

From: [Price, John H](#)
To: [DLNR.CW.DLNR.CWRM](#); [Kaaa, Iwalani HR](#)
Subject: Testimony in support of the Appointment of Ciara W. K. Kahahane
Date: Monday, October 28, 2024 3:36:15 PM

Please accept this email in support of Ciara's appointment as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management.

I had the pleasure of working with Ciara at the Attorney General's Office. Her ability to analyze new and complicated challenges is second to none, as is her commitment to service for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i.

I am please to recommend her to you without reservation. Our loss is CWRM's gain. We all wish her the best as her role changes from colleague to client.

John Price

John H. Price
Supervising Deputy Attorney General
Department of the Attorney General
Complex Litigation Division
425 Queen Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: 808-[REDACTED]
John.H.Price@Hawaii.gov

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October 29, 2024

Re: October 31, 2024; Agenda Item B.1.

Dear Chairperson Chang and Members of the Commission,

I am the Special Assistant to the Attorney General. In 2021, I served as the hearings officer in the contested-case hearing of Department of Health v. U.S. Department of the Navy, affirming a DOH emergency order mandating the defueling of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility following the release of tens of thousands of gallons of fuel in November 2021, poisoning the Red Hill shaft and displacing thousands of our residents. I am writing to you in my personal capacity, giving my strongest possible support to Ciara Kahahane to serve as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management.

Ciara is a righteous person. She is kind, calm, caring, and moral. She upholds the highest ethical standards and expects the same from those she works with. Ciara is humble and wise far beyond her years. In the Department of the Attorney General, she is widely respected and admired. I have never heard anyone say a single bad thing about her.

Ciara is among the best attorneys I have ever had the pleasure of working with. She is brilliant, has excellent instincts, is a wonderful writer, and a first-class strategist and thinker. Ciara is someone we could always rely on to do work to the best of her ability, and to perform as well as anyone in the Department. She will likewise excel as First Deputy, without a doubt.

Ciara has a solemn respect and deep love for Hawai'i, its people, and its traditions. In particular, Maui and her native Lahaina.

We already miss Ciara greatly at the Department of the Attorney General. But you have gained a superstar in Ciara, and I couldn't be happier for her and for the Commission and its staff. I offer her my highest possible support.

Dave Day

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE


Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

IN REPLY REFER TO:

DIR 1.11857

October 29, 2024

TO: DAWN N. S. CHANG, CHAIRPERSON
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

FROM: EDWIN H. SNIFFEN 
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF APPOINTMENT FOR
CIARA W. K. KAHAHANE AS THE FIRST DEPUTY TO THE
CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

The Department of Transportation (DOT) strongly supports the appointment of Ciara W. K. Kahahane as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management.

Ms. Kahahane's extensive experience and dedication to public service make her an exceptional candidate for this important role. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated a strategic, forward-thinking approach to building strong relationships that align with Hawaii's long-term sustainability goals. Her leadership and collaborative abilities have been instrumental in shaping policies that address the needs of Hawaii's communities and infrastructure.

We recognize the Commission's critical role in balancing the demands of urban development, agriculture, and transportation with the preservation of our state's precious water resources. Ms. Kahahane's insights and experience will undoubtedly enhance the Commission's capacity to fulfill this vital mission, especially in the face of complex challenges such as climate change and increasing demands on our water systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our support for her candidacy.

October 30, 2024

The Honorable Dawn N.S. Chang, Chairperson
Commission on Water Resource Management
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96809

**Re: In Support of the Appointment of Ciara W.K. Kahahane to the
Position of First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on
Water Resource Management**

Meeting Date/Time: October 31, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

Dear Chairperson Chang:

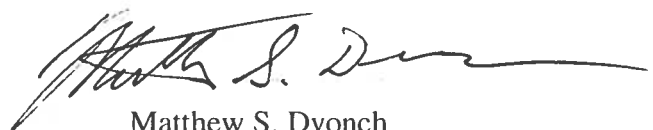
I write in strong support of the appointment of Ciara Kahahane to the position of First Deputy to the Chairperson, Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM). I currently serve as First Deputy Attorney General for the State of Hawai'i, but I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity.

At the Department of the Attorney General, Ms. Kahahane proved herself to be a diligent, capable, and enthusiastic attorney, first as counsel to the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, and later as a key member of the Department's Complex Litigation Division where she handled a number of major cases with statewide implications. I worked closely with Ms. Kahahane on several matters, and she was always prepared, engaged, and professional, both with her colleagues and with opposing parties and counsel. Her proficiency in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i was also instrumental in at least one of her cases at the Department.

All these traits will serve Ms. Kahahane well in her position as First Deputy at CWRM. The job demands a clear understanding of the law combined with a cultural sensitivity regarding water rights and usage. I have no doubt that she will excel at CWRM and that her tenure will have a lasting positive impact on the State of Hawai'i.

In Ms. Kahahane, CWRM has truly gained a talented and passionate individual. She is exceptionally well-qualified for this position and I urge the Commission to approve her appointment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Dvonch

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

PHONE: (808) 587-0620

FAX: (808) 587-0600

IN REPLY REFER TO:

24:OED-35

October 30, 2024

Chairperson Dawn N.S. Chang
Commission on Water Resource Management
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: Approval of Chairperson's Appointment of Ciara W. K. Kahahane as First Deputy
to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management

Dear Chair Chang and Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong support for the approval of Ciara W. K. Kahahane as the First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management. Ms. Kahahane previously served as a Deputy Attorney General for the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation. I personally worked with Ms. Kahahane on a number of matters and can attest that she is a dedicated and hard-working public servant, who provided sound guidance while juggling multiple complex matters. Ms. Kahahane is also knowledgeable of native Hawaiian culture and traditional practices, and I believe that this knowledge will also be of benefit to the Commission.

In closing, I believe that Ms. Kahahane is highly qualified for the position of First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management, and I strongly encourage the Commission to approve her appointment.

Sincerely,

Dean Minakami
Executive Director

Lee A. Miller

[REDACTED]
Waipahu, HI 96797

October 30, 2024

Ms. Dawn N. S. Chang, Chairperson
Commission on Water Resource Management
State of Hawaii
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: Approval of Chairperson's Appointment of Ciara W. K. Kahahane as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management

Dear Chair Chang and Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong support for the approval of Ciara W. K. Kahahane as the First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management. I personally worked with Ms. Kahahane on Waiahole Valley issues. She was the Deputy Attorney General for the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation.

She is a dedicated and hardworking public servant that provides clear, strong guidance and recommendations for complex, sensitive issues. Her knowledge of Native Hawaiian culture and traditional practices is imbued in her decision making. Her willingness to be considered for this position is an example of the kuleana she undertakes to lead the commission in understanding both sides of the water issues before us.

I believe that Ms. Kahahane is highly qualified for the position of First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management and I strongly encourage the Commission to approve her appointment.

Sincerely,

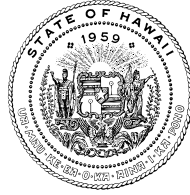


Lee Miller

Ph: 808- [REDACTED]

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM
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677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
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PHONE: (808) 587-0620

IN REPLY REFER TO:
24:FIN/1228

October 30, 2024

Via Email to: iwalani.hr.kaaa@hawaii.gov and dlmr.cwrm@hawaii.gov.

Ms. Dawn N. S. Chang, Chairperson
Commission on Water Resource Management
State of Hawaii
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: Endorsement of Ciara W. K. Kahahane for the Role of First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management

Dear Chair Chang and Commissioners,

I am writing to offer my wholehearted endorsement of Ciara W. K. Kahahane for the position of First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management. In my experience working with Ms. Kahahane during her tenure as a Deputy Attorney General for the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation, I have found her to be an exemplary public servant. She consistently brought a thoughtful and measured approach to managing complex legal matters, displaying both professional dedication and a high level of competence.

In addition to her professional expertise, Ms. Kahahane's deep understanding of native Hawaiian culture and practices will serve as a valuable asset to the Commission. Her ability to integrate this cultural insight into her work is just one of the many qualities that distinguish her as a leader in her field.

I am confident that Ms. Kahahane is exceptionally well-suited for this role, and I strongly urge the Commission to confirm her appointment. Her commitment, knowledge, and leadership make her an outstanding choice for First Deputy.

Sincerely,

David T. Oi
Housing Finance Manager



Department of Land and Natural Resources

Aha Moku Advisory Committee

State of Hawaii

Post Office Box 621

Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

Hawaii State Aha Moku Testimony
To the Commission on Water Resource Management

For the meeting of the
Commission on Water Resource Management
October 31, 2024
Honolulu, Hawaii

AGENDA ITEM: B1

Approval of Chairperson’s Appointment of Ciara W.K. Kahahane, as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management.

Aloha Chairperson Chang and Honorable Members of Commission for Water Resource Management (CWRM),

On behalf of the Hawaii State Aha Moku (Aha Moku) native Hawaiian generational families connected to the Pae’Aina (Lands of Hawai’i Nei) which include: Moku O Keawe (Hawai’i), Moku O Pi’ilani (Maui), Moku O Kanaloa (Kaho’olawe), Nana’i Kaula (Lana’i), Moloka’i Pule O’o (Moloka’i), Moku O Kakuhihewa (O’ahu), Manokalanipo (Kaua’i), and Ka ‘Aina O Kawelonakala (Ni’ihau) we offer our mana’o and testimony **in support of Agenda Item B1 and ask that CWRM approve this Action Item.**

Hawaii State Aha Moku

The Hawaii State Aha Moku (Aha Moku), via Act 288, SLH 2012 brings the voices of the native Hawaiian generational and lineal descendants of Ahupua’a forward to the Hawaii State government in issues that impact their traditional and customary practices within natural and cultural resources. Aha Moku is attached to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and is located within the Chair’s Office.

Ka Pa’akai Framework

The September 11, 2000, Hawai’i Supreme Court decision in Ka Pa’akai O Ka ‘Aina v Land Use Commission ruled that State agencies are obligated to protect the reasonable exercise of customarily and traditionally exercised rights of native Hawaiians to the extent feasible. CWRM is obligated to make an assessment, independent of the developer or applicant, of the impacts on customary and traditional practices of native Hawaiians. The independent assessment must include three factors known as the “Ka Pa’akai framework.” The framework includes the Hawaii Supreme Court mandate to:

1. Identify the scope of valued cultural, historical, or natural resources in the petition or impacted area, including the extent to which traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights are exercised in the petition area.
2. Determine the extent to which those resources, including traditional and customary native Hawaiian rights, will be affected or impaired by the proposed action.
3. Identify feasible actions, if any, to be taken to reasonably protect native Hawaiian rights if they are found to exist.

Ms. Kahahane's consideration of Kapa'akai is unwavering, thoughtful and just.

Water is life to the indigenous native Hawaiian. Ms. Kahahane's extensive experience with water is necessary to the Water Commission. Her deep understanding of the native Hawaiian culture and its symbiotic connection to water is critical to the success of the State Water Code and how it protects and perpetuates this life resource. Ms. Kahahane's empathetic and respectful approach to how each island is different and unique in its care of water is deeply appreciated, not only by native Hawaiian communities but by the Public Trust as well.

The Hawaii State Aha Moku strongly supports the recommendation of CWRM staff and urges the Commission to accept, approve and adopt Agenda Item B-1.

Respectfully yours,

Hawaii State Aha Moku Advisory Committee

Charles Young, Po'o, Moku O Keawe (Hawai'i) youngc042@hawaii.rr.com

Kalei Luuwai, Po'o, Moku O Pi'ilani (Maui). rluuwai@gmail.com

Manuel Kuloloio, Po'o, Moku O Kanaloa (Kaho'olawe), manuelkuloloio@gmail.com

Walter Rawlins, Po'o, Moloka'i Pule O'o (Moloka'i), walterkrawlins45@gmail.com

Winifred Basques, Po'o, Nana'i Kaula (Lana'i), winnie@aloha.net

Leialoha (Rocky) Kaluhiwa, Po'o, Kakuhihewa (O'ahu), rockykaluhiwa1122@gmail.com

Lewellyn Kaohelaulii, Po'o, Manokalanipo (Kaua'i), terriehayes@gmail.com

Keith Robinson, Po'o, Ka 'Aina O Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau), niihauisland@hawaiian.net

Leimana DaMate, Luna Alaka'i/Executive Director

Hawaii State Aha Moku

808-640-1214

Leimana.k.damate@hawaii.gov

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



ANNE E. LOPEZ
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MATTHEW S. DVONCH
FIRST DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
Ka 'Oihana O Ka Loio Kuhina
425 QUEEN STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 586-1500

October 30, 2024

Commission on Water Resource Management
Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 227
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Attn: Chair Chang

Re: Approval of Ciara Kahahane as Deputy Director

Dear Chair Chang and Members of the Commission on Water Resource Management:

I write in my official capacity in support of the approval of Ciara Kahahane as deputy director to the Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM). Unfortunately, I am leaving for the mainland and am unable to attend your Commission meeting and testify in person.

I started working with Ms. Kahahane two years ago when I assumed my current role. Ms. Kahahane was a deputy attorney general in the Department's Complex Litigation Division (CLD). As titled, this division is responsible for managing, litigating, and negotiating settlements for the most complex lawsuits filed against the State of Hawaii. The deputies in CLD are those with specific skill sets, including exceptional writing skills, the ability to manage multiple litigation matters and deadlines, and communicating effectively with clients, opposing counsel, colleagues, and members of the judiciary.

In the two years that I observed and worked with Ms. Kahahane, I was extremely impressed with her work product, composure, critical thinking, and ability to work with diverse groups of stakeholders.

One matter involved the lawsuit against the State brought by a group of youth plaintiffs alleging that the State Department of Transportation (HDOT) was violating their constitutional right to live healthful lives in Hawaii in the present and the future as a result of its operation of a transportation system that emitted high levels of greenhouse gasses.

Ms. Kahahane was the deputy in this Department that was able to successfully negotiate a settlement with the youth plaintiffs that was celebrated by the plaintiffs,

environmentalist, the Governor, and the HDOT. She was able to lead this effort because she fully understood the complex science involved, the State Constitution, Hawaii's laws, but most importantly, because she could use this understanding to communicate effectively with the youth plaintiffs, their counsel, the Director of HDOT, and me.

Ms. Kahahane was the lead deputy attorney general reporting directly to me with respect to the investigation of the facts surrounding the August 2024 Maui Wildfires. This investigative undertaking required an attorney who could work with the independent investigators, members of state and local government, and opposing counsel. Ms. Kahahane worked diligently every day, on weekends, and at night to manage the huge amount of data and information being requested and being received. Ms. Kahahane dedicated herself to this project for over a year. Her work was always comprehensive, complete, and timely. She was consistently able to respond to my questions, to brief me on the status of the relevant legal issues and prepare thorough and accurate legal documents. Despite the often stressful and emotional video, audio and images, Ms. Kahahane was poised, thoughtful and compassionate.

It has been a pleasure to work with Ms. Kahahane. It was obvious to me and others that Ms. Kahahane was destined to move on to even more challenging work. I believe that she will carry out the duties of the deputy director with commitment to the CWRM mission and ensuring that the CWRM Members are properly equipped and prepared to fulfill their responsibilities.

Very truly yours,

Anne E. Lopez

Anne E. Lopez
Attorney General

October 30, 2024

Chairperson Dawn N.S. Chang
Commission on Water Resource management
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Testimony in support of the appointment of Ciara W.K. Kahahane as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management

Dear Chairperson Chang and Commissioners:

I, in my personal capacity, strongly support the appointment of Ciara Kahahane to the position of First Deputy to the Chairperson, Commission on Water Resource Management.

Ciara was one of the first people I met when I started working for the Department of the Attorney General. I quickly noticed her passion and heart for the people of Hawaii. The cases assigned to her were some of the most challenging, but she always put her clients and their wellbeing first and was able to close cases with stunning results. Ciara has earned the respect of everyone who has had the privilege of working with her.

Ciara's Hawaiian roots run deep in Maui. She is a daughter of Lahaina, has earned the respect of her colleagues and community. She is a natural born leader, and I am confident she is the perfect person to bring about collaboration and unity in her new role with the Commission on Water Resource Management.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Toni E. Schwartz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Toni Schwartz

Honolulu, HI 96813

October 31, 2024

Ms. Dawn N. S. Chang
Chairperson
Commission on Water Resource Management
State of Hawaii
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Commission on Water Resource Management October 31, 2024 Meeting Agenda Item
B.1 Concerning the Appointment of Ciara W. K. Kahahane as First Deputy to the
Chairperson

Dear Chair Chang:

I am writing to extend my enthusiastic support for the approval of Ciara W. K. Kahahane's appointment as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the State of Hawaii Commission on Water Resource Management. Ms. Kahahane's qualifications, experience, and unwavering dedication to public service make her an exemplary candidate for this vital role.

Ms. Kahahane previously served as a deputy attorney general advising the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation, where I worked with her on several complicated and sensitive matters involving lands in Waiahole Valley on Oahu. I'm confident that she will meaningfully contribute to the protection and management of the State's water resources and that her work will greatly benefit the State of Hawaii and its residents.

Thank you for considering my strong endorsement of Ms. Kahahane for this significant appointment.

Sincerely,



Chris Woodard
Chief Planner
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation

From: [Craig Iha](#)
To: [DLNR.CW.DLNR.CWRM](#); [Kaaa, Iwalani HR](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] testimony in support of Ciara Kahahane
Date: Thursday, October 31, 2024 7:56:48 AM

My apologies for the late submission -- please consider my testimony if possible:

Craig Y. Iha

[REDACTED]

October 31, 2024

Dear Chair Chang and Members of the Commission:

I am in strong support of Ciara Kahahane's appointment as First Deputy to the Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resources Management. I am testifying in my individual capacity as a private citizen.

I first met Ciara in 2021 when she interviewed with the Public Safety, Hawaiian Home Lands, and Housing Division at the Department of the Attorney General. At the time, Ciara's superior academic record and clerkship with a United States Bankruptcy Judge allowed her to pursue any type of legal career she wanted. She could have worked in private practice serving business interests for a high salary. But she chose public service.

Her resume speaks directly to her qualifications and accomplishments. As Ciara's earlier division supervisor, I can speak to her integrity and motives: she will always do what is right, in the best interests of the public. Ciara brings that integrity and dedication to the Commission. She is one of the most conscientious, brightest, and sensible people I have worked with.

Please approve her appointment.

Sincerely,
Craig Iha