

Testimony of Ed Sniffen  
State Department of Transportation  
June 26, 2026

**Item D-4**

**Issuance of Construction and Management Right-of-Entry Permit to Department of Transportation for the Kalaeloa Hybrid Reef Project**

**Item K-2**

**Conservation District Use Application OA-3994 for the Kalaeloa Hybrid Reef Project**

HDOT respectfully requests the Board's approval of both the Construction and Management Right-of-Entry Permit and Conservation District Use Application OA-3994 for the Kalaeloa Hybrid Reef Project offshore of Kalaeloa Point, O'ahu.

The Kalaeloa Hybrid Reef Project is an innovative pilot project that seeks to evaluate whether nature-based infrastructure can provide meaningful coastal protection while also supporting ecological enhancement. Developed in partnership with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the University of Hawai'i, Kuleana Coral Restoration, and numerous federal, state, academic, and community partners, this project represents an important opportunity to advance resilient shoreline management strategies.

The project proposes the installation of a prototype hybrid reef system designed to attenuate wave energy, reduce shoreline erosion and coastal flooding risks, and provide new habitat for coral and associated marine organisms. Unlike traditional hard armoring approaches, the hybrid reef integrates engineered structures with coral restoration techniques to create a living, adaptive coastal protection system. HDOT recognizes the unique environmental, cultural, and community values associated with the Kalaeloa coastline and has worked with regulatory agencies and community members throughout project planning and environmental review.

The project has undergone environmental review, including completion of a federal and state Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact, consultation under HRS Chapter 6E, Federal Endangered Species Act consultation, Essential Fish Habitat consultation, Coastal Zone Management consistency review, USACE permits, and numerous agency coordination efforts. HDOT is committed to implementing all permit conditions, best management practices, mitigation measures, and monitoring requirements associated with this project.

As Hawai'i continues to experience the impacts of sea level rise, coastal erosion, and increasingly severe storm events, HDOT believes this pilot project provides an important opportunity to evaluate innovative and nature-based approaches that may help protect critical infrastructure and coastal communities throughout the State. HDOT appreciates the support and collaboration provided by DLNR staff, OCCL, DAR, SHPD, Land Division, and all the project partners.

Mahalo for your consideration, and we respectfully request the Board's approval of Agenda Items D-4 and K-2.