



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Aloha Friends,

Congratulations to all of you for being here today to stand in defense of the public's right to access and safely use the shoreline and ocean of our wonderful island state!

Although I am off-island on legislative business in California regarding the proposed early childhood learning initiative, I am here with you in spirit! I am grateful for your sustained commitment to focus attention on the issue of beach access and applaud each and every one of you for coming together to send that message loud and clear. It is the involvement of people like you, joining together and speaking with one voice that is the key to holding government officials accountable for serving the public interest.

Access to the ocean should never be denied. To emphasize this position, I have introduced House Bill 3265, which requires that, to the extent practicable, public rights of way, statewide, shall be no more than 1/4 mile apart. The intent of the bill is not only to protect, but also to expand our access to the ocean and its resources. Given the beach access challenges on every island, I believe it is necessary for the State to establish, once and for all, the recognition that the ocean is a natural resource which should be available and accessible for EVERYONE.

As we also know, with the "Public Rights of Way" signs come the "Emergency Response Location" signs, as well. These indicators are essential for the safety of everyone in our communities, not just the beach goers. Residents along the shoreline would also benefit from such access.

Our communities throughout all of our islands are full of active surfers, paddlers, swimmers, and beach goers -- people of all ages who live here, in part, because of the special love for the ocean that surrounds us. As ocean users, we know how important it is to vigorously enforce a law to create and maintain public rights of way to the shoreline. And that's why we're all here today -- to insure that the public's right to beach access is NOT compromised by landowners who claim the shoreline for themselves or by government processes that let them get away with it

The ocean shoreline is for all of Hawai'i's people, and we must insure that our children, in particular, have that legacy to enjoy. Thank you for being here today to stand up and make that promise a reality.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Lyla B. Berg, Ph.D.
House of Representatives, 18th District
(Hahaione to Kaimuki)