



February 25, 2026

ATTN: Ms. Dawn Chang, Chairperson
Mr. Ryan Kanaka'ole, First Deputy (Acting Chair)
Board of Land and Natural Resources
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Submitted *via Email* to blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

SUBJECT: Strong Support for Agenda Item F2 Request for Fines and Penalties against Trident Adventures LLC for Conducting Unpermitted Commercial Activities in the Sharks Cove, Three Tables, and Waimea Bay Ocean Waters of the North Shore Ocean Recreation Management Area ("ORMA") regulated under HAR § 13-256-63, and Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD) regulated under HAR Chp. 13-34, O'ahu, on June 9 and 19, 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources Meeting
February 27, 2026, 9:00 a.m., Kalanimoku Building, Room 132

Aloha pumehana kākou:

[Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo](#) (KUA) **strongly supports** Agenda Item F2 regarding requested fines and penalties for Trident Adventures LLC conducting unpermitted commercial activities in the North Shore ORMA and Pūpūkea MLCD.

Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo means "grassroots growing through shared responsibility," and our acronym KUA means "backbone." We exist to increase resilience, adaptation, and transformation through community based biocultural management, currently supporting three major networks of: (1) over 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or "that which feeds") community groups referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) in varying stages of restoration and development, with caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things "limu" or locally grown "seaweed." **Our shared nu'ukia (vision) is to experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as 'āina momona – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and wellbeing.**

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) has been working since 2005 to replenish and sustain the biocultural resources of Pūpūkea and Waimea ahupua'a for present and future generations through active community stewardship, education, and partnerships. They are a valued member of our KUA networks, including our Limu Hui and formerly serving on our E Alu Pū council. MPW is also actively engaged in several of our advocacy efforts both administrative and legislative, including current legislation for community co-management agreements and our weekly Lawai'a Pono Hui meetings. Further, we applaud MPW for recently completing the Act 31 (2022) carrying capacity study, which over the past three years compiled extensive data showing the significant impacts to marine life in the Pūpūkea MLCD due to overuse and disrespect by uninformed tourists and local recreational users alike – essentially exactly the type of exploitation and abuse on our public trust 'āina that is before you today with Agenda Item F2.



Marine Protected Areas like MLCDs in Hawai'i are established to conserve and replenish the i'a (marine animals), limu (various underwater plants), 'āko'ako'a (coral), and all life in these designated wahi pana (sacred places), acting as safe havens and nurseries for these lifeforms that may have little to no protections in surrounding areas. Threats to MLCDs include overuse by uninformed and irresponsible tourists and locals, as well as increased environmental changes and disasters, pollution, and invasive species, to name a few. As such, we find these violations by Trident Adventures LLC disappointing and offensive given the delicate nature of MLCDs, and strongly support the fines and penalties requested. Whether they were operating commercially or recreationally, this type of behavior should *not* be accepted in an MLCD or anywhere, as it is not only *nonessential*, but also irresponsible, dangerous, and highly disruptive to both the marine life and surrounding nearshore community.

Before policymakers identified the extreme need to better manage visitor impacts on the environment and people living here in Hawai'i, our communities led the way. Building back a government and economy that allows for abundance, peace, and wellness for our 'āina and kama'āina goes hand-in-hand with the need for smarter, sustainable, and community-based practices with managing tourism. MPW is one of the few organizations that dedicates much of its capacity to this purpose given the high demand on these special places like Pūpūkea and Waimea that careless recreational users often exploit. We urge you to **approve** Agenda Item F2 and better protect our public trust 'āina and MLCD marine life for future generations to come.

Me ka mahalo a me ka 'oia'i'o nō,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Chang".

Kevin K.J. Chang
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olan Leimomi Fisher".

Olan Leimomi Fisher
Kua'āina Advocate

February 24, 2026

To: Chair and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources

Re: Testimony in **Full Support** of February 27, 2026 Agenda Item F-2: Enforcement Action (Fines and Penalties) Against Trident Adventures LLC for Conducting Unpermitted Commercial Activities in the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District and for the Prevention of Any Future Helicopter Activities in the District

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I submit this testimony in **full support** of DLNR's enforcement action against Trident Adventures LLC and in strong support of preventing any future helicopter activities within the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD).

In addition to the violations already before you, this testimony highlights the following key issues:

1. **Importance and Sensitivity of Pūpūkea MLCD**

The ecological, cultural, and public trust importance of the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District, and why commercial helicopter operations are fundamentally incompatible with its purpose.

2. **Ongoing Commercial Advertising and Promotion**

Ongoing commercial advertising and continued promotion of helicopter scuba tours associated with Pūpūkea MLCD, including A-frame "sandwich board" signage at Pūpūkea Beach Park and similar advertising observed in Hale'iwa.

3. **Community Video Documentation and Resident Interaction**

A July 28, 2025 community video documenting helicopter activity coinciding with the departure of spinner dolphins, and the subsequent direct contact from a Trident representative that the resident described as intimidating and dismissive.

1. **Importance and Sensitivity of Pūpūkea MLCD**

Pūpūkea MLCD is one of the most special and highly protected marine areas in the State of Hawai'i. The protections afforded to this place exist for a reason: to protect and conserve marine life by setting this area aside as a refuge where species can grow, reproduce, and thrive without disturbance, ensuring the long-term health and replenishment of marine resources for surrounding shorelines. Pūpūkea is not only a sanctuary for marine life, it's also a place of cultural practice, education, and enjoyment for residents, families, and visitors alike.

Commercial helicopter operations are fundamentally incompatible with these values. The noise, physical disturbance, and safety risks posed by helicopters are profoundly disruptive to both protected marine species and people. Such activity should not be permitted anywhere within a Marine Life Conservation District or other Marine Protected Areas. Allowing this kind of exploitation undermines the very purpose of these protections and erodes public trust in their enforcement.

2. Ongoing Commercial Advertising and Promotion

In addition to the two violations addressed in this hearing, Trident Adventures has continued to actively advertise and promote its commercial helicopter scuba tours associated with Pūpūkea MLC. Specifically, Trident representatives were observed recruiting customers in the parking lot at Pūpūkea Beach Park, which fronts the Marine Life Conservation District. The link provided at the end of this testimony includes photographs taken on July 16, 2025 (one month after one of the incidents under enforcement) showing an individual advertising with three A-frame boards. This conduct demonstrates Trident's clear intention to continue operating despite the illegality of these activities and widespread community concern. Similar advertising has also been observed in Hale'iwa.

3. Community Video Documentation and Resident Interaction

Further, although not included in DLNR's enforcement action report, a video taken on July 28, 2025 (over one month after the incidents under enforcement) by a resident who lives along the MLC documents additional concerns. The video was posted to the Facebook page The North Shore Community Hub. In the recording, the resident states that a school of spinner dolphins was present in the area immediately prior to the helicopter's arrival and departed as the helicopter approached. This observation is deeply concerning given the known sensitivity of marine mammals to noise and disturbance.

After posting the video, the resident was contacted directly by a representative of Trident Adventures, who stated she was on the helicopter, reviewed onboard camera footage, and did not observe dolphins. The resident felt intimidated and bullied by this interaction. She stated:

"I received an inbox message from Teri Gilbert Lathrop. She said there are many cameras on the helicopter and she reviewed all the footage and there were no spinner dolphins—basically calling me a liar. They were definitely scared off as the military-size loud helicopter approached. She told me she's a professional diver and dolphin trainer. I really don't care. Everything about what they have done three times now is wrong. I didn't get into a banter back and forth with her."

**The video has been screen-recorded from the original post and a link and QR code for viewing are shared on the last page of this testimony.

As someone who has spent a lifetime growing up here, and decades working to care for, educate about, and protect the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District, I am deeply concerned by these actions and their implications. Pūpūkea's protections exist because this place is irreplaceable. They must be meaningfully and intentionally upheld.

I respectfully urge the Board to enforce these violations to the fullest extent allowed and to take all necessary steps to ensure that such disruptive, dangerous, and inappropriate activities do not occur again in the future.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jenny Yagodich
Director of Educational Programs &
Makai Watch Coordinator,
Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea

Link to Video/Images:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10K6xQRKhA57YP3UPcYHm7uwUg475v0nT?usp=sharing>



Trident advertising in the parking lot fronting the Pūpūkea MLCD on Jul 16, 2025 at 2:30 PM.