

Carleton Ching  
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Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

March 9, 2015

The Honorable Senator Laura H. Thielen, Chair,  
And Members of the Senate Water and Land Committee  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 231  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Thielen, Vice Chair Galuteria, and Members of the Senate Water and Land (WTL) Committee:

**Subject: GM 514 - Carleton Ching – Nominee for Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources**

Aloha. I am Carleton Ching, nominee for Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). Serving the people of the State of Hawai'i and fulfilling the mission and duties of the DLNR are responsibilities that I hold in high regard. I am humbled and honored to be nominated by Governor Ige to carry out these responsibilities.

It was on January 19, 2015, Martin Luther King Day, that I discussed in earnest with Governor Ige the position of Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources. There was no specific agenda or directives, but a request to put forward my working experience to serve as administrator of the DLNR, to continue the work of the DLNR and efforts made under the administration of William Aila, and those before him who made a commitment to serve the State of Hawaii and the mission of the DLNR.

If my nomination is confirmed, I vow to uphold the mandates of the Hawai'i Constitution and will work closely with other federal, state and county agencies, legislators, and other stakeholder interest groups to advance DLNR's mission in the best interest of the State of Hawaii.

### **Mandate and Mission**

The breadth of DLNR's responsibility is challenging. The Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) has a broad responsibility for managing, administering, and exercising control over public lands, water resources, ocean waters, navigable streams, coastal areas (except commercial harbors), minerals, and all interests therein. This jurisdiction encompasses nearly 1.3 million acres of state lands, beaches, and coastal waters as well as 750 miles of coastline (the fourth longest in the country). It includes state parks, historical sites, forests and forest reserves, aquatic life and its sanctuaries, public fishing areas, boating, ocean recreation, and coastal programs, wildlife and its sanctuaries, game management areas, public hunting areas, natural area reserves, and public records. All are managed by ten distinct divisions. Additionally, three

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Federal programs are also attached to the DLNR: the Kahoolawe Island Reserve, the Papahānaumokuākea Monument, and the Humpback Whale Sanctuary.

The Commission on Water Resource Management (“CWRM”) is attached to the DLNR and administers the State Water Code, with its mission to protect and enhance the water resources of the State of Hawaii through wise and responsible management.

Under the general direction of the Deputy Director for Water Resource Management, the staff provides administrative and technical support services to the CWRM. The staff’s primary responsibilities are to implement and administer the provisions of the State Water Code by planning, surveying, regulating, monitoring, and conserving the State’s water resources within established plans that have been adopted by the CWRM.

DLNR is guided by these overarching policies:

Hawaii’s public trust doctrine, enshrined in Article XI, section 1 of Hawaii’s Constitution, states as follows:

For the benefit of ***present and future generations***, the State and its political subdivisions shall ***conserve and protect*** Hawaii’s natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall ***promote the development and utilization*** of these resources in a manner consistent with their ***conservation*** and in furtherance of the ***self-sufficiency*** of the State.

The 2050 Sustainability Plan:

- ✓ ***Respects the culture, character, beauty and history*** of our state’s island communities
- ✓ Strikes a ***balance between economic, social and community, and environmental priorities***
- ✓ ***Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations*** to meet their own needs

DLNR’s Statute (HRS-Chapter171) and mission that states:

***“Enhance, protect, conserve and manage*** Hawaii’s unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for ***current and future generations*** of the ***people of Hawai’i nei, and its visitors***, in partnership with others from the ***public and private sectors.***”

Balancing these policies and mandates may present some conflicting interests. Therefore, a close working relationship with both the BLNR and CWRM is critical, and collaboration with stakeholders, compliance with law, and reliance on the expertise of the DLNR staff will be paramount in seeking solutions in the best interest of the State of Hawaii.

There are many dedicated men and women in the various divisions and offices of the DLNR who deal with these very issues day-in and day-out. The Chairperson must manage and coordinate their efforts to assure that the mandates and mission of the DLNR are carried out in a balanced and measurable manner. In this regard, I believe the Chairperson should possess a thorough understanding of both sides to an issue, sensitivity to and appreciation of differing viewpoints, the inherent conflict that can exist between enhancing, protecting, conserving and managing our precious and limited resources, the ability to fairly apportion and allocate limited resources, and an expansive network of meaningful relationships in both the public and private sectors.

Fulfilling these obligations requires careful consideration and a balancing of interests and outcomes; of reaching out for input and perspectives, of listening to opinions, of analysis and intuition, of core values to ensure that all viewpoints are heard and constituent parts considered before a decision is made. Decisions should be made only after due consideration of the totality of the circumstances, including short-term and long-term plans, goals and objectives.

### **Experience and Lessons Learned**

Through my associations with previous organizations, I have been exposed to a wide range of viewpoints, skills and public policy issues, as well as community engagement and related political and legislative processes, all of which may be useful background for the Chairperson of the DLNR.

For example, in the 1970s, the Waiahole Valley became embroiled in a dispute regarding the area's future. Some felt it was prime land for residential development; others felt it should remain in agriculture. After the State acquired 600 acres in Waiahole Valley, I personally participated in community outreach efforts, site visits, community resolution on a myriad of issues, an environmental assessment, development planning and design, a Land Use Commission petition and legal condemnation proceeding to clear title. Waiahole Valley was ultimately developed as a farming community (agricultural leases), with limited residential uses (residential leases), and a community facility (Waiahole Poi Factory). In addition, preservation of agricultural lands and the Valley's water resources were developed to promote diversified agriculture and maintain cultural practices in Waiahole Valley.

Waiahole Valley gave me the opportunity to work with people from many backgrounds and perspectives: anti-development factions, the Waiahole-Waikane Community Association (WWCA) and non-WWCA members, various lessees and interests, environmentalists and environmental consultants. It also gave me valuable insights for balancing economic viability and impacts: varying viewpoints and interests, budget/planning/design disciplines to implement policy and a program to preserve Waiahole Valley for future generations.

My employment with major landowners has given me unique opportunities and experiences. I was involved (in varying capacities) in a wide array of asset management and land stewardship/management programs (or the planning of these programs) in varying degrees and scopes. This

included programs for the maintenance of cultural sites; education, recreation and conservation; and sustainability initiatives. Participation in these programs involved community outreach, networking, listening, collaborating and setting a vision to achieve. I was also exposed to the importance of sound land stewardship, responsible tourism, economic development, and sustainability. To be sure, there were diverse opinions on many of the matters in which I participated. Despite the opposition and adversity, however, I listened to opposing viewpoints and sought to bring balance to discussions based on community input, with the focus towards ultimately finding viable and responsible solutions.

I have also been privileged to have collaborated with many people of different backgrounds. In connection with my community outreach efforts, I have been part of a management team with oversight on projects involving habitat conservation; development of renewable energy facilities; agriculture use, and the designation of hundreds of acres as Important Agricultural Lands (IAL). It affirms the importance of collaboration needed with many stakeholders as well as with many governmental agencies and officials at the federal, state and county levels.

I volunteered on various nonprofit boards for a variety of organizations dealing with important social issues such as healthcare, low income rental housing, higher education, land use policy, and small business. I have worked alongside people of all walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, nurses, educators, administrators, administrative assistants, deans, experts, technicians, and volunteers. This experience has provided insight into the importance of board protocol and governance; setting goals and objectives; strategic/business plans; measured metrics and accountability; and reliance on a dedicated work force committed to a core mission. As a board member, I was involved in policy decisions impacting hundreds of employees, as well as the oversight of multi-million dollar budgets.

My background has provided me with experience in working collaboratively with individuals and groups with differing points of view and the importance of finding opportunities for partnering and achieving common goals and win-win, sustainable solutions. I understand that collaborative solutions and successful public/private partnerships cannot be accomplished by being one sided and inflexible or by drawing lines and taking unwarranted positions, especially in our tight-knit community in Hawai'i. I have also learned the importance of listening to and understanding people's positions and convictions, to respect and appreciate differing viewpoints and the importance of consensus, community building and partnerships in balancing competing interests with limited resources. These experiences, I believe, will be of benefit to the DLNR.

### **Fulfilling the Mandate and Mission**

As a nominee, I have been very sensitive about gathering DLNR information and data, without impairing the DLNR work load and daily demands, especially during the rigorous legislative session. Nevertheless, the DLNR division administrators and other program managers have accommodated me with a brief orientation of their prespective programs. They have affirmed my belief that the DLNR has a talented and committed team.

I met with a variety of individuals and groups that provided their insights and constructive criticism, and others who had predetermine my purpose. In the course of trying to understand the functions of the DLNR and those of the DLNR Chair specifically, I have been asked several times to comment on particular objectives or initiatives I intend to effectuate if confirmed. I felt it was premature to make any pronouncements at that time since I did not want to potentially undermine current efforts by the DLNR team and without further detail discussions with the staff, and the benefit of input from the various stakeholders.

At the same time, however, I am mindful of Governor Ige's desire to protect and preserve our fragile natural environment; to seek a healthy environment and responsible economic growth through comprehensive planning that engages many stakeholders; to prioritize programs to make prudent expenditures of limited funds; to explore new revenue sources to balance the interest of multiple interest; and to do what is best for the interest of our State. These are guidelines that will be considered in analyzing DLNR issues

### **My Call to Duty**

I was raised in Kapahulu by middle class, hard working parents who were both employed at Pearl Harbor. Their purpose was to provide a better foundation for their children, much like other parents. My humble upbringing, public school education, team-sports participation, and work experiences for various employers with varying missions, and the many teachers, coaches, and mentors have all influenced and guided me. Born and raised in these islands and being part-Hawaiian, I have an innate and deep respect for this land and its natural resources: to honor and respect our host culture, to learn from our past, to help define our future in the best interest of all who cherish this place we call home.

We are individually inspired by many factors and experiences in our lives. My inspiration came as I attended a recent grade school basketball game to cheer on my granddaughter, my oldest moopuna, Mackenzie Masoe. As I observed her and the other young athletes play to represent their respective schools and their families within the confines of the Palama Settlement gym, it was reminiscent of a very familiar scene. Families and friends gathered to support their young players: to encourage and cheer their efforts, to fortify their spirits to be strong and competitive, and play with good sportsmanship. To learn from winning and losing, to set an early foundation for success, and eventually to improve their own future prospects, to set a course of action to achieve an outcome, to guide their destinies.


It was at this precise moment when I decided to commit to serve and subsequently accept the Governor's nomination for this position. It reminded me that the foundation we set today, the decisions we make, will determine our future and our destiny for Hawaii, and the legacy that we leave for our children and our grandchildren, and the generations to follow; ultimately the future of our Hawaii, our home. That is why I am here before you today.

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At this stage of my career, my purpose is to serve the State of Hawai'i, for our keiki, our moopuna, our future. This is my agenda. I will comply with the law, I will be guided by DLNR's mission, and I will engage both public and private stakeholders to seek balance and to seek resolution. I will vow to do what is right to enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's precious resources, in the best interest of the State of Hawaii, to honor and respect our Host Culture, our Home.

I respectfully request your support and confirmation to allow me the privilege to serve the State of Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carleton Ching". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carleton Ching