

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

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

March 30, 2026

1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

in consideration of
SCR 159 / SR 150
**URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE
RESTORATION OF WAIKIKI BEACHES.**

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

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SCR 159 / SR150, which urges the adoption of shared guiding principles for beach restoration projects in Waikiki. These guiding principles would prioritize public access to and conservation of natural resources, approach planning decisions from a holistic perspective, reinforce the State's role as the policy and implementation lead in beach restoration efforts, and equitably distribute costs among the public institutions and private interests that benefit from a healthy and restored beach.

OPSD supports regional shoreline management as an appropriate planning tool and policy strategy to protect beaches and nearshore waters, preserve public enjoyment of public trust resources, and develop proactive, adaptive measures that reduce the risk of coastal hazards to natural resources, shoreline properties, and infrastructure.

The Waikiki we know today is the result of more than a century of large-scale civil engineering projects that created its sandy beaches and buildable land. Although we today may not make the same choices that our predecessors did, we also recognize that their past actions determine our current reality. In 2024, Waikiki was directly responsible for almost 5% of the State's total tax revenue and was indirectly responsible for just under 7%, not counting the taxes collected by the City & County of Honolulu. Tens of thousands of local residents go to work every day in Waikiki and over 20,000 make Waikiki their home. Leaving aside its visitor-focused amenities, Waikiki is irreplaceable in terms of the jobs, housing, recreation, and ocean access that it provides for residents.

Waikiki's beaches are being lost at an average rate of approximately one foot per year, with up to 30 feet of mauka shoreline migration in key locations due to a combination of natural

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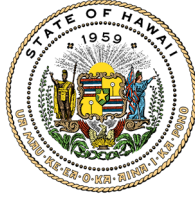
and human-caused factors. Significant beach loss has been documented in the area since the early 1900's and on-going mitigation efforts since that time, including shoreline hardening, erection of static groins, and periodic sand replenishment, have not stabilized the shoreline. We have learned some lessons over the past century. First, if we fight against the ocean, over time the ocean wins. Second, the ocean doesn't respect ownership boundaries. Third, what works at one moment won't work forever. Shoreline management solutions must be planned collaboratively to work in concert across the total beach system, designed to accommodate rather than oppose natural forces, and lie lightly enough on the ground to be adapted over time in response to continually changing conditions.

OPSD recognizes that Waikiki's beach and shoreline stakeholders are numerous and varied. The non-coordinated nature of past shoreline management attempts has resulted in a fragmented shoreline that does not reflect best management practices and has not fostered cooperation and trust. OPSD believes that the guiding principles contained in this measure will be a sound foundation for a unified, transparent, equitable, and effective strategy for restoring and preserving Waikiki's iconic beaches into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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LAND
STATE PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Monday, March 30, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 159
URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE
RESTORATION OF WAIKĪKĪ BEACHES

Senate Concurrent Resolution 159 proposes a set of guiding principles to be included in strategies for the maintenance of Waikīkī. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this resolution.**

This resolution recognizes that Waikīkī is not a naturally self-sustaining beach system, but rather an engineered urban shoreline that requires continuous management and investment to exist.

It is possible that at one time the shoreline along Māmala Bay functioned as a single littoral cell—that is, one connected system of coastal processes where sand moved naturally along the coast. Over time, however, this system was fundamentally altered. Extensive dredging of the reef flat to fill the Kālia wetlands, mining of beach sand for construction, and construction of an estimated 37 seawalls all contributed to significant beach loss in the early 20th century.

The beaches that exist today are the result of repeated large-scale nourishment projects beginning in 1939, which created and expanded Kaimana, Queen's Surf, Kapi'olani, and Kūhiō Beaches. These engineered beaches were then locked in place by a series of groins and breakwaters.

By establishing clear guiding principles, this measure supports the coordinated, long-term stewardship of Waikīkī.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.