



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
And
Senate Committee on Water and Land
And
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Friday, February 9, 2018 at 2:15 p.m.

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SB 2078 – RELATING TO PUEO RESEARCH

Chairs Gabbard, Rhoads, and Kahele, Vice Chairs Riviere and Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, Committee on Water and Land, and Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2078.

The Hawaiian short-eared owl (Pueo) is on the endangered species list for the state of Hawai'i. This subspecies has a unique place in the Hawaiian culture, and its survival is complicated by the fact that it is a ground nesting species. This characteristic, along with diminishing habitat, cause concern for the ultimate survival of the Pueo. The ground nesting habit leaves its eggs vulnerable to predators that were not part of its natural history.

The hope is that the proposed research on the Pueo's interaction with its habitat, and identification of preferred breeding habits, will provide the necessary information to land managers that will assure the continued survival of a species which is considered to be the guardian of Hawaiian families. This research will help to better identify its autecology, potential ecological benefits, and the ecosystem services that it provides to society.

Dr. Melissa Price of CTAHR has been working with the UH West O'ahu (UHWO) group to develop the ideas behind this research. This bill represents a collaboration between the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, UHWO and CTAHR. Another benefit gained from passing this bill will be the training of one postdoctoral fellow, two graduate students, and two undergraduates in ecology and ecosystem service disciplines. This workforce will be well-suited to work in state agencies or private enterprises to further protect Hawai'i's fragile ecology.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2078.