

Date Aug 21 2025

The Trust for Public Land
c/o Reyna Ramolete Hayashi
1003 Bishop St., Suite 740
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Letter in Support of Protecting and Acquiring Kāneʻohe Pali, TMKs: (1) 4-5-041:004; (1) 4-5-025:008;
(1) 4-5-041:001; (1) 4-5-042:018

I write to express my personal support for the State of Hawaiʻi Department of Land & Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Forestry & Wildlife (DOFAW), Trust for Public Land, and the Kāneʻohe community's efforts to purchase and protect the Kāneʻohe Pali property in Kāneʻohe, Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi.

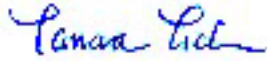
I am a Botanist and Professor at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, and my lab has been carrying out research on Hawaii's plants for the past 25 years. Our work has demonstrated the population decline of Hawaii's native plants, including both threatened species and even common species. The conservation of Kāneʻohe Pali will be critical to the protection of Hawaii's native forest, including the 31 plant species for which it is critical habitat.

Among Kāneʻohe Pali's treasures are the remnants of Kekele, a historic and beloved hala grove. Hala is a plant species of great "biocultural" importance in Hawaii because it plays critical ecological roles and also cultural roles. Over the past few years my lab has been involved in collaborative research on the biocultural conservation of hala. The archival research, led by Tehina Kahikina, has demonstrated the enormous historical cultural importance of Kekele, for example as illustrated in mele, as well as in written accounts of the cultural losses that occurred when the grove was destroyed. The ecological work that Mason Russo has conducted has demonstrated the continuing and very worrying decline of hala populations throughout the state, including Oʻahu. The interviews conducted by Tehina Kahikina and Makana Montallana, have also highlighted declining hala groves on Oʻahu and therefore the lack of accessible quality material for hala weavers. Our research points to the critical need to protect and restore Kekele – something that DOFAW plans to do should the property be acquired.

Overall, the purchase of Kāneʻohe Pali would play a critical role in conserving Oahu's native plants, and in conserving and restoring a critical component of Hawaiʻi's biocultural heritage, thus benefiting generations to come of Hawaiʻi residents.

If you have any questions, please contact me at ticktin@hawaii.edu.

Mahalo

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tamara Ticktin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tamara" and last name "Ticktin" clearly distinguishable.

Tamara Ticktin,

Professor, School of Life Sciences

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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