

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII



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**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**

P. O. BOX 1879  
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May 15, 2013

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Public Comments Processing  
Attn: FWS-R1-ES-2012-0070 and  
FWS-R1-ES-2012-0028  
Division of Policy and Directives Management  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM  
Arlington, VA 22203

Subject: Oral Statement at Public Hearing - Endangered  
and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing 15  
Species on Hawaii Island as Endangered and  
Designating Critical Habitat for 3 Species

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) is a state agency responsible for the management of a native Hawaiian public land trust. At least 533 acres of our land inventory will be significantly impacted by the proposed designation under consideration. We strongly urge Secretary Jewell to exempt our land holdings within the proposed 18,766-acre critical habitat as permitted by the Endangered Species Act.

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act is a congressional mandate for DHHL to provide homestead opportunities for native Hawaiians. Our ability to do so will be severely restricted in the Kona region if our lands are not exempted. DHHL relies on federal funds from both the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U. S. Department of Agriculture for infrastructure development and house construction in Kona, Hawaii. The critical habitat designation will effectively make 36% of our lands in the Kona region unavailable for homesteads. The State of Hawaii and DHHL have already invested millions of

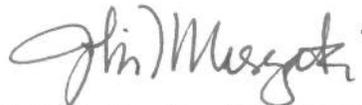
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dollars from trust funds, state funds, and federal funds in on-site and off-site infrastructure to develop affordable housing, community facilities, and homesteads in this region. If our lands are not exempted, these investments will be foregone.

Further, we request an extension of the Public Comment period to allow an additional 60 days for public review and comment. The State of Hawaii has a critical interest in seeing that DHHL property is not adversely impacted by the proposed designation. The assessment of the benefits of the exclusion or inclusion of these lands is a complex process involving numerous factors. To ensure that these factors are properly identified, weighed, and evaluated, the State needs sufficient time to gather and assess information. Additional time is also necessary to thoroughly review the recently released economic analysis. Given limited governmental budgetary and staffing constraints, it is not possible for the State to conduct this analysis prior to the published deadline of May 30, 2013.

We appreciate the opportunity to present this statement and will reserve the balance of our comments for our written testimony. If you require additional information on our position, please contact Mr. Kaleo Manuel of our Planning Office at (808) 620-9485 or [kaleo.l.manuel@hawaii.gov](mailto:kaleo.l.manuel@hawaii.gov).

Aloha,



Jobie M. K. Masagatani, Chairman  
Hawaiian Homes Commission