



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

February 5, 2021

To: House Committee on Corrections, Military and Veterans
Representative Takashi Ohno, Chair
Representative Sonny Ganaden, Vice Chair

Re: HB 1352 – RELATING TO SURPLUS MILITARY LAND

Hearing: Friday, February 5, 2021, 10:00 a.m. Room 430, via videoconference

Position: **STRONG SUPPORT**

Aloha, Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, and Members of the Committee:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i and its Human Environmental Impacts Committee are in strong support of HB 1352, which would establish a surplus military land task force to plan for the remediation and restoration of, and alternative uses for, lands currently under federal ownership and control that are anticipated to be returned to the State.

For more than one hundred years, the United States Government has established naval and other military bases in Hawai'i without very much in the way of consent from the people of Hawai'i, who were not even organized as a State for a large part of that time. The playing field was anything but level.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i (Party) has adopted at its 2018 State Convention, clear safeguards to protect the *'āina* against military destruction. At page 22 of the Party Platform, it specifically provides that Democrats “support the protection of our *'āina* against destruction by military use.”

Especially with respect to properties that the United States has occupied for military purposes, very serious environmental contamination has taken place. As the United States continues its occupation of these properties and renews these leases, and even as it turns back over a few of these properties to the State, we are not seeing enough environmental remediation taking place as part of the process. We continue to see less than a thorough removal of hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants and military munitions resulting from active military activities. Inadequate remediation are oftentimes provided, insufficient to protect human health and the environment, thus failing to return military lands to usable condition. Separately, we are

not seeing the State taking leading role in pressing the United States to: (1) release properties that it is retaining under its control; and (2) engage in more thorough environmental remediation than it has been willing to do to date. This bill would make great improvements in both of these areas and provide much transparency by requiring detailed annual reporting of these important matters.

Fundamentally, this bill intends to shift the responsibility for the lead from the federal government to the State, and pushes State officials to do what they need to do: require the federal government to turn back the lands to the State in an environmentally clean condition.

Please pass this important and overdue legislation. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on this key issue.

Respectfully yours,

Alan Burdick and
Melodie Aduja
Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus
Co-Chairs, Human Environmental Impacts Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai`i
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Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Correction, Military, and Veterans Committee
Friday, February 5, 2021 at 10:00 A.M.
Via Videoconference**

RE: HB 1352, RELATING TO SURPLUS MILITARY LAND

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") respectfully submits reservations on HB 1352. This measure establishes a surplus military land task force to plan for the remediation and restoration of, and alternative uses for, lands currently under federal ownership and control that are anticipated to be returned to the State.

The Chamber's Military Affairs Council (MAC) was established in 1985 to specifically advocate on behalf of Hawaii's military as it is the second economic driver for the State of Hawaii, comprised of business leaders, state and local officials, non-profit organizations, community leaders and retired U.S. flag and general officers to advocate and liaison with the military commands.

Given the critical role the federal government plays in Hawaii, it is important to note that there are both ceded land leases and lands held in fee which the federal government/U.S. military has in Hawaii for a host of federal purposes. Further, there already exists legal processes for the disposal of federal properties in the event that an excess determination is made. Establishing a task force that sits and waits for such a possible excess of federal lands to occur does not seem like the best use of scarce state resources during these most difficult of economic times.

That said, should the Committee be inclined to pass this measure, we request your consideration of adding additional representatives from:

1. Representatives from military branches; and
2. Representative from Chamber of Commerce Hawaii, Military Affairs Council

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony expressing reservations.

LATE

HB-1352

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 11:17:27 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/5/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you! This is long overdue.

LATE

HB-1352

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 5:00:58 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/5/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden and members of the Corrections Military and Veterans Committee,

I, Kimeona Kane, strongly support HB1352 which creates a task force to plan for the remediation and restoration of surplus military impacted lands, many of which were once prime spaces for multitudes of resources and utilized for generations of Kanaka prior to the military occupation. In many places, access is not permitted, however native gathering is imperative. Some reasons for this denied access is because the military is perhaps the worst when it comes to caring for the land, water, etc. These issues are and have been ignored for decades and is well overdue for correction. Once abused land SHOULD BE CLEANED UP and FULL SCALE restoration work SHOULD NOT BE VOLUNTARY or WHEN THEY FEEL LIKE IT for the Federal Government. In my community, the largest fresh water river source goes unused and quality of it and the remaining areas it feeds into, remains in questions, as "would have" "could have" "long term destruction" continues to happen. It will take generations to get the land back into a healthy state of providing food for communities, if at all, and if this bill does what it says it will do, the conversation NEEEDS to happen immediately. In my humble opinion, I may die before I see the water source and mud be turned back to taro fields in Waimānalo, and I am deeply saddened by that thought. Generations to come will never know the potential of this 'Āina, if action is not taken NOW. Create the change, pass the bill, WORK FOR THE PEOPLE AND THEIR LAND.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kimeona Kane

LATE

HB-1352

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 9:52:10 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/5/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Blanche McMillan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We are Blanche McMillan and Mabel Keli'ho'omalu and we are born and raised residents of Waimanalo. We both live close to Bellos Air Force Base. This is ceded land that has been promised to DHHL when it is returned to the State. We support this Bill so our State can be proactive in getting the land cleaned and considered for return. Please contact us for any further testimony.

Respectfully submitted

Blanche McMillan

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Mabel Keli'ho'omalu

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