the selection of the curator has historically been done in consultation with the customary societies—a process that was only interrupted in 2015, when DLNR decided to bypass this historical process.** Assigning these roles to the commission is redundant to the processes in place.

## **2. Lack of Spiritual, Historical, and Cultural Understanding of Mauna 'Ala**

Section 2, §6E(f) lines 7-9 state:

The kahu of Mauna 'Ala shall be recognized as the individual responsible for the cultural, traditional, and spiritual care of the iwi kūpuna interred at Mauna 'Ala.

This definition is inaccurate. **The caretaker (Kahu) of Mauna 'Ala is responsible for the care of Mauna 'Ala in its entirety, not only over the iwi kūpuna interred there.**

Section 2, §6E(b) relating to the composition of the commission, states that the working group shall consist of:

- (9) One member who is a lineal descendant of High Chief Ho'olulu and a member of the Ho'olulu Kahu family.

**Historically there is no such thing as a “Kahu family”. Caretakers (Kahu) were chosen for their knowledge of genealogy, protocol, and abilities to manage the daily workings of the site.**

To conclude, we should not be asked to compromise our customary practices for an issue that could easily be resolved if DLNR and the Governor took responsibility to correct the flawed selection process of the Mauna ‘Ala curator in 2024.

We humbly ask that the Committee vote against moving forward this bill.

Mahalo for your time and this opportunity to testify.

Mālama pono—

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Nawahineokala'i Lanzilotti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a distinct dot over the 'i' in "Lanzilotti".

Nawahineokala‘i Lanzilotti

‘Ahahui Ka‘iulani

**TESTIMONY OF QUENTIN KŪHIŌ  
KAWĀNANAKOA**  
*OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF KAWĀNANAKOA*

**SUPPORTING COMMENTS ON S.B. 3247, S.D.1,  
H.D.2**  
RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Quentin Kūhiō Kawānanakoa. I'm **submitting supporting testimony of the Royal House of Kawānanakoa.**

Our family represents an unbroken genealogical line to Prince David La‘amea Kahalepouli Kinoiki Kawānanakoa, who was named by King David Kalākaua in 1888 to the line of succession for the Hawaiian Kingdom. That history carries a responsibility that continues today.

Mauna‘ala is deeply personal for our ‘ohana. My great-grandfather, Prince David Kawānanakoa, and my great-grandmother, Princess Abigail Wahīka‘ahu‘ula Campbell Kawānanakoa, are both laid to rest in the Kalākaua Crypt. When we speak about stewardship, we are speaking about a place where our own ancestors rest.

I support the intent of this measure. Ensuring the proper care, stewardship, and long-term management of Mauna‘ala is important and necessary. The Legislature’s recognition that this space must be managed in a way that respects cultural practices and genealogical ties is commendable.

I would like to respectfully offer two key recommendations.

First, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs should be added back as a member of the commission. Founded in 1918 by Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs has long served as a trusted voice for the lāhui. Its inclusion provides historical continuity, credibility, and a direct connection to community perspectives that are essential in decisions involving Maunaʻala.

Second, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs should be included as an advisory, non-voting member, similar to the role of the Department of Land and Natural Resources in this measure. OHA's statutory and fiduciary responsibilities to Native Hawaiian beneficiaries make its participation both appropriate and valuable to the overall process.

Maunaʻala is not just a historic site. It is a place of deep connection, responsibility, and remembrance for families like mine and for our broader lāhui. It is important that the voices at the table reflect that depth of connection.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share these manaʻo and for your continued leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Quentin K. Kawananakoa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Quentin Kūhiō Kawānanakoa.



*DAUGHTERS AND SONS OF THE HAWAIIAN WARRIORS*

*(Mamakakaua)*

*Honolulu, Hawaii*

**P.O. Box 1285  
Honolulu, HI 96807**

SB 3247 SD1 HD2, RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS:

Establishes a Royal Mausoleum Commission Within the  
Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, April 2, 2026, 2:00pm  
Conference Room 308, State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street

Aloha Finance Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and members of the Committee.

I am Coline Aiu, Kuhina Nui of the Daughters and Sons of the Hawaiian Warriors-Māmakakaua (DSHW-Māmakakaua), a little-known society whose origin began during the Hawaiian monarchy. We have attached information at the end of our testimony to provide a deeper understanding of our identity as a Hawaiian Royal Society.

The DSHW-Māmakakaua **opposes** SB 3247 SD1 HD2 amended to establish a permanent Royal Mausoleum Commission within DLNR with nine (9) voting members. The controversy over the DLNR hire is the central argument for the establishment of this bill, expressly to address concerns from “Native Hawaiian organizations, the ali‘i trusts, and cultural descendants” (section 1, ¶2, lines 12-13) since 2024. **Therefore, a Royal Mausoleum Commission is not needed.**

## 1. Section 2 §6E(b) – Commission Body

- (3) One representative of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I;
- (4) One representative of the ‘Ahahui Ka‘ahumanu;
- (6) One representative of Hale O Nā Ali‘i O Hawai‘i;

These individual organizations are members of the ‘Aha Hipu‘u (testimony given on March 25, 2026). As the individual Ali‘i Trusts are members of the Mālama Mauna ‘Ala which receives one vote, as such it would be consistent that the ‘Aha Hipu‘u should receive one vote as well.

- (7) One member who is a lineal descendant of persons interred at Mauna ‘Ala connected to the Kamehameha dynasty;
- (8) One member who is a lineal descendant of persons interred at Mauna ‘Ala connected to the Kalākaua dynasty;
- (9) One member who is a lineal descendant of High Chief Ho‘olulu and a member of the Ho‘olulu Kahu family.

Which genealogical society will be tasked with reviewing applicants from these families to determine selection?

## 2. Section 2 §6E(c)(2) – Selection of Kahu

- (D) Selection of the official kahu or curator of Mauna ‘Ala to ensure continuity of traditional practice

This is the central argument to establish this bill. The real problem is that in 2024 the DLNR selection panel **did not follow the traditional and proven process** when hiring the current curator to replace the vacancy left by Kai Maioho.

**Traditional customary protocols remain.**

Historically, DLNR’s role is to maintain consistent communication with the caretaker (Kahu). The caretaker (Kahu) was knowledgeable, accountable, and committed to the sanctity of Mauna ‘Ala and its traditional protocols. It was the caretaker’s (Kahu) customary responsibility to ensure the respectful stewardship, preservation, and appropriate management of the Royal Mausoleum, or Mauna ‘Ala, in accordance with Hawaiian cultural traditions and values.

Before any new legislation is introduced or any amendments made to existing Hawai‘i Revised Statutes concerning Mauna ‘Ala, **the honored and sanctified position of Kahu at Mauna ‘Ala must be restored.**

**3. Section 2 §6E(c) – Responsibilities of the commission**

(3) – Advise and collaborate with the department and other agencies regarding conservation, security, infrastructure, and visitor management;

(4) – Accept, receive, and expend gifts, grants, and appropriations for purposes consistent with this section;

Requires a staff to support volunteer members to produce reports consistent with Hawai‘i State Finance appropriations.

(5) – Engage the public, Native Hawaiian organizations, and the ali‘i trusts in education, outreach, and consultation regarding Mauna ‘Ala;

This has been the kuleana (responsibility) of the caretaker (Kahu) with DLNR since 1967.

(6) – Submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, a summary of the condition of the site and the activities of the commission, and financial statements, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session.

This demand also requires funding to assist volunteers in providing this obligation.

#### 4. Section 2 §6E(d) – Legislative Appropriations

The legislature may appropriate funds to support the operations of the commission, including maintenance and cultural programming...  
(page 5, line 19-page 6 line 2)

Maintenance of physical buildings and space have already been determined in the MOU between the Ali‘i Trusts and the State of Hawai‘i in 2014.

Appropriations do not guarantee funds. See testimony of the Deputy Attorney General from March 17, 2026: “...one Legislature cannot bind a future Legislature to make a specific appropriation” (p3, IV. Appropriation Wording, ¶1, line 8).

The commission may also receive private or federal funds to further its objectives. (page 6, lines 1-2)

Private funds historically have been offered and used with the discretion of the caretaker (Kahu).

Federal funds should not be considered based on national world events and natural disasters in Hawai‘i and across the continent.

Kingdom laws that established Mauna ‘Ala and the Christian principles of our King Alexander Liholiho Kamehameha IV and his Queen Emma should not be devalued and placed for decision-making in the Hawai‘i State Legislature.

We remain opposed to SB 3247 SD1 HD2. A Royal Mausoleum Commission is not needed. We ask that you review our complete testimony from 2024–present and that you consider our ongoing request **not to move this bill forward.**

‘O wau nō me ka ha‘aha‘a,  
/s/ Coline Aiu  
Coline Aiu, Kuhina Nui



**TESTIMONY OF HALE O NĀ ALI'I O HAWAI'I**  
ON S.B. 3247, S.D.1, H.D.2  
RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i respectfully submits **comments** on S.B. 3247, S.D.1, H.D.2.

Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i is one of four Hawaiian royal benevolent societies, with deep historical and genealogical ties to the ali'i of Hawai'i. The organization traces its origins to the Hale Nauā, founded by King David Kalākaua. Following its disbandment in the 1890s, members re-emerged under the guidance of Princess Abigail Wahīka'ahu'ula Kawānanakoa and formally established Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i on April 17, 1918. As an organization grounded in the preservation of Hawaiian traditions, 'ike, and chiefly legacy, we carry a clear kuleana to places such as Mauna'ala.

At the outset, we support the intent of this measure to strengthen the stewardship, preservation, and management of Mauna'ala, a wahi pana of the highest order and the sacred resting place of our ali'i. The Legislature appropriately recognizes the significance of Mauna'ala and the need to ensure that management decisions uphold cultural protocols and genealogical connections.

We respectfully offer the following recommendations to strengthen the measure.

**Commission Composition**

We recommend that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs be added back as a member. Founded in 1918 by Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, the Association brings longstanding credibility, statewide representation, and a direct connection to the lāhui that is essential in decisions involving Mauna'ala.

Additionally, we recommend that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) be added back as an advisory, non-voting member, similar to the role of the Department of Land and Natural Resources as contemplated in the measure. OHA's statutory and fiduciary responsibilities make its advisory participation both appropriate and beneficial to the overall deliberative process.

Mauna'ala is not simply a historic site. It is a sacred place of remembrance, genealogy, and responsibility. It is critical that the voices at the table and the scope of work reflect that depth.

Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i believes this measure is an important step forward. With these additions, it can more fully reflect the 'ike, kuleana, and voices of the lāhui it is intended to serve.

Mahalo for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Na'u no me ka ha'aha'a

Justine Waikululani Cockett

Ikū Ha'i Nui, State Board President

Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

### **SB 3247, SD1, HD2**

RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

House Committee on Finance

Thursday, April 2, 2026 | 2:00 p.m. | Conference Room 308, State Capitol

**Submitted by: Benton K. Pang, Ph.D.**

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance:

I submit this testimony in support of SB 3247, SD1, HD2, which establishes the Royal Mausoleum Commission within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to ensure the respectful stewardship and culturally grounded management of Mauna 'Ala.

### **Why This Bill Matters**

Mauna 'Ala is not simply a historic site managed by the State. It is a wahi pana—a sacred place that holds the iwi kūpuna of the ali'i of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties. The mana of those buried there, and the kuleana to care for them, cannot be administered through standard government processes alone. It requires genealogical knowledge, cultural 'ike, and a relationship of trust between the site and those with lineal and organizational ties to it.

Since the transfer of Mauna 'Ala to the State in 1967, Native Hawaiian organizations, ali'i trusts, and cultural descendants have consistently raised concerns about management decisions and the treatment of traditional protocols. Those concerns came to a head in 2024, when a new kahu selection process proceeded without meaningful input from royal societies, lineal descendants, or organizations like the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs—groups with direct cultural and familial ties to the site. That situation made clear what has long been understood: the State needs a permanent, dedicated body with the authority and cultural grounding to guide stewardship of Mauna 'Ala.

SB 3247, SD1, HD2 provides exactly that.

### **The Commission Structure Is Appropriate**

The bill establishes a nine-member Royal Mausoleum Commission with representation from:

- The ali'i trusts (Mālama Mauna 'Ala Hui)
- The Royal Order of Kamehameha I
- 'Ahahui Ka'ahumanu
- Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors Māmakakaua
- Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i
- Lineal descendants of the Kamehameha dynasty
- Lineal descendants of the Kalākaua dynasty

- A lineal descendant of High Chief Ho'olulu and the Ho'olulu Kahu family

This composition reflects the actual community of practice and cultural authority that has always been responsible for Mauna 'Ala. It recognizes that the continuity of care depends on mo'okū'auhau—genealogical connection—not administrative appointment alone.

The commission is given meaningful authority: to develop a management plan, establish access and ceremonial protocols, advise on conservation and infrastructure, and guide the selection of the kahu. These are exactly the responsibilities that should rest with this body, not with a general state agency acting without cultural guidance.

### **My Connection to This Kuleana**

My doctoral dissertation examined forest use during the Kamehameha I era. My academic work has been grounded in Hawaiian ethnobotany and the cultural practices of the ali'i period. I understand, at least in part, the significance of what is held at Mauna 'Ala—not just as history, but as a living expression of mālama iwi kūpuna that connects us to those ancestors today.

As a life member of the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu and Board President of Ka 'ala Farm, I work alongside organizations and communities for whom this kuleana is personal. The Hawaiian Civic Club movement was founded by Prince Jōnā Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, who rests at Mauna 'Ala. Members of O'ahu Hawaiian Civic Clubs maintain the chapel there on a monthly basis. This is not an abstract policy question for our community.

### **Broader Principle: State Management Requires Cultural Partnership**

This bill reflects a principle that should guide how the State approaches all wahi pana: state ownership and cultural stewardship are not the same thing, and state management processes are not a substitute for the knowledge, authority, and relationships that Native Hawaiian communities bring to these places.

Establishing a permanent commission—not just a temporary working group—signals that this is understood. It creates the institutional structure needed to ensure Mauna 'Ala is cared for across administrations, budget cycles, and personnel changes.

I share the view expressed by OHA and the 'Aha Hipū'u that robust, inclusive representation is essential to the commission's credibility. The nine-member structure in HD2 is a strong foundation. Any further amendments should preserve the genealogical and organizational representation that gives this body its cultural authority.

### **I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS SB 3247, SD1, HD2.**

Mauna 'Ala deserves nothing less than the most careful, culturally grounded stewardship we can provide. This bill moves us in that direction.

Mahalo for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

**Keali'i Pang, Ph.D.**

Life Member, Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu

Kaimukī, O'ahu

**SB-3247-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 7:15:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support including OHA testimony dated 3//25/26

3247 SB RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) SUPPORTS SB3247 SD1 HD1, which would establish a temporary Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to ensure respectful stewardship, preservation, and appropriate management of Mauna‘ala.1 Mauna‘ala (also known as the Royal Mausoleum State Monument) is a uniquely sacred wahi pana and the final resting place of Hawaiian royalty, including ali‘i from the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties. Historically, the care of Mauna‘ala has been understood as a sacred lineal kuleana (responsibility), rooted in traditions that pre-date the State of Hawai‘i. Since 1865, many of the Mauna‘ala kahu (curators) have been descendants of High Chief Ho‘olulu and Hoapili, who were entrusted by Kamehameha I with the care of his remains, and whose descendants were later entrusted by the Kamehameha line to serve as kahu of Mauna‘ala. In 2024, DLNR’s selection of a new Mauna‘ala curator generated significant concern across the lā hui because the appointment was viewed as a departure from long-standing cultural practice. At the time, leaders of the royal societies and the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs requested to be included in the selection process to provide their vital cultural and historical insight but were ultimately left out. The continuity of the care of Mauna‘ala is a deeply sacred and important trust responsibility to Native Hawaiians, and it requires cultural ‘ike (knowledge) of mo‘okū ‘auhau (genealogy), protocol, and a spiritual kuleana that is transmitted intergenerationally and cannot be replicated through standard state management processes alone. Establishing a Royal Mausoleum Working Group that includes representation from the ali‘i trusts, royal societies, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, and lineal descendants, is a culturally appropriate mechanism to help ensure that the continuity of care and cultural protocol are meaningfully considered in stewardship and decision making for Mauna‘ala going forward. OHA supports the purposes of the working group but is concerned with limiting its membership to seven individuals. In light of the HD1 amendments, which shift the working group’s role to providing recommendations to the Legislature rather than exercising a decision-making authority, OHA no longer sees a need for such a restriction. To ensure meaningful and inclusive input, all key stakeholders should have equal opportunity to participate in shaping the future stewardship of Mauna‘ala. Accordingly, OHA urges the inclusion of representatives from each royal society, ali‘i trusts, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and relevant lineal descendants. As the constitutionally established

entity charged with protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians, OHA brings extensive experience engaging with diverse Native Hawaiian communities, organizations, and state agencies through its advocacy efforts to help ensure the protection of wahi pana and iwi kū puna. OHA's participation would serve to augment the foundational perspectives of ali'i trusts, royal societies, lineal descendants, and other cultural practitioners by providing a broad trust and consultation framework to support the culturally grounded stewardship of Mauna'ala. For the above reasons, OHA respectfully urges the committee to PASS SB3247 SD1 HD1.

**SB-3247-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 4:49:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tara Rojas	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB3247 HD1

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

I respectfully offer my STRONG SUPPORT for SB3247 HD1.

Mauna ‘Ala is not just a site. It is one of the most sacred wahi pana in Hawai‘i - the resting place of ali‘i, carrying the mana, genealogy, and ‘ike of the lāhui. The care of Mauna ‘Ala is not general land management. It is a sacred kuleana rooted in protocol, lineage, and ‘ike kūpuna.

This measure is an important step forward.

It recognizes that the current structure that was wrongfully established needs to be corrected, and that stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala must be again reestablished and grounded in cultural authority, not treated as ancillary within a broader state system.

However, I want to be clear:

Cultural authority must not be implied.  
It must be explicit.

The role of Kahu - especially those with genealogical and generational kuleana to Mauna ‘Ala - must be clearly recognized, protected, and restored as lineally grounded, not left open to interpretation or appointment outside of that lineage.

Cultural stewardship is not advisory.  
It is foundational.

If this commission is to carry integrity, it must ensure that:

Lineal descendants are not symbolic seats  
Kahu are not replaced or diluted  
And decision-making reflects those with direct genealogical ties and kuleana to this sacred place

Additionally, representation matters.

The success of this effort will depend entirely on who is at the table and how decisions are made.

Most importantly:

This cannot become another process without outcome.

This must lead to real, enforceable, and culturally grounded stewardship of Mauna 'Ala.

And I must also emphasize:

The name Mauna 'Ala must be upheld and restored in full.

When you erase the language, you erase the culture.

When you erase the culture, everything becomes performative.

This is not just about governance.

This is about truth, 'ike, and the rightful restoration of what has always been.

I support SB3247 SD1 HD2 because it creates a path forward.

But that path must be rooted in 'ike, kuleana, cultural authority, respect for kūpuna, and the sanctity of MAUNA 'ALA.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-3247-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 10:21:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Bacchilega	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

with apologies for being late, here is my testimony **opposing** SB3247 SD1 SD2.

SB3247\_HD1\_HD2 replaces the temporary “working group” proposed in SB3247\_HD1 with a commission, and a permanent one, that is “placed withing the department,” that is, the DNLR, and yet exercises “policy-making authority independent of the department.”

The care of Mauna ‘Ala will depend on the deliberations of a “commission.” But there are already over 170 commissions in Hawai‘i and their workings are uneven, as exemplied by the Hawaiian Homes Commission (which now has an incredibly long waiting list to address and has faced bureaucratic and financial challenges) and the Land Use Commission (whose efficacy in preventing uncontrolled development is often questioned). Even the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission—which oversees an annual parade—has problems. So forgive me but I am not confident that a permanent commission will actually bring about outcomes that are timely and pono.

And what is the “authority” of a commission that consists of Hawaiian stakeholders who are nevertheless to report to the DNLR and are chaired by the DNLR head or head’s designee? Isn’t it naïve to think that this individual’s being a “nonvoting member” diminishes their power as chair of the commission and head of the state’s agency to which the commission reports?

Establishing this permanent commission consolidates government overreach in the protection and stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala, discounts the honored position of its Kahu, and devalues the testimony of those who, like Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors-Māmakakaua, have historically played a crucial role in the care of Mauna ‘Ala.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider and let this bill die.