



BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND WATER & LAND

March 18, 2021

SCR 78

Relating to the State Historic Preservation Division

Aloha Chair Moriwaki, Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Vice Chair Keith Agaran,

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i Kōmike Kalai'āina submits the following written testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Senate Concurrent Resolution 78 requesting the Auditor to conduct an Audit of the Department of Land and Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Division.

The State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) has failed to comply with its statutory responsibilities to protect our iwi kūpuna over the past two decades. The most grievous of SHPD failures is their refusal to provide administrative support and guidance to the Burial Councils, their noncompliance with legal requirements applicable to the inadvertent discovery of human remains, and their lack of enforcement action for documented violations involving burial sites.

SHPD is supposed to protect and preserve historic properties significant to Hawai'i's history and strive to ensure that negative impacts to historic properties are avoided or lessened for future generations. Instead, SHPD under the leadership of Mr. Alan Downer has neglected this duty and in cases dealing with iwi kūpuna have many times been complicit in their desecration. This has resulted in widespread concern in the Kanaka Maoli community regarding the inner workings of this Department and whether or not this Department is up to par with its sacred mission.

An audit would be a good first step in the right direction when it comes to bringing SHPD into compliance with its statutory responsibilities.

Sincerely,

M. Healani Sonoda-Pale
Public Affairs Officer, Ka Lāhui Hawai'i Kōmike Kalai'āina