The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend that the Board of Trustees SUPPORT GM573, confirming La’akea Poepoe’s nomination to the Molokaʻi Island Burial Council.

Mr. Poepoe would make a great addition to the Molokaʻi Island Burial Council and brings with him ample experience and cultural knowledge. Mr. Poepoe has long been a staunch advocate for the proper stewardship of cultural and natural resources, utilizing ancestral wisdom and traditional methodologies to address modern issues and challenges. He is a community organizer with a long history of service on Molokaʻi and across Ka Pae ʻĀina o Hawaiʻi. His previous service on the Molokaʻi Planning Commission exemplifies his commitment to public service, and also demonstrates his well-rounded approach to serving on a government commission; as a member of the Commission, Mr. Poepoe prioritized responsibility and accountability, and keenly integrated cultural knowledge and traditional and customary practices in the development of conservation strategies and the navigation of complex administrative processes. OHA believes that Mr. Poepoe has been an excellent advocate for the people and resources of his mokupuni and would serve as a great resource on behalf of the kūpuna of Molokaʻi.

For these reasons, OHA urges the committee to PASS GM573 to confirm Mr. Poepoe’s nomination to the Molokaʻi Island Burial Council. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.
In consideration of 
GOVERNOR’S MESSAGE 573 
SUBMITTING FOR THE CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND BURIAL COUNCIL, ISLAND OF MOLOKAʻI, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, LAʻAKEA POEPOE FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2021

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports Governor’s Message 573, nominating Mr. La‘akea Poepoe to the Island Burial Council, Island of Molokaʻi expiring June 30, 2021.

The Island Burial Councils are established under Section 6E-43.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Councils determine whether to preserve or relocate previously identified native Hawaiian burial sites, recognize lineal and cultural descendants, and provide counsel/advice to the Department.

Mr. Poepoe, of part Native Hawaiian ancestry, is a lineal descendant of those born and raised on Molokaʻi. He has been a member of Hui Malama O Moʻomomi since 1993, working in natural and cultural conservation and preservation. As such, he possesses personal knowledge of areas that contain significant cultural sites and burial grounds. His participation in the Molokaʻi Planning Commission has gained him familiarity with public meetings processes and procedures. He has also gained knowledge in laws pertaining to native Hawaiian land use and access rights. He is a Hawaiian language speaker and practitioner of Hawaiian lawai’a (fishing) practices and customs. Mr. Poepoe has been serving on the Council on an interim basis since June 4, 2018.

Senate confirmation will ensure that Mr. Poepoe’s knowledge and perspective informs the deliberations of the Molokaʻi Island Burial Council until June 30, 2021.
La'akea Poepoe is a Keiki O Ka 'Aina of Moloka'i and has the 'ike and heart to malama burials on Molokai.
Aloha Luna Ho'omalu Shimabukuro and Hope Luna Ho'omalu Kahele,

I am in wholehearted support of our Governor's nominee La'akea Poepoe to be the Moloka'i representative on the Burial Council. La'a has been an outstanding positive strong voice for Moloka'i during the update of their Island Plan, Moloka'i Planning Commission issues and all kinds of Moloka'i community needs.

He will be an awesome warrior for our Iwi Kupuna!

Mahalo for this opportunity to share my Mana'o,

Elle Cochran

808-281-7709