

STATEMENT OF  
ALEJANDRO J. BALANDRAN  
BEFORE THE  
STATE OF HAWAII BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

ON

FRIDAY, July 23, 2021

9:00 A.M.

Online via ZOOM, Livestream via YouTube

in consideration of

**AGENDA ITEM (F)(1) – RELATING TO THE DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES**

**Purpose:** Request to authorize an amendment to an existing Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Native Hawaiian Practices Permit to Mr. Nainoa Thompson.

**Position:** This testimony reflects my personal view as a student at the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Aloha Chairperson Case,

My name is Alejandro Baladrán, I am 31 years old and a law student at the University of Hawai'i. I am submitting written testimony in support of authorization and approval to issue a Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Native Hawaiian Practices Permit Amendment to Mr. Nainoa Thompson of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, for access to state waters to conduct sails for navigators using non-instrumental navigation activities to clarify language in the existing permit under agenda item (F)(1).

Specifically, I urge the board to issue the amendment with the caveat that nothing in the amendment or clarification of the permit should hinder or in any way limit Mr. Thompson, the Polynesian Voyaging Society, or any relevant party's access to state waters.

The mission statement of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) is to perpetuate the art and science of traditional Polynesian voyaging which is fundamental to Native Hawaiian culture. Native Hawaiian traditions and practices have often come to the brink of extinction within our lifetime. It is imperative to protect practitioners and to allow them liberal access to the resources

they request in the interest of preserving traditions that are crucial to their cultural identity.

From an ethical standpoint, much of the risk of extinction of Native Hawaiian traditions and practices is a direct result of colonization by European settlers and often perpetuated by the U.S. occupation of the Hawaiian Islands. For the state of Hawai'i to limit any access or to make access to resources necessary for cultural practices difficult would be a condemnation of traditional Native Hawaiian voyaging and its importance to Native Hawaiian culture.

Organizations like the PVS not only preserve the historical importance of Native Hawaiian practices but also enrich the community through visibility and representation. From 2013-2019 the Hōkūle'a has traveled to 18 nations and garnered worldwide attention. The PVS is not only an example of Native Hawaiian excellence to the world, but it also demonstrates to the Native Hawaiian community that the reach of native traditions is likely further than we are allowed to imagine.

The state constitution of Hawai'i already details the importance of indigenous rights to land for traditional practices and purposes of subsistence. However, it is imperative for the local community to continually fight to protect the access of cultural practitioners like Mr. Thompson and the PVS as is detailed in their rights as indigenous people to the resources necessary to continue their cultural practices.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony and once again I humbly urge you to authorize the requested amendment only if the amendment or the clarification in the language of the permit does not limit Mr. Thompson or the PVS's access to state waters.

Sincerely,



Alejandro J. Balandrán  
801 S. King St.,  
Honolulu, HI, 96813  
[ajbaland@hawaii.edu](mailto:ajbaland@hawaii.edu)  
(909)260-5489