

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1708

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 05 2023

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 516

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2023  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Water and Land, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 516, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

G.M. No. 516      DAWN CHANG,  
for a term to expire 12-31-2026,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Dawn Chang for service as the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Ms. Chang from the Governor; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Law Enforcement; Department of Health; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Transportation; Department of Taxation; Department of Agriculture; Department of Human Services; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Department of Public Safety; Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Land Use Commission; Office of Enterprise Technology Services; Agribusiness Development Corporation; Hawaii Public Housing Authority; Department of Planning of the County of Kaua'i; Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission; Hawaii State Aha Moku; Mayor of the County of Kaua'i; one member of Maui County Council; one member of the Hawai'i County Council; one former Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; one District Judge of the Court of the First Circuit; one retired Associate Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court;

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McCandless Ranch; Waikiki Improvement Association; Hawai'i Harbors Users Group; Ponoholo Ranch; Matson Navigation Company, Inc.; The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Historic Hawai'i Foundation; Hawaii Reserves, Inc.; Hawaii Operating Engineers Industry Stabilization Fund Political Action Committee; Ko'olau Foundation; Young Brothers, LLC; Pacific Resource Partnership; Hui 'Oihana; General Contractors Association of Hawaii; Cates Marine Service, LLC; Parker Ranch; Hawai'i Forest Industry Association; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawaii Foodservice Alliance LLC; Ulupono Initiative; Hawaii Fish Company Inc.; Kapāpala Ranch; Jas. W. Glover, Ltd.; Maui County Farm Bureau; Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; ILWU Local 142 Hawaii Longshore Division; Par Hawaii; LavaRock Farm; and one hundred forty individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to the nomination for the appointment of Ms. Chang from KAHEA; forty-eight individuals; two internet-based form letters signed by more than nine-hundred individuals; and one petition signed by fifty-six individuals. Your Committee received comments on the nomination for the appointment of Ms. Chang from the Friends of Hanauma Bay and four individuals.

Ms. Chang has served as the interim Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources since January 2023 and has demonstrated a seemingly effortless ability to absorb and embody her role as Chairperson. Within her first ninety days, Ms. Chang has shown her calm, efficient, and collaborative approach to tackling several highly-public challenges faced by the Department of Land and Natural Resources -- including the grounding of two separate vessels on Maui and the harassment of a dolphin pod by thirty-three swimmers in Honaunau Bay, Hawaii island -- proving her mettle and adaptiveness under pressure. Previously, Ms. Chang worked as the principal and owner of Ho'ākea LLC, a woman-owned, Native Hawaiian consulting firm that specialized in assisting both public and private sector clients to plan for and resolve culturally sensitive issues that may arise in the course of project development. Ms. Chang's deep understanding of Native Hawaiian rights, culture, and historic preservation issues allowed her to skillfully assist, not just her federal, state, and private clients, but the impacted community groups as well, mediating issues to encourage all parties to voice their concerns and find workable solutions. Your Committee finds that Ms. Chang's two decades of experience in carefully balancing the competing interests of both business and conservation make her well-suited



for her role as Chairperson, especially as the State continues to grapple with both climate-related conservation issues and the need for affordable housing and agricultural self-sustainability.

Ms. Chang also served on the Land Use Commission for six years following the Senate's confirmations of her appointment and reappointment by then Governor Ige. During her tenure, Ms. Chang once again helped balance competing interests, helping to preserve and protect the State's lands by encouraging those uses to which lands are best suited. Prior to that, and especially relevant here, Ms. Chang served as a Deputy Attorney General for the Land and Transportation Division, where she gained substantial legal experience in the areas of real property, administrative law, Native Hawaiian issues, riparian rights, and environmental law. Before then, Ms. Chang served as an appellate law clerk for the Honorable Walter M. Heen at the Intermediate Court of Appeals. Before making the decision to attend law school, Ms. Chang was a social worker specializing in assisting Hawaiian children and families in rural communities. Ms. Chang received her Juris Doctorate from the William S. Richardson School of Law; she received her Masters Degree in Social Work and a Bachelors Degree in Sociology from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Ms. Chang is a member of the Hawaii State Bar Association and the Native Hawaiian Bar Association.

Your Committee believes that Ms. Chang, with her unique background in business, conservation, and land use, in addition to her over twenty years of experience working in contentious and culturally sensitive Native Hawaiian issues, possesses the requisite qualifications to serve as the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Your Committee finds that Ms. Chang's leadership ability and her willingness to work with others, including those who disagree, make her the right person to enhance and build trust between the Department and the community. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Chang's prior experience makes her especially well-suited to fully carry out the purpose and intent of Act 90, Session Laws of Hawaii 2003, which was enacted to transfer certain public lands classified for agricultural use from the Department of Land and Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture for the development of farms and homeownership. Your Committee also notes the significant and moving testimony in support of Ms. Chang, which spoke to Ms. Chang's character, integrity, and values. Therefore, your Committee recommends that Dawn Chang be appointed as the



Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources based on her knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water and Land that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.

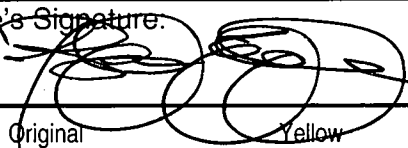
Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Water and Land,

  
LORRAINE R. INOUÉ, Chair



The Senate  
 Thirty-Second Legislature  
 State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Water and Land**  
**WTL**  
**Advise and Consent**

Governor's Message No.:* <b>GM 516</b>	Committee Referral: <b>WTL</b>	Date: <b>3/31/23</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent 2340 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent 2345				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
INOUYE, Lorraine R. (C)	✓			
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C. (VC)	✓			
CHANG, Stanley	✓			
MCKELVEY, Angus L.K.		✓		
FEVELLA, Kurt	✓			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
<b>Distribution:</b> Original      Yellow      Pink      Goldenrod File with Committee Report      Clerk's Office      Drafting Agency      Committee File Copy				

\*Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes