

**STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ACTING ASSISTANT
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 1728, TO AMEND THE
NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION ACT OF 1978 TO REAUTHORIZE
THE NA HOA PILI O KALOKO-HONOKŌHAU ADVISORY COMMISSION**

July 12, 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 1728, a bill to amend the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 to reauthorize the Na Hoa Pili o Kaloko-Honokōhau Advisory Commission.

The Department supports enactment of S. 1728. This legislation, which would reestablish the advisory commission for Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park for ten years, would enable the National Park Service to benefit from the advice and counsel of Hawaiian residents who have expertise in Native Hawaiian language, history, and cultural arts during a period when the park will be engaged in projects critical to the interpretation of traditional Native Hawaiian activities and culture.

“Na Hoa Pili o Kaloko-Honokōhau,” which means “Friends of Kaloko-Honokōhau,” is the name of the advisory commission that was authorized for ten years as part of the original 1978 authorization for the park (Public Law 95-625), and that was reestablished for ten years, after a lapse, in 1996 (Public Law 104-333). S. 1728 would authorize the reestablishment of the commission effective upon the date of enactment, to last until

December 31, 2017. The composition, purpose, and responsibilities of the commission would remain as provided for under existing law.

From the beginning, the law has provided for the commission to advise the National Park Service with respect to the historical, archeological, cultural, and interpretive programs of the park, affording particular emphasis to the quality of traditional Native Hawaiian culture demonstrated in the park. It was helpful to have the commission's sound, pragmatic, and critical advice on these matters during the initial stages of establishing the park. It will be equally helpful to receive such advice over the next decade, particularly on two major projects – design and construction of traditional structures that will serve as a cultural center, and completion of the restoration of the historic Kaloko fishpond.

The advisory commission would provide advice in the planning and design of the thatched structures made of local natural materials that will house traditional Native Hawaiian cultural activities. Once the structures are built, the commission would provide guidance in the interpretation of cultural activities, make recommendations on the preservation, interpretation, and perpetuation of traditional Native Hawaiian culture, and facilitate the participation of Native Hawaiians, especially the *kupuna*, or elders, in activities.

The commission would also continue to provide advice concerning the reconstruction and interpretation of the centuries-old fishpond, an enclosure contained by 30-foot-wide stone seawalls, where restorers are practicing the native traditional masonry work under the

guidance of some of the finest masons in Hawaii. This impressive reconstruction represents both the general cultural significance of fishponds and the uniqueness of engineering and management skills of Native Hawaiians. The commission would help ensure that the significance of the fishpond to Native Hawaiian culture and history is fully and accurately interpreted.

The advisory commission has been instrumental in facilitating the collaborative partnership that the National Park Service has developed with the Native Hawaiian community. With enactment of S. 1728, we will look forward to another decade of assistance from the commission in fulfilling the mandate of the enabling legislation for the park--the preservation, interpretation, and perpetuation of traditional Native Hawaiian activities and culture, the demonstration of historic land use patterns, and the provision of education, enjoyment, and appreciation of such traditional Native Hawaiian activities and culture by local residents and visitors.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.