

Hui Maka‘āinana O Makana



The Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in within the Hā‘ena State Park.

25 July 2025

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources:

I am testifying today in support of Agenda item E-1 to Authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of State Parks to Directly Negotiate with Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana, an eleemosynary organization, for a Concession Agreement with Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana for the Retainment of Fees Collected for the Parking and Shuttle Service and ancillary mission-related revenue generation activities at Hā‘ena State Park, Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i, Tax Map Key: (4) 5-9-008:001 portion;

While today is a day we should be celebrating - after being stuck in a cycle of revocable permits for the past three years - it just doesn't feel that way to me. Let me explain why.

I am one of the five community leaders who incorporated the Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana in 1999. I have served on either their Board of Directors or on our Ohana Council over the past 26 years. I currently serve as the Secretary of the Hui's Board. I spent over 20 years of my life working with other community leaders and State Parks planners and two different sets of consultants to develop the Master Plan for Hā'ena State Park which was adopted in 2018. I am the 5th generation in our ohana to live in Hā'ena and have spent the past 50 years focused on making Hā'ena a model of effective community-based conservation.

The co-management of Hā'ena State Park has been a long-held dream of our community. Both the current Master Plan (adopted by the BLNR on May 25, 2018), as well as the previous draft plan that was developed by Keith Companies (in the 1990s) but never completed or presented to the Land Board, had community co-management as the community preferred option for the long-term future of the Park. The organic documents of the Hui which we drafted in the late 1990s clearly articulated our vision along with the concepts of regenerative tourism, a community-managed fishery, restored lo'i kalo, and most important the restoration of our community's *pilina* to what is now called Hā'ena State Park.

It is with this as a context that we have been cycling through revocable permits for years waiting for State Parks and the AG to come to agreement on the terms of a lease of the Park to the Hui. While State Parks and the Hui have been on the same page about the vision of community co-management and a nonprofit lease for years, apparently over the past few months it was determined that the only way forward at this time is via a "concession agreement". We only found out about this in the past two weeks. While practically speaking a concession agreement may achieve much of the management goals of the Hui, the concession agreement is a huge step

backwards for the concept of co-management. That is why this meeting today seems less of a celebration that it should. The Hui has been busting trail on community co-management for the past 26 years and we will continue to push for the full realization of our dream and hope that we can count on DLNR, the BNLR and the good folks in State Parks to support that as we seek a change in the HRS that seems to have caused the AG to not support the concept of a non-exclusive non-profit lease at Hā'ena State Park.

So, in conclusion, we ask for your support in approving Agenda item E1. We will accept the concession agreement as a win, as another important step along the long journey that we have been on to be recognized as the rightful and effective stewards of our ancestral lands. But know that we will be back before once we have identified the path forward to achieve our dreams.

Our vision is framed around the 'olelo no'eau that our ancestors put forth which captures our relations to Hā'ena: *He Ali 'i Ka 'Āina, He Kauwā Ke Kanaka* . The 'āina is “da boss” and it's our kuleana to help create the balance that will protect it and in doing so we as a community will thrive.

I plan to participate in the BLNR meeting on July 25th in person and will be happy to answer any questions you might have about the vision of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana or the submittal that is before you today.

Me ka ha'a ha'a,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chipper Wichman", with a long, flowing horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Chipper Wichman, Secretary
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana