

## 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.*

26 June 2026

Aloha Chair Kanaka‘ole and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources:

I am testifying today on behalf of the Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana. The late notice of this agenda item being sent to the Hui (we only got it three days ago) and pre-exiting travel plans will prevent any other participation or testimony from our leadership team including Pua Chin our Executive Director and Billy Kinney our Assistant Director. I serve as the Vice President of the Board and am one of the five community members that founded the Hui almost 30 years ago.

I am “reluctantly” testifying on behalf of the Hui in support of Agenda item E-1 Approval to Continue Revocable Permit SP0002, Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana, for Management of Reservation System for Collection of Parking and Entry Fees, Shuttle Services and Resource Enhancement, Hā‘ena State Park, Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i.

Why are we reluctant in our support? The extension of this RP means we will begin yet another year without a clear long-term agreement with DLNR in place. Revocable Permit SP0002 was approved in 2021 as a short-term stop-gap measure to allow the Hui and State Parks to enter into a long-term relationship as defined in the Master Plan for Haena State Park which the BLNR approved in 2018. This has been a frustratingly slow process that seems to have been blocked at every turn by concerns from the AG’s office.

One year ago, on July 25, 2025, the BLNR authorized 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”. I am sure you will remember that the approval to move forward with a “concession agreement” was also not a happy one as it was not what the Master Plan envisioned which was a lease of the park to a nonprofit organization. The Concession Agreement was seen as the only legal way for the DLNR to enter into a long-term agreement with the Hui. In spite of its shortcomings at least the Concession Agreement would have established a long-term relationship between the Hui and DLNR thanks to its 10-year term. Well, as if it is ground-hog day, guess what, the AG has concerns with the concept of the Concession Agreement and although we worked really hard on drafting this with State Parks legal fellow Chris Makowski and got to the AG for review many months ago, it now appears that there will be no Concession Agreement for you to consider today.

The only good news to come out of this multi-year, super frustrating process, is that following the July BLNR meeting last year, Speaker Nakamura threw her full support behind a legislative fix to this problem. Over the summer and fall of 2025, a group of community leaders worked with Speaker's office to draft a bill that would create a legal pathway for the State to enter into true community co-management agreements. I have attached my testimony on HB2218 which will give you more background on this effort. In May, HB2218 CD1 (also attached) was passed by both houses and was sent to the Governor. A formal signing ceremony is scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.

The signing of HB2218 will not only impact the Hui and the State Park system, it is being embraced by several divisions within DLNR each of which is working with established community groups to develop community co-management agreements. This is a very exciting development and hopefully the challenges we have faced from the AG's office in the past will be fully addressed by this new law and the pathway it has created.

In conclusion, the action before you today is to extend our RP for another year. The Hui encourages you to approve this request. Furthermore, we hope to be back in front of you in the not too distant future, not to approve a concession agreement, but to ask you to approve a new community co-management agreement!!!

I plan to participate in the BLNR meeting on June 26<sup>th</sup> via zoom 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, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Chipper Wichman, Vice President  
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

Attachments: HB2218 Testimony  
HB2218 CD1 (final approved bill)



## HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA

*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.*

TO: Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
Members of the House COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

DATE: Tuesday, February 10, 2026  
TIME: 9:00 am  
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE in Room 411

From: Chipper Wichman, Vice President  
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

RE: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2218 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

I am writing today as a founding Director and current Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (the Hui) a nonprofit established in 1998 to support the care and management of Hā'ena State Park (HSP). **The Hui is in strong support of HB 2218.**

Our Hui has worked closely with House leadership and DLNR leadership over the past six months to draft this bill. The process of drafting this bill brought together community leaders from across the *pae 'āina* (Hawaiian archipelago) to work collaboratively with leaders and subject matter specialists from DLNR as well as lawmakers. In the 50+ years that I have been advocating for community-based resource management I have never been part of such a collaborative process. This reflects that importance of this bill for both our communities as well as our government.

HB 2218, as currently written, will authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to enter into “community co-management agreements” with qualified Hawai'i-based nonprofit groups both mauka (inland) and makai (seaward). **This is a “tool” that our State needs to have in our toolbox so that we can collectively work together to better manage the natural and cultural heritage of our State!**

The initial motivation to draft this bill came from the deep frustration caused by the inability of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) in July of last year to issue a long-term lease to our Hui for the management of Hā'ena State Park (HSP). State Parks and the Hui have been working diligently towards the goal of a long-term lease since the Master Plan for HSP was approved in 2018. The concept of a nonprofit lease was the preferred community option on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared along with the Master Plan for HSP.

After working together over the past six years to achieve the goal of a long-term lease, it finally became clear at the BLNR meeting on July 25, 2025, that the legislature would need to create a

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2218 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

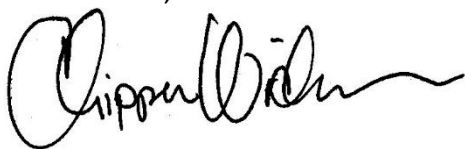
new legal pathway to achieve this important goal. What happened next is something that we should all be proud of. With Speaker Nakamura’s encouragement, community leaders and government leaders worked hand-in-hand, week after week, to not only draft this bill but to engage widespread community input and support.

The legal drafting of the bill over the past several months was done by Olan Leimomi Fisher the Kua’āina Advocate working for Kua’āina Ulu ‘Auamo (or KUA) in collaboration with a “working group” made up of government experts and community leaders. KUA then used their networks to vet the ideas and language that would become the foundation of the draft bill. KUA also met with communities across the State (both in person and virtually) creating an effective feed-back loop that informed the drafting process and ultimately the final language that is in the bill before you today. The Hawaii Conservation Alliance (HCA) was also a key partner is helping to draft and vet this bill through their membership and networks!

This effort was truly a “Community Led, Government-Supported” process which has been the model our Hui has used to make Hā'ena a State-wide model of regenerative tourism and the gold standard for community-based natural and cultural resource management. What has emerged from years of frustration for the Hui is an opportunity for finally create a legal pathway for community co-management initiatives across the state. What started as an effort within the Division of State Park has grown and is now embraced and championed by the Division of Aquatic Resources and the Division of Forestry and Wildlife – all of whom are important members of the “community co-management working group”. This bill will truly benefit all of DLNR!

In closing, we ask for your STRONG support of HB 2218. The members of the House committee on Water and Land are the experts who are familiar with the issues that make this bill so important. As such, we hope that you too will become champions of the concepts embodied in this important piece of legislation.

Me ke aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chipper Wichman", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Chipper Wichman, Secretary  
Hui Maka’āinana o Makana

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that providing explicit  
2 authority to the board of land and natural resources to enter  
3 into community co-management agreements honors the Native  
4 Hawaiian concepts of malama aina and ahupuaa-based management,  
5 promoting more effective stewardship of public trust resources  
6 for present and future generations.

7           The legislature further finds that grassroots communities  
8 across the State, including Haena, Pupukea, Moomomi, Kipahulu,  
9 Hookena, Kaupulehu, and Kealakekua, have spent decades  
10 collaborating with government agencies to care for wahi pana and  
11 surrounding resources. These efforts would be more effective  
12 and sustainable if supported by long-term community  
13 co-management agreements.

14           Although community-government partnerships exist through  
15 curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the  
16 lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits  
17 their effectiveness. For example, the Hui Makaanana o Makana



1 has worked since 1998 to steward Haena state park and perpetuate  
2 ike kupuna. The board of land and natural resources approved  
3 entering into a concession agreement, yet has not secured a  
4 long-term co-management agreement with the Hui. Other aina-  
5 based organizations face similar challenges.

6 Community-based co-management has also been successful in  
7 fisheries through the community-based subsistence fishing area  
8 framework. Communities in Haena, Milolii, Kipahulu, and  
9 Kealakekua have established community-based subsistence fishing  
10 areas, and additional communities are organizing, all of which  
11 would benefit from long-term co-management agreements.

12 The legislature further finds that the State alone cannot  
13 sustainably manage the State's public trust resources and that  
14 place-based Native Hawaiian and local communities provide  
15 essential stewardship, capacity, and local knowledge.

16 Article XI, section 1, and article XII, section 7, of the Hawaii  
17 State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means  
18 of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources  
19 for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and  
20 religious purposes.

21 The purpose of this Act is to:



- 1 (1) Authorize the board of land and natural resources to
- 2 enter into community co-management agreements;
- 3 (2) Establish qualifications for eligible community
- 4 co-managers; and
- 5 (3) Authorize the disposition of public lands by a
- 6 community co-management agreement.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 171, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
 8 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and  
 9 to read as follows:

10 **"PART . COMMUNITY CO-MANAGEMENT**

11 **§171-A Findings and purpose.** The legislature finds that  
 12 providing specific authority to the board of land and natural  
 13 resources to enter into community co-management agreements with  
 14 community-based organizations honors the traditional Native  
 15 Hawaiian concept of malama aina and place-based practices for  
 16 natural and cultural resource management, promoting more  
 17 effective protection of the State's public trust resources for  
 18 the benefit of present and future generations.

19 **§171-B Definitions.** Notwithstanding any other definition  
 20 to the contrary provided in this chapter, as used in this part:



1 "Aina education" means learning pathways that are guided  
2 and grounded in geographic place, aina and kai, and Native  
3 Hawaiian values, language, culture, and history.

4 "Community-based organization" means a nonprofit  
5 corporation incorporated in the State that has a mission,  
6 capacity, and commitment to malama aina; care for natural and  
7 cultural resources; and engage in community-driven planning,  
8 management, and projects that benefit public trust resources.

9 "Community co-management unit" means the location and  
10 boundaries of the land subject to a community co-management  
11 agreement.

12 "Land" means all interests therein and natural resources  
13 including water, streams, shorelines out to a mile or the  
14 fringing reef, ocean minerals, and all things connected with  
15 land, unless otherwise expressly provided.

16 **§171-C Community co-management agreements.** (a) The board  
17 may enter into community co-management agreements, by direct  
18 negotiation and without recourse to public auction, with  
19 qualified community-based organizations to implement this part.



1 (b) Community co-management agreements shall be used  
2 solely and exclusively for one or more of the following  
3 purposes:

4 (1) Preservation and practice of all rights customarily  
5 and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for  
6 subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes;

7 (2) Preservation, protection, and restoration of  
8 archaeological, historical, and environmental  
9 resources;

10 (3) Rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and  
11 preservation of native species and habitats;

12 (4) Management of parking, visitor activities, and public  
13 and recreational parks and facilities in conjunction  
14 with malama aina-focused principles; or

15 (5) Aina education;

16 provided that no community co-management agreement shall  
17 allocate the sharing of management functions and  
18 responsibilities and the rights of entry and use for a given  
19 community co-management unit under the jurisdiction of the  
20 department for a period of time exceeding sixty-five years.



1 (c) The board shall consider the following when deciding  
2 whether a community-based organization is qualified to enter  
3 into a community co-management agreement:

4 (1) Nonprofit status and mission;

5 (2) A list and qualifications of board members and staff;

6 (3) A summary of past and current projects in the proposed  
7 community co-management unit, including those in  
8 partnership with community groups, and federal, state,  
9 and county governments;

10 (4) A description of the location and boundaries of the  
11 community co-management unit;

12 (5) Justification for the proposed community co-management  
13 agreement;

14 (6) Other information deemed necessary for consideration;  
15 and

16 (7) A co-management plan recommended by the department  
17 containing a description of the:

18 (A) Specific place-based, mission-driven, and  
19 community-led activities to be conducted in the  
20 area that sustain community, natural, and  
21 cultural resources;



- 1 (B) Demonstrated commitment to the use and knowledge
  - 2 of customary and traditional Native Hawaiian
  - 3 practices, understandings, and values as a core
  - 4 component of the plan;
  - 5 (C) Use of adaptive practices and responses to
  - 6 changing conditions;
  - 7 (D) Defined management functions, roles, and
  - 8 responsibilities;
  - 9 (E) Performance and accountability standards for
  - 10 monitoring, evaluation, and revenue generation,
  - 11 if any;
  - 12 (F) Reporting processes and requirements;
  - 13 (G) Parameters for equitable data collection,
  - 14 sharing, and rights;
  - 15 (H) Dispute resolution pathways;
  - 16 (I) Methods of funding and enforcement; and
  - 17 (J) Other information deemed necessary to support the
  - 18 application.
- 19 (d) Every ten years, beginning from the effective date of
- 20 the community co-management agreement, the department shall
- 21 submit to the board for its review a report detailing the



1 community-based organization's progress on meeting the goals set  
2 out in the co-management plan. The board may make any  
3 applicable amendments to the co-management plan or terminate the  
4 community co-management agreement.

5 (e) Notwithstanding subsection (d), a community-based  
6 organization or the board, upon written notice, may terminate  
7 the community co-management agreement, subject to the terms of  
8 the community co-management agreement.

9 (f) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91  
10 to implement this part."

11 SECTION 3. Section 171-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
12 amended by adding two new definitions to be appropriately  
13 inserted and to read as follows:

14 "Community co-management" means collaboration between the  
15 department and one or more community-based organizations, under  
16 a community co-management agreement, to allocate the sharing of  
17 management functions and responsibilities and the rights of  
18 entry and use for a given community co-management unit under the  
19 jurisdiction of the department.



1           "Community co-management agreement" means a written  
2 agreement between the board and a community-based organization  
3 for community co-management pursuant to this chapter."

4           SECTION 4. Section 171-13, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
5 amended to read as follows:

6           "**§171-13 Disposition of public lands.** Except as otherwise  
7 provided by law and subject to other provisions of this chapter,  
8 the board may:

9           (1) Dispose of public land in fee simple, by lease, lease  
10           with option to purchase, license, community  
11           co-management agreement, or permit; and

12           (2) Grant easement by direct negotiation or otherwise for  
13           particular purposes in perpetuity on such terms as may  
14           be set by the board, subject to reverter to the State  
15           upon termination or abandonment of the specific  
16           purpose for which it was granted, provided the sale  
17           price of such easement shall be determined pursuant to  
18           section 171-17(b).

19 No person shall be eligible to purchase or lease public lands,  
20 or to be granted a license, community co-management agreement,  
21 permit, or easement covering public lands, who has had during



1 the five years preceding the date of disposition a previous  
2 sale, lease, license, community co-management agreement, permit,  
3 or easement covering public lands canceled for failure to  
4 satisfy the terms and conditions thereof."

5 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

DLNR; Community Co-Management Agreements; Public Lands

**Description:**

Authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources to enter into community co-management agreements and establishes qualifications for eligible community co-managers. Authorizes the disposition of public lands by a community co-management agreement. (CD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

