HB 2981 recognizes the efforts of the Hawaii Nature Center in fostering public awareness, appreciation and understanding of Hawaii's environment and would provide $141,038 for continuation of their program.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

As the coordinator of Environmental Studies under the Liberal Studies program and advisor of University students seeking a major equivalent or certificate in Environmental Studies and as an instructor of the Interdisciplinary Studies course titled Environmental Practicum under the Honors Program at the UH Manoa, I have had many students work with the Hawaii Nature Center. These students consistently reported on the "outstanding and innovative programs" and "exceptional educational guidance" being put forth by the Hawaii Nature Center. In several cases, students career goals were redirected to more closely focus on environmental issues pertinent to careers in law, education, art, communications, journalism, and planning as a direct result of their internship experience with the Hawaii Nature Center.

Based on my personal experience with their operations and from the perspective of one engaged in environmental education at the University level, I certainly offer my full support for the work being undertaken by the Hawaii Nature Center and thus my concurrence with HB 2981.