

**July 2026**

**Board of Land and Natural Resources**  
State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

**Re: Follow-up Testimony Regarding Agenda Item D-5**  
**East Kaua'i Water System / Keālia Watershed**  
**Board Meeting of June 26, 2026**

**Aloha Chair Ryan P. Kanaka'ole and Honorable Members of the Board:**

‘O wau nō ‘o Kamealoha Hanohano Pa-Smith, he mamo no nā ‘ohana mai Keālia, Kamalomalo‘o, Anahola, a me Kapa‘a, he po‘e i hānai ‘ia e ka wai a me nā kumuwaiwai o kēia ‘āina mai kahiko mai a hiki i kēia lā. He wai ola. He wai e ho‘omau ana i nā pilina kanaka, nā hana ku‘una, a me ka ‘ike kupuna i ho‘oili ‘ia mai kekahi hanauna a i kekahi hanauna. No laila, ke mahalo aku nei au i ka Papa no ko lākou ho‘oholo ‘ana e hā‘awi hou i ka manawa no ke kūkākūkā ‘ana me ke kaiāulu.

I respectfully submit this follow-up testimony regarding Agenda Item D-5 considered by the Board on June 26, 2026. I appreciate the Board's decision to grant a six-month extension to allow additional coordination and public outreach before this matter returns for future consideration. I testify today as a community member, lineal descendant, Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner, researcher, and nonprofit leader whose family continues to maintain longstanding relationships with the wai, resources, and cultural landscapes associated with the East Kaua'i watershed.

I want to be clear that I support responsible stewardship of the East Kaua'i Water System. I recognize the importance of maintaining agricultural infrastructure, protecting water resources, supporting food production, and ensuring long-term management of these public assets. My concern is not whether planning should occur, but how it should occur. I believe the additional six-month period presents an important opportunity to strengthen the planning process by meaningfully engaging Native Hawaiian practitioners, lineal descendants, and community members whose cultural relationships with these waters continue today.

The Board's discussion recognized the need for additional public outreach. I respectfully encourage the agencies involved to ensure that this outreach includes Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners with generational knowledge of Keālia, Kamalomalo‘o, Anahola, Kapa‘a, and the broader East Kaua'i watershed. From a Native Hawaiian perspective, these waters are far more than irrigation infrastructure. They are living cultural landscapes that sustain gathering practices, ceremonial relationships, subsistence traditions, ‘ike kupuna, stewardship responsibilities, and

intergenerational connections to place. Decisions affecting diversions, reservoirs, streams, transmission systems, and watershed management therefore have cultural implications that extend well beyond engineering or operational considerations.

The Hawai‘i Supreme Court, through *Ka Pa‘akai O Ka ‘Āina v. Land Use Commission* and *In re Water Use Permit Applications (Waiāhole Ditch)*, has affirmed that state agencies have an affirmative responsibility to identify Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, assess potential impacts, and implement reasonable protections where those practices may be affected. Those responsibilities are strengthened through direct engagement with lineal descendants and practitioners possessing place-based knowledge that cannot be fully documented through technical reports alone.

Over the past several years, my work has focused on community-based cultural research, cultural impact assessment, archaeological monitoring, and practitioner-led approaches to Native Hawaiian resource stewardship. Through that work, I have seen firsthand that community knowledge and technical planning are not competing approaches—they complement one another and often produce stronger, more durable outcomes.

Accordingly, I respectfully encourage the Board to ensure that the additional six-month coordination period includes a robust cultural engagement process with lineal descendants, Native Hawaiian practitioners, cultural organizations, and community members. I further encourage consideration of a community-based Ka Pa‘akai Analysis documenting ongoing traditional and customary practices, cultural landscapes, and practitioner relationships associated with the East Kaua‘i watershed before future management decisions are brought back before the Board.

This request is not intended to delay progress. Rather, it is offered in the spirit of partnership. The East Kaua‘i watershed presents an opportunity to demonstrate how engineering expertise, agricultural planning, watershed management, and Native Hawaiian cultural knowledge can work together to fulfill both the State's public trust responsibilities and its legal obligations under Hawai‘i law.

Should the agencies find it helpful, I would welcome the opportunity to participate in future community engagement efforts and to assist in developing a practitioner-informed process that strengthens collaboration between government agencies and the communities that continue to mālama these places. Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued commitment to the stewardship of Hawai‘i's public trust resources.

Respectfully submitted,

**Kamealoha Hanohano Pa-Smith, MA/PD**

Community Researcher & Native Hawaiian Cultural Practitioner

Phone: (808) 212-4356

Email: [khs96703@gmail.com](mailto:khs96703@gmail.com)