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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Thursday, April 16, 2026
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 32
REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MARINE LIFE CONSERVATION
DISTRICT CARRYING CAPACITY STUDY TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A
STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Senate Concurrent Resolution 32 requests the establishment of a Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD) carrying capacity study task force to develop a statewide implementation plan. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and offers the following comments.**

The Department's Division of Aquatic Resources is coordinating the community-driven Holomua Marine Initiative (Holomua) to improve marine management practices across the state to ensure healthy ecosystems and abundant resources that allow the people of Hawai'i to enjoy coastal waters, support local livelihoods, and feed our families. One of the four pillars of Holomua is monitoring to measure current conditions, track progress following implementation of new management approaches, and to use data to identify areas where management actions need to be further adapted.

Events such as the extreme flooding in 2018 at Hā'ena, Kaua'i and the COVID-19 pandemic have provided unique glimpses into how nearshore marine resources and ecosystems respond to reduced human use. It is becoming increasingly evident that activities long considered "non-extractive" can still have significant impacts on nearshore ecosystems. It is critical that we better understand these impacts and human-use thresholds so we can prevent precious and unique areas like the state's MLCDs from being "loved to death."

There are currently ten designated MLCDs statewide:

- Hanauma Bay MLCD, O‘ahu
- Pūpūkea MLCD, O‘ahu
- Waikīkī MLCD, O‘ahu
- Kealakekua Bay MLCD, Hawai‘i
- Lapakahi MLCD, Hawai‘i
- Old Kona Airport MLCD, Hawai‘i
- Waialea Bay MLCD, Hawai‘i
- Honolua – Mokolē‘ia MCLD, Maui
- Molokini Shoal MLCD, Maui
- Mānele – Hulopo‘e MLCD, Lāna‘i

Carrying capacity studies have recently been conducted for Hanauma Bay and Pūpūkea. Additional carrying capacity studies for the remaining MLCDs would aid the Department in managing human use in these special areas. The Department agrees that the formation of a task force to develop a comprehensive framework for an MLCD Carrying Capacity Program and to identify administrative and financial resource needs would be beneficial.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SCR-32

Submitted on: 4/13/2026 4:40:30 PM

Testimony for WAL on 4/16/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!



WAL Hearing, Thursday, 04-16-26 9:00AM

SCR32 – MLCD Carrying Capacity Task Force

In Support

Aloha WAL Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members,

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) is a Hawai'i non-profit organization founded on the North Shore of O'ahu in 2005. Our mission is "working to replenish and sustain the natural and cultural resources of the Pūpūkea and Waimea ahupua'a for present and future generations through active community stewardship, education, and partnerships."

For twenty-one years, we have focused our collaborative stewardship and education efforts on the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD), one of only three MLCDs on O'ahu.

MPW strongly supports SCR32.

MPW was honored to be selected by DLNR-DAR to conduct the Act 31 (2022) Carrying Capacity Program for the Pūpūkea MLCD.

The [final report](#) was submitted to the State Legislature by DLNR on January 5, 2026.

MPW is willing and able to assist with the Task Force to be appointed under this SCR and to build on the specialized knowledge we gained and shared through Act 31.

Mahalo!

Denise Antolini
President, MPW

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea
Post Office Box 188
Hale'iwa, HI 96712

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SCR-32

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 6:48:22 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/16/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support this effort to address the effects of unlimited human impacts on sensitive and finite marine shoreline ecosystems. I also support managing these areas for long term sustainability.

Malama pono,

Diane Ware Volcano 96785

I support this measure to include establishing co-management agreements for all parties stewarding an MLCD, developing place-based (human-use, marine species, water quality, habitat) monitoring. Agreements shall identify compliance and enforcement services, and Special Activity Permits (SAPs) for immunities and privileges that partie(s) may use to fulfill co-management obligations.