



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 3247, S.D. 1, RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

DATE: Tuesday, March 17, 2026

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 411

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Alyssa-Marie Y.H. Kau, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Hashem and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the following comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish a Royal Mausoleum Working Group (Working Group) within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, stewardship, and outreach of the Royal Mausoleum, also known as Mauna 'Ala. The bill authorizes the Working Group to adopt rules as necessary to carry out its duties, employ staff, and accept and expend private and federal funds. The bill further requires the Working Group to submit periodic brief reports and a final comprehensive report to the Legislature, and requires the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to support the operations of the Working Group.

I. Executive Branch Structure and Allocation of Authority

The bill describes the Working Group as an entity that shall "create a potential management policy independent of the department." Page 2, lines 18-19. Because DLNR is an executive branch principal department under article V, section 5, of the Hawai'i Constitution, and subject to the Governor's executive authority under article V, section 1, wording characterizing the Working Group as independent of DLNR while granting it binding management authority raises a question regarding the allocation of executive authority. To the extent this bill reallocates discretionary management

functions relating to the administration of state property from DLNR to the Working Group, clarification of the Working Group's placement within, and accountability to, the executive branch would help ensure consistency with the constitutional structure of executive oversight.

To address the Department's concerns, we recommend amending subsection (a) of the new section added to chapter 6E, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), by section 2 of the bill on page 2, lines 15-21, to read (new material shown in bold) as follows:

(a) There is established a working group to be known as the royal mausoleum working group, **which shall be** placed within the department for administrative purposes[.] **only.** The working group shall ~~create a potential management policy independent of the department, except for budgetary, fiscal, and personnel administration purposes, regarding the royal mausoleum, also known as Mauna 'Ala.]~~ **develop and adopt management policies governing the royal mausoleum, also known as Mauna 'Ala, in accordance with applicable law.**

II. **Contested Case Procedures Under Chapter 91, HRS**

The bill requires the Working Group to conduct contested case hearings pursuant to chapter 91, HRS, upon written request by a "directly and substantially affected" lineal descendant or kahu family member. Page 10, lines 9-13. The phrase "directly and substantially affected" is not defined, and in the context of Mauna 'Ala, numerous descendants, cultural practitioners, and organizations may plausibly assert that they are affected by access rules or cultural determinations. Without clearer limiting standards, the Working Group could be required to conduct repeated contested case hearings over policy decisions of general applicability, and we recommend that this provision be clarified along with the types of decisions that may be challenged.

III. **Article XII, Section 7, and the *Ka Pa'akai* Framework**

This bill establishes mandatory written findings whenever a rule, protocol, or decision may substantially burden a traditional and customary practice. Page 9, lines 3-20. The Hawai'i Supreme Court has articulated a specific framework under article XII, section 7 of the Hawai'i Constitution to require agencies to identify protected practices,

assess impacts, and consider mitigation when taking concrete actions that may affect those rights. *Ka Pa‘akai o ka ‘Āina v. Land Use Commission*, 94 Hawai‘i 31, 47, 7 P.3d 1068, 1084 (2000). The *Ka Pa‘akai* analysis is triggered in the context of specific agency actions that affect identified rights, typically in land use or permitting decisions. It does not apply in the abstract or absent a concrete agency action determining the legal rights, duties, or privileges of specific parties.

However, this bill applies broadly to the adoption of rules and policies of general applicability and may require findings even where no site-specific or adjudicatory action is at issue. In addition, the directive that the working group "shall protect" such rights to the extent feasible may be interpreted as constraining the balancing discretion recognized under article XII, section 7, jurisprudence. Because agencies are already constitutionally obligated to comply with article XII, section 7, and the *Ka Pa‘akai* framework when taking concrete actions affecting traditional and customary rights and to avoid conflicting interpretations, the Department recommends deleting subsection (j) on page 9, line 3, through page 10, line 3, and relying on existing constitutional safeguards.

IV. Appropriation Wording

Subsection (g) of the new section added to chapter 6E by section 2 of this bill states that the "legislature shall appropriate sufficient funds to support the operations of the working group." Page 8, lines 10-12. Under article VII, section 5, of the Hawai‘i Constitution, no public money may be expended except pursuant to appropriations made by law. Under article VII, section 8, of the Hawai‘i Constitution, appropriations are enacted through the legislative budget process and remain within the discretion of each Legislature. As a matter of constitutional structure and legislative authority over public funds, one Legislature cannot bind a future Legislature to make a specific appropriation.

Accordingly, the Department recommends revising the funding wording in subsection (g) of the new section added to chapter 6E by section 2 of this bill on page 8, lines 10-13, to reflect that the Working Group's operations are subject to legislative appropriation, rather than mandating that the Legislature appropriate funds (new material shown in bold):

(g) ~~[The legislature shall appropriate sufficient funds to support the operations of the working group, including maintenance and cultural programming.]~~ **Subject to legislative appropriation, the working group may carry out the purposes of this section. The working group may also receive private or federal funds [to further its objectives.]; provided that such funds shall be administered by the department in accordance with applicable law.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

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

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Wai a me ka ‘Āina
(House Committee on Water & Land)

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

Malaki 17, 2026

9:00am

Lumi 411

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB3247 SD1**, which would establish a Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, and outreach 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, the majority of 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

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

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‘okūauhau (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, provides 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 and respectfully requests inclusion as a member of the Royal Mausoleum Working Group.

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’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.

Accordingly, OHA recommends inserting the following at line 19, page 4: “The chairperson of the board of trustees of the office of Hawaiian affairs, or the chairperson’s designee.”

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges the committee to **PASS SB3247 SD1.**

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

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
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, March 17, 2026
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

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

Senate Bill 3247, Senate Draft 1 establishes a Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, and outreach of Mauna 'Ala; allows the Royal Mausoleum Working Group to make rules as necessary, employ staff, and receive private or federal funds; requires the Royal Mausoleum Working Group to submit a brief report and a final comprehensive report to the Legislature; and requires the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to support the Royal Mausoleum Working Group. **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.

The Department appreciates the intent of this measure and the continued interest in ensuring long-term stewardship of Mauna 'Ala. The Department offers the following proposed HD1 with considerations as suggested in the Senate Committee Report No. 2729.

The Department looks forward to continued discussion with the measure's introducers, the Ali'i Trusts, and other stakeholders regarding the most appropriate stewardship framework moving forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the royal mausoleum, also known as Mauna ‘Ala in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, is the sacred resting place of the ali‘i of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties, among other high chiefs of Hawai‘i. This wahi pana holds deep cultural, historical, and spiritual significance for Native Hawaiians and the people of Hawai‘i. Mauna ‘Ala embodies the mana of the ali‘i and the cultural practice of mālama iwi kūpuna, expressing the enduring respect for the ancestors who shaped Hawai‘i's history and identity.

Since its transfer to the department of land and natural resources in 1967, Mauna ‘Ala has been maintained by the State. However, the legislature finds that concerns have arisen from Native Hawaiian organizations, the Ali‘i trusts, and cultural descendants about ensuring that all management decisions uphold traditional protocols, respect genealogical ties, and preserve the sanctity of the site.

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.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish the royal mausoleum working group under the department of land and natural resources to ensure the respectful stewardship, preservation, and appropriate management of the royal mausoleum, or Mauna ‘Ala, in accordance with Hawaiian cultural traditions and values.

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

"§6E- Royal mausoleum working group. (a) There is established a working group to be known as the royal mausoleum working group, ~~which shall be~~ placed within the department for administrative purposes~~[-] only~~. The working group shall ~~[create a potential management policy independent of the department, except for budgetary, fiscal, and personnel administration purposes, regarding the royal mausoleum, also known as Mauna 'Ala.]~~ develop and adopt management policies governing the royal mausoleum, also known as Mauna 'Ala, in accordance with applicable law.

(b) The working group shall consist of the following voting members:

(1) One member chosen from the organizations listed in paragraphs (4) through (9) and appointed by the governor to serve as chairperson of the working group;

(2) One member appointed by the president of the senate with direction from the senate standing committee with primary jurisdiction over Hawaiian affairs;

(3) One member appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives with direction from the house of representatives standing committee with primary jurisdiction over Hawaiian affairs;

(4) Five representatives of the ali'i trusts that have founders interred at Mauna 'Ala; one each from Kamehameha Schools, the Lili'uokalani Trust, the Queen's Health Systems, the Kapi'olani Medical Center, and the Lunalilo Trust;

(5) Four representatives of the royal societies; one each from the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, 'Ahahui Ka'ahumanu, Hale O Na Ali'i O Hawai'i 'Ahahui Po'o, and the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors Māmakakaua;

(6) One representative from the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs;

(7) One representative from an island burial council;

(8) Three members as follows:

(A) One lineal descendant representative of those interred at Mauna 'Ala connected to the Kamehameha dynasty;

(B) One lineal descendant representative of those interred at Mauna 'Ala connected to the Kalakaua dynasty; and

(C) One member who is a lineal descendant of High Chief Ho'olulu and a member of the Ho'olulu Kahu family, selected pursuant to a written process established by the Ho'olulu 'ohana lineal descendants; and

(9) One representative from the Daughters of Hawai'i.

(c) Members of the working group shall serve four-year terms and may be reappointed thereafter to the working group. Initial appointments shall be staggered, with half of the members serving two-year terms to ensure continuity. Members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in the performance of their duties, subject to legislative appropriation.

(d) The working group shall:

(1) Develop and implement a comprehensive management plan for the protection, maintenance, and interpretation of Mauna 'Ala, including all crypts, vaults, chapels, structures, and the surrounding grounds;

(2) In consultation with Native Hawaiian organizations, the ali'i trusts, lineal descendants, and kahu families, establish protocols governing:

(A) Access by visitors, researchers, and practitioners;

(B) Ceremonial and ritual practices;

(C) Curation and interment of remains; and

(D) Appointment, duties, and removal for cause of the official kahu, curator, and caretaker of Mauna 'Ala, including continuity of traditional and customary practices and, to the extent feasible and consistent with safety and stewardship needs, residential stewardship at Hale Ho'olulu;

(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;

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

(6) Submit a brief report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, a summary of the condition of the site and the activities of the working group, and financial statements, to the legislature every six months beginning in January and the final comprehensive report shall be submitted sixty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2028; provided that the reports shall also include:

(A) A summary of traditional and customary practices identified under subsection (j);

(B) A description of any rules, protocols, or decisions adopted that affected access or practice, with the written findings required by subsection (j); and

(C) A summary of contested cases requested and resolved under subsection (i) including any mitigation measures implemented to protect traditional and customary practices (k), with identifying personal information redacted as appropriate.

(e) The working group shall comply with chapters 92 and 84. Each voting member shall disclose actual or reasonably foreseeable conflicts of interest and shall recuse from decision-making where required by chapter 84 or where participation would create an appearance of undue influence. The working group shall adopt bylaws addressing quorum, voting procedures, and public participation consistent with this section. Any member with a direct personal, familial, or a pecuniary interest in a matter before the working group shall disclose the interest and, upon a majority vote by the working group, shall be recused from deliberation and voting on that matter.

(f) The working group may employ an executive director and other staff exempt from chapter 76, subject to legislative appropriation. Any executive director employed under this section shall report directly to the working group and coordinate with the department to implement policies adopted by the working group.

(g) ~~[The legislature shall appropriate sufficient funds to support the operations of the working group, including maintenance and cultural programming.] Subject to Legislative appropriation, the working group may carry out the purpose of this section. The working~~

group may also receive private or federal funds ~~[to further its objectives.]~~; provided that such funds shall be administered by the department in accordance with applicable law.

(h) The working group may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out the purposes of this section, including rules relating to access, ceremonies, maintenance, and the respectful treatment of human remains and artifacts.

(i) If any provision of this section, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the section that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.

(j) In adopting any rule, protocol, management plan, or decision under this section, the working group shall protect all rights customarily and traditionally exercised for cultural and

religious purposes to the extent feasible and shall not regulate such rights out of existence. At least thirty days prior to adopting any rule, protocol, or decision that may substantially burden a traditional and customary practice, the working group shall make written findings that:

(1) Identify the cultural, historical, and natural resources at Mauna 'Ala that are the basis of the practice, including the extent to which the practice is exercised;

(2) Identify the identity and scope of the affected practice and the persons or groups who exercise it;

(3) Evaluate the extent to which the proposed action will affect or impair the practice; and

(4) Identify feasible measures, conditions, or alternatives to reasonably protect the practice.

The working group shall provide advance public notice and a reasonable opportunity to be heard before adopting any action under this subsection.

(k) The working group shall provide reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard before taking any final action that substantially burdens a traditional and customary practice or that appoints, removes, or disciplines the official kahu, curator, and caretaker.

Upon written request by a directly and substantially affected lineal descendant or kahu family member received within twenty days after notice of the proposed final action, the working group shall conduct a contested case hearing pursuant to chapter 91. A final decision and order shall be issued in writing and shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law. Judicial review shall be available pursuant to section 91-14.

(l) The department shall not appoint, designate, recognize, or contract for any person to serve as kahu, curator, and caretaker, or any substantially similar stewardship role for Mauna 'Ala except as provided by the working group protocol adopted pursuant to this section.

(m) For the purposes of this section:

"Hale Ho'olulu" means the on-site caretaker residence historically associated with customary stewardship at Mauna 'Ala.

"Kahu family" means the lineal descendants of the historically recognized kahu responsible for the customary care of the burial and remains of nā Ali'i o Hawai'i and stewardship of Mauna 'Ala, specifically Ho'olulu 'ohana lineal descendants whose kuleana is associated with the secret burial of King Kamehameha I as well as the kahu, curator, and caretaker duties at Mauna 'Ala and Hale Ho'olulu.

"Lineal descendant" means a person who can document direct descent from a person interred at Mauna 'Ala.

"Substantially burden" means to materially restrict, condition, deny, penalize, or unreasonably interfere with the exercise of a traditional and customary practice.

"Traditional and customary practice" means a practice protected by article XII, section 7, of the Hawaii State Constitution and established by Hawaiian usage within the meaning of section 1-1 including cultural and religious access, ceremony, malama iwi kupuna, and customary stewardship practices at Mauna 'Ala.

"Working group" means the royal mausoleum working group established under this section."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on September 9, 2129.

Report Title:

DLNR; Mauna 'Ala; Royal Mausoleum Working Group; Rules; Reports

Description:

Establishes a Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, and outreach of Mauna 'Ala. Allows the Royal Mausoleum Working Group to make rules as necessary, employ staff, and receive private or federal funds. Requires the Royal Mausoleum Working Group to submit a brief report and a final comprehensive report to the Legislature. Requires the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to support the Royal Mausoleum Working Group. Effective 9/9/2129. (SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.



RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Meia o Ke Kalana o Maui

J. KAPONO‘AI MOLITAU
Po‘o o Ka ‘Oihana Kumuwaiwai ‘Ōiwi

KEKAI ROBINSON
Hope Po‘o o Ka ‘Oihana Kumuwaiwai ‘Ōiwi

KA ‘OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI ‘ŌIWI
DEPARTMENT OF ‘ŌIWI RESOURCES
KE KALANA O MAUI, COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAI‘I 96793
pūnaewele: www.mauicounty.gov leka uila: oiwi@co.maui.hi.us

TO: Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
John Kapono‘ai Molitau, Director of ‘Ōiwi Resources

DATE: March 16, 2026

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF SB3247 SD1 – RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

Aloha kākou:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this measure, SB3247 SD1, which establishes a Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, and outreach of Mauna ‘Ala. Allows the Royal Mausoleum Working Group to make rules as necessary, employ staff, and receive private or federal funds. Requires the Royal Mausoleum Working Group to submit a brief report and a final comprehensive report to the Legislature. Requires the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to support the Royal Mausoleum Working Group. Effective 9/9/2129. (SD1)

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Mauna ‘Ala is among the most sacred wahi pana in Hawai‘i. As the final resting place of the ali‘i of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties and other high chiefs, it embodies the mana of leadership, genealogy, and the enduring cultural practice of mālama iwi kūpuna. Stewardship of such a site requires more than routine land management; it requires governance rooted in Hawaiian values, protocol, and ‘ike kupuna.
2. Mauna ‘Ala warrants a permanent, culturally authoritative body. Establishing a Royal Mausoleum Commission with policy-making authority ensures that decisions affecting the site are guided by those with genealogical ties, cultural responsibility, and institutional knowledge, rather than being treated as ancillary to broader land management functions. A permanent, culturally grounded commission provides continuity, accountability, and respect that cannot be achieved through temporary or advisory arrangements alone.

Thank you for your commitment to honoring Hawai'i's ali'i, ancestors, and the cultural foundations.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
John Kapono'ai Molitau, Director of 'Ōiwi Resources
County of Maui Testimony Support for SB3247 SD1

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT (SB 3247 SD1)

SB 3247 SD1 aims to implement Native Hawaiian understandings to ensure the cultural wellbeing and spiritual lifeforce of Hawaii's Royal Mausoleum, Mauna 'Ala.

My name is Quent Kūhiō Kawānanakoa and I am testifying on behalf of the Royal House of Kawānanakoa. My connection with Mauna 'Ala is familia as many of my ancestors are buried in the Kalākaua Mausoleum at Mauna 'Ala.

Prince David La'amea Kahalepouli Kinoiki Kawānanakoa established the Royal House of Kawānanakoa and was the last named heir to the Kingdom of Hawaii. His wife was Princess Abigail Wahi'ika'ahu'ula Campbell Kawānanakoa. Prince David and Princess Abigail are both interred in the Kalākaua Mausoleum and are respectively my Great-Grandfather and Great-Grandmother. His brothers, Prince Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole and Prince Edward Keli'iahonui are my Great-Grand Uncles and are also interred in the Kalākaua Mausolium. I also note the presence of numerous other relatives steeped in antiquity that rest within Mauna 'Ala.

It is imperative we all remember that Mauna 'Ala is the paramount "Burial Grounds" of the Native Hawaiian people. It is the "piko," which in Hawaiian means "umbilical cord" – a tether that binds us to the ancestors, to the land, and to the beginning of life. But "piko" also means "navel" or "center" of things—like the top of a mountain, a gathering place, or points connecting mind, body, and spirit, representing balance and lineage across past, present, and future. Indeed, Mauna 'Ala is both an umbilical cord and a navel. It is the story of Hawaii's cultural and spiritual past as it flows into the present and eventually into the future. Mauna 'Ala is also the core of Hawaiian cosmology, which retains – and allows us to express – the "ike" of our collective Hawaiian experience.

"Ike" is the equivalent of our Native Hawaiian World View. Through this cultural lens, Native Hawaiians perceive and understand the world in which we live. The concept of "ike" pools together all the mores that Native Hawaiians have honed over the course of millennia, ultimately defining our understanding of the Hawaiian lifeforce. "Ike" is the knowledge that we are Hawaiian.

Mauna 'Ala can become the exemplar of Hawaii uniting in 'ike. Mauna 'Ala offers a unique point of cohesion of cultural knowledge and spiritual understanding. At once a site of repose, of regeneration and of reverence, it is both a foundation and a pinnacle of the Native Hawaiian World View.

This is the reason that we, Native Hawaiians and all of Hawaii's citizens, must collaborate in finding a harmonious way forward – as distinct cultures living together and respecting each other, embracing our similarities while honoring our differences.

SB 3247 SD1 provides the means to achieve a joint goal of cooperation and guidance, for the nurturing of Mauna 'Ala as a site of preserved and living history. SB 3247 SD1 creates a working group of Hawaiian cultural experts, sharing their 'ike to carve constructive paths forward for Mauna 'Ala. Bringing together a range of important perspectives and expertise, this working group will assist in perpetuating the lifeforce of Hawaii's host culture at Mauna 'Ala. By establishing this working group, SB 3247 SD1 will define, raise and uphold the essence of the Hawaiian World View for all the people of Hawaii.

And as the motto of the State of Hawaii and the Hawaiian World View are virtually the same:

Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka 'Āina I Ka Pono.

The Life of the Land will be Perpetuated in Righteousness.

Respectively submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Quentin K. Kawananakoa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'Q' and 'K'.

Quentin Kūhiō Kawānanakoa
Regent, Royal House of Kawānanakoa



March 17, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the House Committee on Water and Land
In Support of

SB 3247 SD1 - RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Aloha Chair Hashem, Chair Lee, and members of the committees:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs submits testimony in **support** of SB 3247 SD1, which establishes a working group to develop a management plan for Mauna 'Ala.

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 and access of the site. The proposed working group includes representatives from these organizations, including the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, to ensure decisions about Mauna 'Ala incorporate stakeholder voices.

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.



DAUGHTERS AND SONS OF THE HAWAIIAN WARRIORS

(Mamakakaua)

Honolulu, Hawaii

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

**SB 3247-SD1, RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS:
Establishes a Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the
Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)**

House Committee on Water & Land

Tuesday, March 17, 2026; 9:00am
Conference Room 411, State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street

Aloha Water & Land Chair Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair Dee Morikawa, and Members of the Committee on Water & Land.

I am Coline Aiu, Kuhina Nui of the Daughters and Sons of the Hawaiian Warriors-Māmakakaua (DSHW-Māmakakaua), a genealogical society whose origin began during the Hawaiian monarchy. I am here to testify in opposition of SB 3247-SD1 which seeks to establish a Royal Mausoleum Working Group.

Our position is not to move SB 3247-SD1 forward.

The DSHW-Māmakakaua opposes SB 3247-SD1 to establish a Royal Mausoleum Working Group under DLNR with seventeen (17) members and a complex apparatus of reporting to the State of Hawai‘i that does not address or solve a self-contained and glaring problem occasioned by the faulty hiring process in 2024 of the current curator of Mauna ‘Ala.

The controversy over the DLNR hire is the central argument for the establishment of this bill. However, 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. In the past, these Kahu were knowledgeable, accountable, and committed to the sanctity of Mauna ‘Ala and its traditional protocols.

"E ike i ka hoa kanaka, he mamalahoa ke kanawai"

As per my previous testimony on February 10, 2026:

"From 1967 when the DLNR assumed the kuleana of the Royal Mausoleum until 2015, a period of over 54 years, there was a successful working relationship between the State of Hawai‘i-DLNR, the Kahu of Mauna ‘Ala, and the Governors of Hawai‘i, specifically John A. Burns, George Ariyoshi, and John Waihee."

"Only two (2) of the ten (10) kahu after Keano, the personal kahu of Kamehameha IV and curator of Mauna ‘Ala, were not vetted, confirmed and approved: Kai Maioho (2015-2023) and the current appointee (2024-present)."

Expressly to address since 2024 “concerns . . . from Native Hawaiian organizations, the Ali‘i trusts, and cultural descendants” (section 1, ¶1, lines 13-14), the proposed bill:

1. Introduces a new working group that is under the DLNR and accountable to the Legislature.

The DSHW-Māmakakaua opposes this because the establishment of such a working group institutes and formalizes the State’s oversight on the spiritual, historical, and cultural stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala.

2. This working group is tasked to “provide the necessary cultural guidance, policy continuity, and community oversight to safeguard the site for future generations” (section 2, ¶2, lines 3-5).

The DSHW-Māmakakaua opposes this because cultural guidance is the kuleana of the Kahu. It is not for the Legislature or the State to dispense.

3. This working group is tasked with making “written findings” that “identify” “traditional or customary practices” at Mauna ‘Ala.

The DSHW-Māmakakaua opposes this mandate to commit living practices to a document because it places the burden on Native Hawaiian organizations and practitioners to explain them, it violates the privacy that applies to them, and it arbitrarily fixes or sets them once and for all. While the stated purpose of this fixing of living practices in writing is to “protect” them “to the extent feasible” (section 2, ¶j), such rituals and knowledge are not necessarily noa and should not be codified by a State-constituted body.

4. Amending Chapter 6E, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, SB 3247-SD1 states that the working group will consist of “voting members” (section 2, §6E b, line 2), chosen from a number of Hawaiian organizations (section 2, §6E b, ¶4-9) as well as, in two cases, chosen by the president of the senate and the president of the house of representatives. One member “chosen from the

organizations listed in paragraphs (4) through (9)” would be appointed by the governor to chair the working group.

The DSHW-Māmakakaua opposes this because of the government’s overreach in determining the constituency and practices of the working group, and because such a working group is not a Hui, constituted by Hawaiians with united ‘ike who come to an agreement not by voting but by taking responsibility and doing what is right.

5. The DSHW-Māmakakaua opposes other specifics in the proposed bill as further examples of governmental overreach in the stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala, including the working group members’ 4-year appointment and reimbursement of necessary expenses (section 2, §6E c), compliance with chapters 92 and 84 (section 2, §6E e), and responsibility for “cultural programming” (section 2, §6E g and j) as well as the employment of an executive director (section 2, §6E f). However, for the DSHW-Māmakakaua, Mauna ‘Ala is a life-long commitment. It is a kuleana that does not require reimbursements or delegation to employees and is not measured by the State standards of conduct.

6. The DSHW-Māmakakaua also finds language and details of the proposed bill objectionable as inaccurate or signaling limited knowledge:

Section 1, ¶1, lines 1-2 of SB 3247-SD1 refer to “the royal mausoleum, also known as Mauna ‘Ala in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” but it should be “Mauna ‘Ala, also known as the royal mausoleum.”

Lines 4-5 tell us “This wahi pana holds deep cultural, historical, and spiritual significance for Native Hawaiians and the people of Hawai‘i.” But that deep significance is first of all “spiritual” and then “historical and cultural.”

As for the constituency of the working group:

A. Why is there a representative of the Lunalilo Trust (section 2, §6E b4) when Lunalilo is interred at Kawaiaha‘o Church?

B. Just as the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs receives one representative position, so should the ‘Aha Hīpu‘u – a body comprised of three (3) Hawaiian Royal Societies: Royal Order of Kamehameha I, ‘Ahahui Ka‘ahumanu, and Hale O Nā Ali‘i O Hawai‘i – receive one representative position with a second representative position for DSHW-Māmakakaua (see section 2, §6E b5).

C. Some organizations, such as individual Hawaiian Civic Clubs (section 2, §6E b6) and the Daughters of Hawai‘i (section 2, §6E b9), attend birthday occasions and have limited responsibilities at Mauna ‘Ala.

D. Why include the island burial council, which is a government organization and deals with inadvertent burials? (section 2, §6E b7)

E. In the case of lineal descendant representatives of those interred at Mauna ‘Ala (section 2, §6E b8), there is no awareness of how the complexities of family histories, titles, and kuleana would slow down and complicate the process of selection. Overall, the list seeks to be inclusive, but it also shows why ensuring proper stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala should not be the Legislature’s doing.

Most importantly, the constitution of this working group establishes a new State-heavy process that undermines the honored and sanctified position of Kahu at Mauna ‘Ala. 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.

‘O wau nō me ka ha‘aha‘a,

/s/ Coline Aiu

Coline Aiu

Kuhina Nui



ROYAL ORDER OF KAMEHAMEHA I

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

SENATE BILL 3247 SD1 RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 9:00 AM

Conference Room 411

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

On behalf of Ali'i Sir Alika 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, and the entire Royal Order, the Royal Order of Kamehameha I is in STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 3247 SD1 Relating to Hawaiian Affairs and specifically to establishing a Royal Mausoleum Working Group 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 Working Group would assist to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, and outreach of Mauna 'Ala in consultation with 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 a succession plan 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 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 Working Group positioned to guide Mauna 'Ala policy, this measure strengthens both cultural preservation and community stewardship for future generations.

For these reasons, the Royal Order of Kamehameha I respectfully urges the Committee to PASS SB 3247 SD1 as is.

Mahalo.

Ali'i Sir Keith Ridley

Kaka'olelo, Chapter 1



Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Water & Land

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: March 17, 2026

Where: Conference Room 411

TESTIMONY

Kēhau Abad

Vice President, Uluhiwa

RE: SB3247, SD1, Relating to Hawaiian Affairs

Aloha e ka Luna Ho‘omalua Hashem, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalua Morikawa, a me nā Lālā o ke Kōmike.

Kamehameha Schools appreciates this opportunity to **support SB3247, SD1**.

Kamehameha Schools cares deeply about the stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala, a most sacred wahi kapu housing the iwi of our Hawaiian Kingdom’s ruling sovereigns and their closest ‘ohana. The kuleana to mālama and kia‘i Mauna ‘Ala demands the highest standards from all who are entrusted with this sacred responsibility.

Our commitment to work with our lāhui and state partners to ensure that Mauna ‘Ala receives the care it deserves remains steadfast. We support the intent of the bill to establish a working group dedicated to the protection and management of Mauna ‘Ala and we welcome the opportunity to serve on the working group to help mālama this special place.

Founded in 1887 through the Will of Ke Ali‘i Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop, Ke Kula ‘o Kamehameha is a private, educational, charitable trust committed to empowering Native Hawaiians in perpetuity by improving the well-being of our people through education. We envision our haumāna, strong in E Ola!, grounded in Hawaiian and Christian values, succeeding in post-secondary education and contributing through ‘ōiwi leadership to a thriving and self-determined lāhui.



KIA'I IWI ALAKA'I

James J K C Maioho

Kahu of Mauna Ala | Founder, Kiai Iwi Alakai

808-459-1313 | James@HoilinaStrategies.com

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

I submit this testimony in SUPPORT of SB3247, relating to the establishment of a Royal Mausoleum Commission for the stewardship and protection of Mauna ‘Ala, with important amendments for your consideration.

First, I wish to acknowledge and commend the Legislature for recognizing the profound cultural, historical, and spiritual significance of Mauna ‘Ala. The creation of a dedicated body focused solely on the protection, management, and cultural integrity of this sacred wahi pana is a long-standing need. Establishing a commission that centers Native Hawaiian values, ceremonial protocol, and genealogical responsibility is a meaningful step toward restoring trust, balance, and appropriate stewardship.

The intent of this measure — to ensure culturally grounded oversight, management continuity, and proper protection of iwi kupuna and royal burials — is both necessary and appropriate. For that, I express my support.

However, I respectfully offer two areas of gentle caution and recommended refinement:

1. SIZE AND STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION

While broad representation is important, the commission as currently structured is quite large. A body of this size may face challenges in efficiency, quorum, decision-making timeliness, and operational cohesion.

A balance must be struck between representation and effectiveness. The sacred nature of Mauna ‘Ala demands governance that is nimble, *trusted*, and able to act with unity.

2. PROTECTION AND CODIFICATION OF THE KULEANA OF HO‘OLULU

Equally critical is the need to explicitly recognize, protect, and codify the kuleana of the Ho‘olulu line and its descendant caretakers.

The Ho‘olulu family holds generational, genealogical, and ceremonial responsibility to the iwi and ali‘i interred at Mauna ‘Ala. This kuleana is not symbolic — it is functional, cultural, and spiritual in nature, carried forward through lineage and practice.

While the bill references lineal descendants and kahu families, it does not specifically safeguard or define the standing role of Ho‘olulu descendants within governance, access, protocol authority, and caretaker recognition.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Legislature to:

- Codify the Ho‘olulu line as hereditary or lineal cultural stewards; and/or
- Guarantee designated representation or decision authority tied to that lineage; and/or
- Advance companion legislation to formally establish and protect this kuleana in statute.

Without such codification, there remains risk that future administrative or political shifts could marginalize or dilute generational caretaker authority that predates State involvement.

In closing, I reiterate my support for SB3247 and the creation of a Royal Mausoleum Commission. This measure represents progress toward culturally grounded governance and the restoration of appropriate Native Hawaiian oversight at Mauna ‘Ala.

With thoughtful refinement — particularly regarding commission size and the explicit protection of Ho‘olulu kuleana — this bill can become a durable, respectful framework that honors both institutional stewardship and ancestral responsibility.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to safeguarding one of Hawai'i's most sacred resting places.

Respectfully submitted,

James Jay Kaleimamahu Crowningburg Maioho,
Ho'olulu Descendant and Kahu to the Iwi interred at Mauna Ala,
The Royal Mausoleum State Monument



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Water & Land

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 17, 2026

S.B. 3247, S.D.1 – RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO **opposes S.B. 3247, S.D.1, specifically section two, subsection (f) on page 8 line 4 to 6**, which allows the Royal Mausoleum Working Group, under the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), to employ staff exempt from chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes. **We respectfully request amendments to this measure that require hiring of positions pursuant to chapter 76.**

While we have no objections to the establishment of the Royal Mausoleum Working Group within the DLNR, we do have concerns for the need to employ staff that would be exempt from civil service law. This measure asks the Legislature to legitimize a Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) workaround and one day we may see more positions that are exempt versus civil service.

This is a union busting measure. Over the past six years, the State has increased exempt positions by about 600, or 25 percent. Many of these exempt employees are members of our union, and proposals like this create employees with fewer rights, which weakens our ability to advocate for union members. Furthermore, this not only undermines the civil service system, but also points to an ugly truth: one day, exempt positions in state government may outnumber civil service positions.

Furthermore, should any existing employees be negatively impacted because of this measure, those employees shall be reassigned without loss of any rights and benefits, and salary.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of exemption of employees within S.B. 3247, S.D.1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

Nawahineokala'i Lanzilotti ('Ahahui Ka'iulani)
Testimony in Opposition of SB3247 SD1
Committee on Water & Land, House of Representatives
Tuesday, March 17, 2026 • 9:00 am

Aloha kākou– Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the presiding committee.

My name is Nawahineokala'i Lanzilotti–I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaiian Organization 'Ahahui Ka'iulani in strong opposition to SB3247 SD1.

Our main position today is threefold: first, that SB3247 SD1 enacts various forms of legislative overreach; second, that it is an unnecessary detour from the central concern regarding DLNR's vetting of the Kahu of Mauna 'Ala raised by the various Hawaiian Royal Societies, OHA, and the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs beginning in February 2024; and third, that it lacks sufficient explanation of purview and process for the responsibilities listed.

1. Historical Overreach–Working Group Purpose: Section 1, Paragraph 4 states,

The purpose of this Act is to establish the royal mausoleum working group under the Department of Land and Natural Resources to ensure the respectful stewardship, preservation, and appropriate management of the Royal Mausoleum, or Mauna 'Ala, in accordance with Hawaiian cultural traditions and values.

Stewardship, preservation, and appropriate management are the responsibilities of the Kahu working with DLNR, and are not a legislative issue. Any concern around the current management of Mauna 'Ala would be addressed by resolving the outstanding Kahu vetting process from 2024.

Additionally, Sec 2, Ch 6E(j), requires the working group to provide a written report to DLNR thirty days prior to any decision that would restrict customary practices at Mauna 'Ala. Before 2023, the Kahu would make such determinations, raise issues to DLNR directly, and the two parties would resolve these mutually. **The outstanding problem is the vetting process by which a candidate is deemed qualified to serve in this role. Assigning these responsibilities to the working group is a clear demonstration of legislative overreach.**

2. Cultural Overreach–Working Group Membership: Section 2, Chapter 6E-b(1-9) assigns the composition of the working group to seventeen (17) representatives. There are discrepancies between groups listed in this section that have no historical role in stewarding Mauna 'Ala, even if they attend or organize events there, and those that do. These include:

b(4) Ali'i trusts–Queen Kapi'olani Medical Center: Queen Kapi'olani Medical Center, although named here, is not a member of the MOU established between the customary 5 ali'i trusts and DLNR to coordinate and fund improvements for Mauna 'Ala in 2013. The five ali'i trusts named in the MOU are: Charles Reed Bishop Trust, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate (Kamehameha Schools), Lili'uokalani Trust, Queen's Health Systems, and Lunalilo Trust. Furthermore, the **Charles Reed Bishop Trust**–the only ali'i trust that has Mauna 'Ala as a named beneficiary–is **not named** in the bill.

b(6) Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs: While individual clubs organize commemorative events at Mauna 'Ala throughout the year, they have no historical role in the stewardship or management of the site.

b(7) Island Burial Council: There should be no further burials at Mauna 'Ala; additionally, there is no planned construction that would require their input.

b(8A-B) Lineal Descendants of Kamehameha and Kalākaua Dynasties: This includes representatives “who can document direct descent” (Sec 2, Ch 6E-m) from A) those in the Kamehameha dynasty interred at Mauna 'Ala; and B) those in the Kalākaua dynasty interred there. However, **there is no process for how those eligible will be selected.**

b(9) Daughters of Hawai'i: The Daughters of Hawai'i participate at Mauna 'Ala but their stewardship is directed at Hānaiakamalama / Queen Emma's Summer Palace (Nu'uauu), Hulihe'e Palace (Kailua-Kona), and the birthplace of Kamehameha III (Keauhou Bay).

The discrepancies in the composition of the working group highlighted above are a further demonstration of legislative overreach.

3. Lack of Defined Processes: Section 2, Chapter 6E (a) says, “the working group shall create a potential management policy...regarding the Royal Mausoleum, known as Mauna ‘Ala.” Furthermore, Sect 2, Ch 6E (d-6) states the working group shall “Submit a brief report of its findings and recommendations... to the legislature every six months beginning in January and the final comprehensive report shall be submitted sixty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2028.” However, **there is no defined process for how this report will be reviewed or implemented once it is submitted.**

Lastly, Sect 2, Ch 6E (k) gives the working group the authority to appoint, remove, or discipline the official kahu, curator, and caretaker, as long as “reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard” is provided. Again, **there is no process for how such disputes will be resolved or how such “final actions” will be carried out.**

In conclusion, the processes and procedures outlined in SB3247 SD1 demonstrate legislative overreach and substantially burden Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practice into the stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala. Respectfully, SB3247 SD1 further delays resolution of the concerns raised for the last two years about the 2024 Kahu vetting process.

We humbly ask that the committee vote against the passage of SB3247 SD1.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Mālama pono-



Nawahineokala'i Lanzilotti
'Ahahui Ka'iulani

SB-3247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 6:35:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill SB 3247 SD1 .

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

SB-3247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 6:43:56 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dee Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of S.B. 3247 S.D.1 relating to the stewardship and protection of Mauna ‘Ala, the Royal Mausoleum. Mauna ‘Ala is a sacred wahi pana and the resting place of many of Hawai‘i’s ali‘i, including members of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties. The site carries profound cultural, historical, and spiritual significance for Native Hawaiians and for the broader people of Hawai‘i. Protecting the dignity, sanctity, and proper stewardship of this sacred place is an important responsibility.

This measure provides a thoughtful framework for ensuring that Mauna ‘Ala is cared for in a manner that respects Hawaiian cultural traditions, honors the descendants of those interred there, and provides clear guidance for its long-term management. The creation of a dedicated working group focused specifically on the Royal Mausoleum recognizes the unique status of this site and the need for culturally grounded oversight.

This bill deserves support for the following reasons:

- It formally recognizes the sacred cultural and historical importance of Mauna ‘Ala as the burial place of Hawai‘i’s ali‘i.
- It establishes a Royal Mausoleum Working Group dedicated specifically to the protection, stewardship, and preservation of the site.
- It ensures that lineal descendants of those interred at Mauna ‘Ala have a meaningful role in management decisions affecting their ancestors.
- It includes representation from respected Hawaiian institutions and cultural organizations connected to the ali‘i legacy, including Kamehameha Schools and the Royal Order of Kamehameha I.
- It requires the development of a comprehensive management plan for the mausoleum grounds, structures, and burial sites to ensure their long-term protection.
- It establishes protocols for visitor access, ceremonial practices, research, and interment procedures to ensure that cultural traditions and proper respect are maintained.

- It protects traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices associated with the care of ancestral remains and cultural ceremonies.
- It recognizes the important role of traditional kahu and stewardship families connected to the care of the royal burials.
- It provides transparency through public meetings, conflict-of-interest disclosures, and regular reporting to the legislature.
- It allows the working group to seek funding, grants, and resources necessary to maintain and preserve the site for future generations.

Taken together, these provisions strengthen cultural stewardship and ensure that decisions affecting Mauna ‘Ala are guided by those with deep cultural knowledge, genealogical connection, and a commitment to honoring the legacy of Hawai‘i’s ali‘i.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to pass S.B. 3247 S.D.1.

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

SB-3247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 6:56:46 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

3247 SB RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB3247 SD1

Relating to Mauna ‘Ala

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Leimomi Khan and I am submitting testimony in my personal capacity. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony on SB3247 SD1 relating to the establishment of a Mauna ‘Ala Working Group.

Mauna ‘Ala, the Royal Mausoleum of Hawai‘i, is among the most sacred cultural and historical places in our islands. It is the resting place of many of Hawai‘i’s ali‘i and remains a living cultural site where ceremony, remembrance, and traditional practices continue today.

I deeply appreciate the Legislature’s recognition that Native Hawaiian voices — including ali‘i societies, kahu families, lineal descendants, and Native Hawaiian organizations — must play an important role in the stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala.

The question before us is not whether Mauna ‘Ala deserves strong stewardship. It clearly does. The question is how to structure that stewardship in a way that is culturally grounded, operationally sound, and realistically supported.

After carefully reviewing this measure, I must respectfully express concern regarding the **scope of responsibilities assigned to the proposed working group and the practical capacity of volunteer cultural organizations to carry them out.**

For that reason, I respectfully **oppose this measure unless the Legislature commits to providing sufficient funding and professional support necessary to implement the responsibilities assigned in the bill.**

The Bill Creates What Is Essentially a Management Authority

While the measure describes the body as a “working group,” the responsibilities assigned in the bill extend far beyond advisory functions.

The working group would effectively function as a **governing authority for Mauna ‘Ala**, responsible for duties including:

- developing and implementing a comprehensive management plan for the site;
- establishing protocols governing access, ceremonies, and ritual practices;
- establishing protocols governing the curation and interment of remains;
- establishing procedures for the appointment, duties, and removal of the kahu, curator, and caretaker;
- advising state agencies regarding conservation, security, and infrastructure;

- accepting and managing funds and grants;
- conducting public outreach and education;
- adopting administrative rules;
- conducting contested case hearings; and
- submitting regular reports to the Legislature.

These responsibilities resemble the functions normally performed by **a public authority or commission with professional staff, administrative infrastructure, and legal counsel.**

Scope of Work Required

To illustrate the magnitude of the responsibilities contemplated in the bill, the working group would be expected to undertake activities such as:

Development of a Comprehensive Management Plan

Developing a management plan for Mauna ‘Ala would likely require:

- a full condition assessment of mausoleum buildings, crypts, vaults, chapels, and grounds
- historic preservation planning
- landscape and grounds management planning
- visitor management planning
- security and emergency preparedness planning
- consultation with lineal descendants, kahu families, ali‘i societies, and Native Hawaiian organizations.

Such work typically requires expertise in historic preservation, cultural resource management, planning, and administration.

Establishment of Cultural and Operational Protocols

The working group would also be required to establish protocols governing:

- visitor access to the site
- ceremonial and ritual practices
- interment and curation of remains
- stewardship responsibilities associated with the kahu, curator, and caretaker.

Each of these areas involves sensitive cultural considerations and may require extensive consultation with descendants and practitioners.

Legal Responsibilities Under State Law

The bill requires the working group to comply with several complex areas of state law.

These include:

Chapter 92 – Sunshine Law

This requires:

- public meeting notices and agendas
- public participation and testimony
- preparation and maintenance of meeting minutes.

Chapter 84 – State Ethics Code

Members would be required to:

- disclose potential conflicts of interest
- recuse themselves from certain decisions when appropriate
- ensure that decision-making avoids any appearance of undue influence.

Chapter 91 – Administrative Procedure Act

The working group may also be required to:

- adopt administrative rules
- conduct contested case hearings
- issue written findings of fact and conclusions of law
- respond to potential judicial review.

These are complex legal processes typically carried out with the assistance of legal counsel and administrative staff.

Contested Case Hearings and Quasi-Judicial Responsibilities

Another provision of the bill raises particularly significant concerns.

The measure provides that if a directly affected lineal descendant or kahu family member objects to certain actions of the working group, the working group must conduct a **contested case hearing pursuant to Chapter 91**.

A contested case hearing is a formal quasi-judicial proceeding that may involve:

- presentation of testimony and evidence
- legal arguments by the parties
- preparation of written findings of fact
- preparation of conclusions of law
- issuance of a written decision and order
- the possibility of judicial review in court.

In effect, the working group could be placed in the position of acting as an **administrative tribunal**.

These hearings could involve highly sensitive issues such as:

- disputes among lineal descendants
- disagreements regarding ceremonial practices
- decisions affecting traditional and customary practices
- matters concerning the appointment or removal of the kahu, curator, or caretaker.

Expecting volunteer members of cultural organizations to manage such proceedings without professional legal and administrative support could place them in an extremely difficult position.

Potential Overlap with Existing Stewardship Roles

Another concern relates to the potential overlap between the responsibilities of the proposed working group and the existing roles of the curator (sometime considered as kahu and caretaker.)

The bill assigns the working group authority to establish protocols governing access, ceremonies, and interment, as well as authority regarding the appointment and duties of the curator..

Many of these functions appear to intersect with responsibilities historically carried out by the **curator** who serves as the day-to-day stewards of Mauna ‘Ala.

The bill does not clearly distinguish between:

- the **policy-setting role of the working group**, and
- the **operational responsibilities of the curator**.

Without clear delineation of these roles, there is a risk of:

- overlapping authority
- uncertainty in decision-making
- potential conflict between governance and operational stewardship.

Capacity of Volunteer Cultural Organizations

Many of the organizations expected to participate in the working group — including ali‘i societies and Native Hawaiian organizations — are **entirely volunteer organizations**.

Their members already devote significant time and energy to the preservation of Hawaiian culture, ceremony, and history.

However, most volunteer cultural organizations do not have access to:

- full-time administrative staff
- legal counsel
- grant administrators
- historic preservation specialists
- the administrative infrastructure necessary to manage complex governmental responsibilities.

Without adequate support, the responsibilities assigned in this bill could place an **unreasonable burden on volunteers who are serving out of cultural commitment and kuleana**.

Professional Expertise Likely Required

To effectively carry out the responsibilities contemplated in the bill, the working group would likely require access to professional expertise in areas such as:

Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management

- historic preservation specialists
- conservation professionals experienced in maintaining historic structures
- cultural resource management professionals.

Cultural and Genealogical Expertise

- cultural practitioners knowledgeable in traditional protocol
- genealogical researchers to assist with descendant verification when necessary.

Legal and Administrative Law

- legal counsel familiar with administrative law
- assistance with rulemaking procedures
- support for contested case hearings
- preparation of findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Public Administration

- administrative staff to coordinate meetings and maintain records
- compliance with Sunshine Law requirements
- preparation of legislative reports.

Financial and Grant Management

- financial accounting
- grant administration
- fiscal compliance.

Site Operations and Visitor Management

- coordination with state agencies regarding infrastructure and maintenance
- visitor management planning.

Recommendation: Conduct a Governance and Stewardship Review

Given the complexity of these responsibilities, a more prudent approach may be for the Legislature to first authorize a **working group focused on governance and stewardship review**, rather than immediately assigning operational responsibilities.

Such a review could examine the **current stewardship framework for Mauna ‘Ala**, including:

- the responsibilities of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR);
- the operational role of the curator and caretaker;
- the role of the kahu family and traditional stewardship practices;
- the advisory and cultural roles of ali‘i societies and the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; and
- the role and work of the **Kōmike Mālama Mauna‘ala**, which has been actively engaged in matters concerning the care and stewardship of the Royal Mausoleum.

The working group could then submit a report to the Legislature identifying:

- appropriate operational responsibilities of DLNR staff
- the role and authority of the curator and caretaker
- the role of the Kōmike Mālama Mauna‘ala
- the advisory and cultural role of ali‘i societies and Native Hawaiian organizations
- the staffing and resources necessary to support long-term stewardship of Mauna ‘Ala.

The composition of the working group would be those members currently identified in the bill plus a representative of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Conclusion

Mauna ‘Ala deserves stewardship that honors both cultural tradition and responsible governance.

Ensuring that the governance structure for Mauna 'Ala is clearly defined and adequately supported will help protect the dignity of this sacred place while also recognizing the practical limitations of volunteer cultural organizations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Legislature to either:

1. provide sufficient funding and staffing support to implement the responsibilities contemplated in this bill; or
2. modify the bill to authorize a governance and stewardship review before assigning operational responsibilities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

Respectfully submitted.

Leimomi Khan

SB-3247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 12:26:06 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB3247 SD1

SB-3247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:40:19 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby Pikachu Billionaire	Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

****Honest Analysis of SB3247 SD1 (Relating to Hawaiian Affairs)**** This bill is ****not**** about public land leases, military use, national security, federal troops, or anything tied to President Trump or the federal government. It has ****zero**** references to those topics. What it actually does (straight from the SD1 text): - Creates a ****Royal Mausoleum Working Group**** placed ****administratively**** under DLNR. - The group gets to write its ****own independent management policy**** for Mauna ‘Ala (the Royal Mausoleum / Mauna ‘Ala). - It must include lineal descendants, the Ho‘olulu kahu family (tied to the secret burial of Kamehameha I), ali‘i trusts, and Native Hawaiian organizations. - The group sets all protocols for access, ceremonies, burials, and — most importantly — ****appoints the official kahu, curator, and caretaker****. DLNR is ****explicitly forbidden**** from appointing or contracting anyone for those roles except through the group’s rules. - The group can hire its own staff (exempt from civil service), accept private or federal grants, make rules, and submit reports to the Legislature. - Effective date is the usual placeholder (9/9/2129). ****Bottom line****: This is a classic “working group” compromise that ****takes real power away from DLNR**** and hands it to Native Hawaiian lineal descendants and cultural practitioners. DLNR keeps the budget and paperwork, but loses control over who actually runs the sacred site and how it’s managed culturally. It’s the opposite of giving DLNR more authority — it’s a deliberate check on them. ****My honest take (no sugarcoating)****:

Given your stated distrust of DLNR, the state government, and Trump/federal entities, this bill is still worth supporting — but with eyes wide open. It is one of the better Hawaiian Affairs bills this session because it ****codifies Native Hawaiian oversight**** over a major ali‘i burial site instead of leaving it fully in the hands of the same DLNR bureaucracy that has mismanaged so many other cultural sites. The fact that the kahu family (Ho‘olulu ‘ohana) and lineal descendants get direct input is meaningful. However, the “administratively under DLNR” language and the need for legislative appropriations mean the state can still starve it of funding or slow-walk it. History shows government “working groups” can get co-opted or ignored. There is no Trump or military angle here at all — this is purely a state-level cultural stewardship fight.

Testimony in ****STRONG SUPPORT**** of SB3247 SD1 Relating to Hawaiian Affairs

loha Chair(s) and Members of the Committees,

My name is Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM, Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party, representing the Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands. I do not trust DLNR. I do not trust the state government. And I certainly do not trust any federal administration — including President Trump's — to ever do the right thing by our people. With that said, I submit this testimony in ****STRONG SUPPORT**** of SB3247 SD1.

This bill finally takes meaningful power away from DLNR over Mauna 'Ala, our sacred Royal Mausoleum. It establishes a Royal Mausoleum Working Group that must include lineal descendants, the Ho'olulu kahu family, ali'i trusts, and Native Hawaiian organizations. That group — not DLNR — will create the actual management policy, set access and ceremonial protocols, decide on burials, and appoint the official kahu, curator, and caretaker. DLNR is explicitly barred from overriding those decisions.

For once, the state is being forced to step back and let Hawaiian people lead the stewardship of our ali'i remains and the grounds where Kamehameha I's kahu family has carried the kuleana for generations. That is long overdue. Here are my honest reasons for supporting this bill even while holding deep skepticism of the system:

1. ****It Checks DLNR's Control**** For decades DLNR has treated Mauna 'Ala like just another state park. This bill flips that — the working group writes the rules and DLNR only handles the paperwork and budget. That is a direct transfer of cultural authority.
2. ****It Centers the Right People**** Lineal descendants and the Ho'olulu 'ohana get real seats at the table. That is pono. That is how it should have been since 1967 when the state took over.
3. ****It Protects Traditional Practices**** The bill explicitly says the group cannot regulate traditional and customary rights out of existence and requires written findings before any action that would burden them. That language matters.
4. ****It Gives the Group Real Tools**** They can hire their own staff, accept private funding, make rules under Chapter 91, and run public education. That creates some independence even if the state still holds the purse strings.
5. ****It is Better Than the Status Quo**** Leaving full control with DLNR has not worked. This bill is an imperfect but real step toward self-determination at one of our most sacred sites. I will watch closely to make sure the working group is not starved of funds or captured — because I expect the government to try.

I urge you to pass SB3247 SD1 and appropriate the funds necessary to make the working group real, not just another empty committee. Our ali'i deserve better than bureaucratic management. Our living descendants deserve the right to care for them on our own terms. Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity. Sincerely,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM