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## **OVER 20 GROUPS OPPOSE DLNR NOMINATION AND PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE THE LUC**

HONOLULU, HAWAII (January 26, 2015) -- Over a dozen environmental groups are asking the Governor to withdraw his nomination of Castle & Cooke lobbyist Carleton Ching to head the Department of Land and Natural Resources and to drop any plans to weaken or eliminate the Land Use Commission.

In a joint statement, the groups said:

We are extremely disappointed in Governor Ige's openness to eliminating the State Land Use Commission. The Land Use Commission serves an essential role in the proper planning of land uses, developing land appropriately, and protecting public trust resources and the public interest. We question the motivation behind this proposal to dismantle the backbone of our state's land use system.

We oppose the Governor's choice of Carleton Ching to lead the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources and ask that the nomination be withdrawn because he has no demonstrated expertise in managing the cultural and natural resources that fall under the department's purview, including but not limited to endangered species, iwi, ceded land, water resources, forests, beaches, coral reefs, fishing and hunting resources, historic sites, and state parks.

It is still early in Governor Ige's term, and we urge him to make the proper course corrections for the benefit of our natural environment and the people of Hawai'i nei. We look forward to working with him and his administration to make Hawai'i a better place for all the people of these islands, our children, and generations to come.

Among the groups are: Sierra Club, The Outdoor Circle, Conservation Council for Hawai'i, KAHEA: The Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance, Hawai'i's Thousand Friends, Life of the Land, Friends of Lana'i, Progressive Democrats of Hawai'i, Earthjustice, Defend O'ahu Coalition, Surfrider Foundation, Hawai'i Wildlife Fund, Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action, Hui Ho'omalua I Ka 'Aina, Kupa'a No Lana'i, LOST FISH Coalition, MANA (Movement for Aloha No Ka 'Aina), Maui Tomorrow, Puna Pono Alliance, Wailua-Kapa'a Neighborhood Association, West Maui Preservation Association, and 'Ilio'ulaokalani Coalition.

The Director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources serves as the chair of its governing body (the Board of Land and Natural Resources), the Chair of the Commission on Water Resource Management, and as the state's Historic Preservation Officer, in addition to overseeing many critical programs.

Marti Townsend, Executive Director of The Outdoor Circle urged the Governor to withdraw Ching's nomination to head up DLNR citing Ching's "lack of experience in protecting natural resources, which is the agency's primary responsibility."

Anthony Aalto, Sierra Club spokesperson, pointed out that Ching "lobbied for developer Castle and Cooke, served as a director on the Building Industry Association of Hawai'i and as vice-President of the Land Use Research Foundation, which according to its website is 'devoted exclusively to promoting the interests of the development community.' Both organizations have consistently lobbied to weaken laws that protect the state's cultural and natural resources."

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