

HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

Minutes of Monday, September 15, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.
Grand Naniloa Hotel, Sandalwood Ballroom, 93 Banyan Drive, Hilo, Hawaii, 96720,
and Interactive Conferencing Technology (ICT) Zoom

PRESENT Kali Watson, Chairperson
Makai Freitas, West Hawai'i Commissioner (ICT)
Sanoë Marfil, O'ahu Commissioner
Lawrence Lasua, Moloka'i Commissioner
Michael L. Kaleikini, East Hawai'i Commissioner
Shaylyn Ornellas, Kauai Commissioner
Pauline N. Namu'o, O'ahu Commissioner (ICT)
Walter Kaneakua, O'ahu Commissioner

EXCUSED Archie Kalepa, Maui Commissioner

COUNSEL Hokulei Lindsey, Deputy Attorney General

STAFF Katie Lambert, Deputy to the Chairman
Richard Hoke, Executive Assistant to the Chairperson
Leah Burrows-Nuuanu, Secretary to the Commission
Juan Garcia, Homestead Services Division Administrator
Russell Kaupu, Property Development Agent to the Office of the Chair
Kalani Fronda, Land Development Division Acting Administrator
Michelle Hitzeman, LDD Homestead Housing Development Manager
David Hoke, Enforcement Administrator
Kahana Albinio, Land Management Income Property Manager
Lilliane Makaila, Planning Office Acting Administrator
Lehua Kinilau-Cano, NAHASDA Government Relations Officer
Oriana Leao, NAHASDA Government Relations Program Specialists

ORDER OF BUSINESS

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 am by Chair Kali Watson. Six (6) members were present in person, two (2) on Zoom, and one (1) excused, establishing a quorum.

Chair Watson announced a request from HSD to amend the agenda to include item D7, Assignment of Leasehold Interest number 55, transferring from Warrick Aiwohi to Kimberly Abe. Commissioner Kaneakua moved to approve the amendment, seconded by Commissioner Lasua, and the motion passed unanimously.

J. Garcia informed the Chairman that due to an administrative oversight, Exhibit A was missing from item D10 in the consent agenda packet, and he had now distributed the missing exhibit to the Commissioners.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Watson confirmed changes to the agenda, including rescheduling item H1 to 11 a.m., moving item G3 to follow F1, and noting the Commission would enter executive session and break for lunch at noon. He announced community meetings at 6:30 p.m. that evening at Keaukaha Elementary and the next night in Ka'u at Pahala Community Center. The amended agenda was approved unanimously.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Kaneakua, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Watson asked if there were edits or amendments to the August 18 & 19 minutes. There were none.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Kaneakua, to approve the August HHC Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON AGENDIZED ITEMS

PT-1 Kenna Stormogibson – Item C-4: Ewa Land Donation

K. Stormogibson, executive director of the Hawaii Housing Policy Foundation, expressed concern over the land's condition, citing photos from 2001 and 2002 that showed signs of heavy industrial activity, including trucks and barrels, suggesting possible contamination. She criticized the current memorandum of agreement (MOA) for failing to address cleanup responsibilities, warning that beneficiaries could be liable for potentially costly remediation, estimated between \$500,000 and \$1 million. Although the MOA included an environmental assessment clause, it focused only on surrounding community impacts, not the land itself. She urged the Commission to conduct a site assessment for soil contamination and revise the MOA to ensure the developer, not beneficiaries, covers cleanup costs. She emphasized the importance of due diligence before accepting land donations and referenced a prior meeting where R. Kaupu advised verifying land suitability to avoid burdening the trust. She then concluded by requesting amendments to the MOA and noted concern that such critical information had not been disclosed earlier.

PT – 2 Jojo Tanimoto – Item C-5

Tanimoto expressed deep frustration over Hawaiian Homes' inaction on a long-promised evacuation road from Kawaihae. She said no progress had been made despite assurances in March about installing a gate and completing an archaeological review. With the Ironman Triathlon closing the only highway access for 12 hours, she stressed the urgent need for an alternate route through Kailapa subdivision. She noted the fire department had previously used this path for emergencies, yet it remains unpaved and blocked by Kohala Ranch. Tanimoto urged Hawaiian Homes to support the emergency road, improve transparency, and communicate more openly with the community.

PT-3 De Mont Manaole – Item C1 & C2

D. Manaole submitted a formal letter of support for C2. He emphasized his desire to be on record and shared a personal saying from his mother, "niele oukou," meaning people should refrain from speaking on matters that are not their kuleana, especially without accurate facts. He then objected to the comments made by the first testifier, suggesting her criticism stemmed from losing the Waipouli issue and was now unfairly targeting others. He defended the deal as beneficial and urged individuals to research before commenting. He voiced frustration over non-trust beneficiaries creating conflict among Native Hawaiians and reaffirmed that such matters are the kuleana of the beneficiaries. He concluded by reiterating his strong support for C1 and C2 and stated he would speak further when those items were addressed.

PT-4 Kalei Kailikini – ITEM G-2

K. Kaleikini expressed deep concern over the waitlist. She had been on the list since 1986, was 77 years old, and was part of the Kalima lawsuit, yet she still had not received a lease. She criticized the Department for prioritizing other developments like Pōhakuloa and Pana'ewa while neglecting elderly beneficiaries. She also emphasized the financial hardship faced by retirees, noting that many cannot afford homes priced at \$200,000 and that monetary compensation from the lawsuit was insufficient due to Hawaii's high cost of living. She urged the Commission to prioritize elderly applicants fairly, provide lots without cost, and uphold the Homestead Act of 1920, which she argued was being violated by selling undeveloped lots. She called for

compassion, transparency, and immediate action, speaking on behalf of many seniors who could not attend hearings and were burdened by stress and disappointment.

PT-5 Iwalani McBrayer – Item C-1

McBrayer voiced strong support for agenda item C1, noting that the Native Hawaiian beneficiary developer’s donation would add a valuable, income-producing property to DHHL’s portfolio and strengthen the trust’s financial base without tapping existing funds. She confirmed that DHHL leaders have been in contact with the donor. On item C2 involving Legacy Ventures LLC, she expressed concern that Kapolei homestead leaders were not consulted despite claims of beneficiary support. McBrayer warned that excluding homestead leadership from such major decisions undermines transparency and sets a poor precedent. She urged the Commission to defer C2 until genuine consultation with Kapolei homestead leaders occurs.

PT-6 Homelani Schaedel – Item C-1

H. Schaedel expressed concern that the project appeared to have been approved before being presented to the Commission and beneficiaries. She emphasized the importance of beneficiaries documenting their support or opposition to projects that may affect the Trust. Referring to the January 21, 2025 meeting minutes, she cited Commissioner Neves’ confirmation that the 19-acre parcel included R5 residential zoning and R. Kaupu’s statement that the developer must comply with Chapter 343 environmental review, including securing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) at their own cost. She reiterated that the developer should bear all costs. She requested that the last line of page 3, item 7 of the MOA be amended to explicitly state that KHL would be responsible for all FONSI-related expenses.

PT-7 Kama Keone – Item C1 & C-2

K. Keone expressed support for agenda item C1 and opposition to item C2. He celebrated the Department of Hawaiian Homes being projected as the largest homestead in Hawai‘i and was pleased with the recent lease and lot selections. Regarding C1, he acknowledged concerns about soil and debris, but supported the project, noting the land had been used for farming for decades and cleanup was expected. For C2, involving Legacy Ventures LLC, he voiced opposition due to the lack of transparency and communication, stating the company was from the mainland and had not reached out to local beneficiaries despite plans to become neighbors. He questioned whether they shared Hawaiian values and criticized the absence of consultation, likening it to strangers entering a home uninvited. He emphasized that beneficiaries deserved to know who would be part of their community and called for open dialogue, stating that his homestead currently opposed the project

II. ITEMS FOR DECISION MAKING

A. CONSENT AGENDA

HOMESTEAD SERVICES DIVISION

- D-2 Approval of Consent to Mortgage (see exhibit)
- D-3 Approval of Streamline Refinance of Loans (see exhibit)
- D-4 Approval of Homestead Application Transfers / Cancellations (see exhibit)
- D-5 Approval to Certify Applications of Qualified Applicants for the month of August, 2025 (see exhibit)
- D-6 Commission Designation of Successors to Application Rights – Public Notice 2024 (see exhibit)
- D-7 Approval of Assignment of Leasehold Interest (see exhibit)
- D-8 Approval of Amendment of Leasehold Interest (see exhibit)
- D-9 Approval to Issue Non-Exclusive Licenses for Rooftop Photovoltaic Systems for Certain Lessees (see exhibit)

- D-10 Request for Extension of Deadline to Sign Successorship Documents – NAUPAKA SHELBY MILDRED TADLAS, Residential Lease No. 5416, Lot No. 57, Paukūkalō, Maui
- D-11 Commission Designation of Successor – GEORGE MAKUAOLE, Residential Lease No. 8300, Lot No. 9, PKE, Oahu
- D-12 Approval of Supplemental Dwelling Unit (SDU) for Certain Lessee – RICHARD I.K. RAMSEYER, Residential Lease No. 8821, Lot No. 19, Waimanalo, Oahu
- D-13 Commission Designation of Successor – NATASHA H. KUNISHIGE., Pastoral Lease No. 8009, Lot No. 34, Pu‘ukapu, Hawaii
- D-14 Commission Designation of Successor – SHEILA LOU M. ROY, Residential Lease No. 4941, Lot No. 15CD, Kuhio Village, Hawaii
- D-15 Commission Designation of Successor – SHEILA LOU M. ROY, Pastoral Lease No. 8061, Lot No. 87, Pu‘ukapu, Hawaii
- D-16 Commission Designation of Successor – SOLOMON AKAU, JR., Residential Lease No. 12710, Lot No. 66, La‘i‘Ōpua, Hawaii.
- D-17 Commission Designation of Successor – DEREK K. PETERSON, Residential Lease No. 10637, Lot No. UNDV011, La‘i‘Ōpua Hawaii

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

HSD Administrator Juan Garcia presented 11 items (D2 to D17) for approval.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kaleikini asked about the Kunewa parcel and referenced past issues with abandoned vehicles on the property. J. Garcia acknowledged the concern but was unsure of the current status. He suggested removing item 39 from the consent agenda to allow time for follow-up without delaying the other 53 transactions. Commissioner Kaleikini agreed to the removal and confirmed that a decision on the item would be made the following day.

Commissioner Kaneakua acknowledged the extensive work reflected in the meeting documents and praised J. Garcia and his division for their consistent efforts in processing lease transfers and supporting beneficiaries. He emphasized the dedication shown month after month. J. Garcia expressed gratitude on behalf of the HSD staff.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Marfil to approve the motion as stated in the submittal						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			
MOTION: [] UNANIMOUS [X] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes						

REGULAR AGENDA

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

**ITEM C-1 Approval of Memorandum of Agreement for Donation and Acceptance of Ewa
Parcels Encumbered by Long-Term Commercial Lease, Ewa, O‘ahu, TMK Nos. (1)
9-1-181- 031 and 037**

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Property Development Agent Russell Kaupu presented the following:

Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission to the Approval of Memorandum of Agreement for Donation and Acceptance of Ewa Parcels Encumbered by Long-Term Commercial Lease(s), Ewa, O‘ahu.

NOTE: Chair Watson recused himself from this item due to connections with the group and appointed Commissioner Marfil to lead the discussion.

R. Kaupu noted this item had also been discussed at the previous month’s meeting. Following that meeting, comments were received requesting the inclusion of a provision addressing environmental assessment responsibilities. As a result, a new provision was added to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), shown in redline format in the Commissioners’ packets. He acknowledged H. Schaedel’s comments from that morning and agreed to revise the MOA further to clarify that the developer, KHL, would be responsible for all expenses related to the environmental assessment process. He mentioned that the developer had participated in the prior meeting and was available via Zoom for the current session. R. Kaupu requested approval of the MOA with the proposed revisions and noted that public testimony would begin with Senator Favella.

Public Testimony – Senator Kurt Fevella - He strongly opposed agenda item C1, criticizing the proposed agreement with KHL Development to accept two Ewa parcels under a 65-year lease. He warned that the land is contaminated from prior industrial use and that cleanup costs could unfairly burden the trust. He cited the Catholic Diocese’s withdrawal from a similar project due to the same issues and questioned the developer’s credibility, given an unfinished Kona project. He also condemned the lack of community consultation, traffic impacts, and proximity to residential and hospital areas. He urged the Commission to reject or delay approval, warning the deal would harm the community.

Public Testimony - DeMont Manaole – D. Manaole reaffirmed his strong support for agenda item C1, acknowledging Senator K. Fevella’s passionate advocacy for his community while suggesting they may be discussing separate land issues. He emphasized that if the land had been approved for use, then it was the developer’s kuleana to ensure its safety and compliance. He expressed trust in the developer’s integrity and efforts, noting no reason to doubt them. He supported the project for its potential to generate income for trust beneficiaries, helping them become financially independent and less reliant on state funding. He stressed the need for more initiatives like C1 to empower the Hawaiian community economically.

Public Testimony - Maysana Aldeguer - a Native Hawaiian from Wai‘anae on the waitlist since 1985, strongly opposed agenda item C1, urging the Commission to prioritize housing and 99-year leasehold lots over environmentally risky land donations with unclear financial benefits. She cited a 2020 study showing most beneficiaries, especially seniors, wanted housing, and highlighted that 73% of O‘ahu waitlisters sought residential lots. Aldeguer criticized the Commission’s focus on a non-priority proposal, questioned the transparency of a deal involving Chair Watson and his former associates, and condemned favoritism after a 2023 applicant received land while she waited over 40 years. She called for honoring Prince Kūhiō’s vision by placing Native Hawaiians on clean, secure land and rejecting contaminated properties.

Public Testimony - Patty Teruya - opposed approving the MOA and accepting the Ewa parcel under a long-term lease. She apologized to Hilo beneficiaries for the O‘ahu-focused discussion, then questioned why the deputy director—not Chair Watson—was authorized to execute the MOA, suggesting a possible conflict of interest. She asked if R. Kaupu had been directed by the Chair and criticized the lack of transparency around

the deputy director's role. Teruya noted the submittal omitted the developer's purchase price and argued DHHL should buy directly from the Catholic Diocese through open bidding. She questioned the developer's ties to Chair Watson and urged Commissioners, especially Commissioner Kaneakua, to consider these concerns carefully.

Commissioner Kaneakua responded to P. Teruya's public remarks by affirming that he was actively listening, taking notes, and cross-referencing her comments with item C1. He clarified that he was not ignoring her and appreciated her concerns. P. Teruya emphasized that no formal beneficiary consultation had been conducted, and private discussions between the developer and a single homestead leader did not qualify as proper consultation. She cited Hawaii Administrative Rules 10-46, which mandate meaningful and timely consultation with beneficiaries, especially for decisions with significant impact, such as accepting potentially contaminated land. She warned that beneficiaries were being exposed to risks without transparency or a proper RFP process. She concluded by stressing the need for due diligence to protect beneficiaries from cleanup costs and reminded Commissioners of their kuleana to safeguard the trust established by Prince Kūhiō.

Public Testimony – Kui Atua-Lebao – She expressed strong concern about the proposed Ewa land donation, warning that it could set a harmful precedent for Hawaiian Homelands. She stated that the donation came with conditions, lacked consultation with beneficiaries, and offered no transparent financial details, posing significant risks. She criticized the developer for selecting Kuai Hale LLC to receive a valuable 65-year commercial lease without a proper request for proposal process, leaving beneficiaries uninformed and unable to assess whether better terms could have been secured. She then emphasized that the decision was made behind closed doors, without financial analysis or a community benefits agreement, and under the sub-lease participation policy, the operator could deduct all expenses before sharing profits—potentially leaving beneficiaries with nothing. She urged the Commissioners not to accept land donations without due diligence, beneficiary consultation, and a fair, transparent selection process for third-party operators.

Public Testimony – Patti Tancayo - Clarified the broader purpose of the Hawaiian Homelands Act, emphasizing that although it was enacted in 1921 after the queen died in 1917, it was designed not just for homesteading, but to rebuild the lāhui through economic development, cultural preservation, and self-determination. She highlighted the long-standing struggle of Hawaiian Homelands to secure funding for infrastructure. She asserted that the proposed project represented one viable strategy for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to generate revenue. She stressed that the donation posed zero risk to DHHL and would bring in a full project with income potential. She explained that since the land would become DHHL property, it must comply with Chapter 343, the environmental review process. She noted that phase one of the environmental assessment had already been completed by qualified engineers and acknowledged existing concerns, but warned that unclear environmental status would hinder future investment.

Public Testimony – Germaine Meyers – Opposed Item C1. She raised concerns about the legitimacy and timing of the company's registration, noting it was formed on December 28, 2023—seven days after the deadline to submit qualifications for a major DHHL project. Despite this, the company was awarded a \$150 million development agreement for three villages at La'i Opua, representing one-quarter of the \$600 million Act 279 appropriation. She then questioned whether Ms. Tancayo's long-standing business relationship with Chair Kali Watson influenced this award and suggested that favoritism may now be extending to the current donation proposal. She urged the Attorney General to investigate procurement records and compliance with Hawaii state laws, emphasizing that Kalaniana'ole Development LLC could not have met the legal requirements at the time of submission. G. Meyers provided documentation, including DCCA records and RFQ 24-HHL-003, and requested transparency and accountability from the Commission.

Public Testimony – Patrick Kahawaiolaa - a native Hawaiian and interim leader of Kumiki' Hou Kupuna Aina Hopulopula, testified in strong opposition to agenda items C1 and C2. He objected to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between DHHL and Kalaniana'ole Development LLC for the acceptance of a parcel in Ewa, arguing that the 65-year lease to a private, for-profit entity would permanently encumber trust lands and perpetuate systemic racism by allowing non-natives to control lands meant for native Hawaiians. He cited

the airports and shopping centers as examples of the misuse of trust lands, noting that the beneficiary waitlist continues to grow despite the passage of Act 279, which was intended to promote homeownership. He also opposed the C2 development agreement for the Kalaeloa Raceway with Legacy Venture LLC, calling it an inappropriate use of trust lands and criticizing the flawed procurement process, which had only one bidder and lacked transparency. He questioned the affordability of such a project for native Hawaiians and warned that it would negatively impact O‘ahu residents for generations. He referenced the Nelson case, where Judge Castagnetti ruled that DHHL must serve native Hawaiians exclusively, not the general public. Kahawaiolaa also submitted objections on behalf of the president of the Pana‘ewa Farmers Association, who could not attend, and reaffirmed his advocacy for native Hawaiian interests.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Lasua expressed deep concern about the matters being discussed and proposed a motion to defer the decision until three key issues were addressed: conducting a beneficiary consultation, requiring DHHL to carry out a separate environmental assessment funded by the developer, and verifying concerns raised by the diocese regarding the suitability of the location for beneficiaries. He questioned why the project should proceed if the diocese had deemed the site inappropriate. Commissioner Kaleikini seconded the motion.

Commissioner Kaneakua acknowledged that paragraph seven of the proposal required the developer to cover the costs of the assessment. Commissioner Kaneakua emphasized the importance of ensuring that environmental concerns were properly addressed as the proposal moved forward.

R. Kaupu explained that the agreement allowed the department to rely on the developer’s due diligence process to evaluate the property, particularly regarding environmental concerns. He emphasized that through this process, they could access phase one and, if necessary, phase two environmental reports, and question the seller—the Catholic Diocese—about the property’s prior use and suitability for development. He clarified that if the findings were unsatisfactory, the department could withdraw from the transaction without accepting the donation. He also cautioned that deferring action could jeopardize the developer’s acquisition due to a closing deadline in their purchase agreement. He noted that environmental liabilities in Hawaii often stemmed from historical land use and required varying levels of remediation, which influenced development costs. R. Kaupu stated that the Catholic Diocese likely chose to sell the property because remediation costs were too high for their intended use. He stressed that all remediation responsibilities would remain with the developer, even after the property was transferred, as outlined in the leases and environmental compliance under Chapter 343. Ultimately, if the property proved unsuitable—such as being a superfund site with excessive remediation costs—the department would walk away from the deal.

Commissioner Kaneakua clarified that, despite assumptions, he had been attentively listening and taking notes throughout the discussions. He acknowledged Senator K. Fevella’s concerns about the high-traffic area and hoped environmental assessments, including EPA reviews, would address such issues. Commissioner Kaneakua noted the Senate’s scrutiny over DHHL’s funding strategies and the ongoing debate about maximizing commercial rent from trust lands. He expressed support for his fellow Commissioners’ concerns and emphasized the Commission’s commitment to listening to beneficiaries. While he had no objection to the idea of deferring the decision, he stressed that the Commission had done substantial homework and was not acting recklessly. He concluded by affirming that if the deal proved unfavorable, the Commission had the option to walk away, thereby invalidating any agreement.

Commissioner Ornellas expressed gratitude to the speakers and shared that, despite conducting extensive research, she now had more questions than when she arrived. Drawing from her background as a teacher, she used the algebraic concept of PEMDAS (order of operations) to illustrate her concern about the lack of clear procedural order in the agenda item. She questioned whether the Roman Catholic Church had given explicit consent for the department to be involved in an active escrow. Upon hearing R. Kaupu’s response that they had not, she emphasized the importance of that detail, especially given her experience as a real estate agent.

R. Kaupu stated that, to his knowledge, the Roman Catholic Church had not been asked to provide express consent for the DHHL to participate in the transaction. Commissioner Ornellas responded by referencing Hawaii state law, which requires private landowners to give explicit consent for another party to access the property or engage in escrow-related activities. She explained that this was why she had previously asked the developer about the status of the escrow, seeking clarity on how far along the process was. He acknowledged that he was unaware of the escrow status and clarified that the escrow agreement was strictly between the seller and the purchaser, with DHHL not being a party to that contract. He explained that DHHL's due diligence rights would only be activated once a memorandum of agreement was in place, allowing them to direct the purchaser to request necessary information. Commissioner Ornellas confirmed her understanding and reiterated that DHHL was piggybacking on the purchaser's due diligence.

Commissioner Ornellas then questioned why, if the transaction was framed as a gift, the grantor had not completed all due diligence and closed escrow before presenting the donation. R. Kaupu responded that the developer's motivation was to donate the property to DHHL with a lease already in place, enabling them to proceed with commercial development, something they could not do unless the property was under DHHL's ownership. Finally, Commissioner Ornellas asked again about the current status of the escrow within the 18-month inspection period. R. Kaupu reiterated that DHHL was not a party to the transaction and therefore did not have access to that information, though he acknowledged the importance of the question.

C. O'Connor, Regional Vice President of Development at the Michaels Organization, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak and acknowledged the many concerns raised. He confirmed that, although they had not been asked previously, they had no issue with the Catholic Diocese directly contacting DHHL and committed to facilitating that communication immediately. Regarding environmental contamination, C. O'Connor clarified that only a portion of the site had contamination, and the area intended for the church's educational center was not affected. He emphasized that the church's decision not to proceed with the school was based on financial hardship, citing recent school closures and past financial struggles at St. Louis School. He reiterated that the choice to abandon the project was not due to environmental concerns but economic challenges.

Commissioner Ornellas asked C. O'Connor for the current status of the escrow. He explained that the project was in an 18-month escrow with about three months remaining and likely needed an extension to finish environmental studies, including phase two, traffic, biological, watershed, civil engineering, and geotechnical assessments.

Commissioner Ornellas asked if the reports would be shared with DHHL before signing the MOA. C. O'Connor confirmed they would, explaining that the developer was investing heavily at risk and needed assurance of a clean site to secure financing. He emphasized DHHL's full visibility in all documents and that no construction could proceed without environmental clearance. Commissioner Ornellas raised concern about paragraph seven's language, questioning why Chapter 343 compliance wasn't required before demolition or construction. C. O'Connor clarified that construction couldn't begin until financial closing, meaning all funding and approvals were secured.

R. Kaupu explained that under Chapter 343, environmental compliance was required before any ground-breaking activity. Still, DHHL could proceed with the donation prior to completing the full 343 process by relying on phase one and phase two environmental reports conducted during due diligence. He emphasized that the broader 343 process included environmental assessments or impact statements but was separate from the initial due diligence. He stressed the importance of understanding the true condition of the property before accepting or gifting it, especially if contamination was present. He clarified that DHHL would have access to the property's environmental history before the developer's acquisition closed and could withdraw from the agreement if the conditions were unsatisfactory, as outlined in the due diligence clause.

Commissioner Kaleikini expressed initial support for the proposed item based on his understanding but acknowledged the significance of the in-person testimony from O'ahu residents and the volume of written testimony in favor of the project. He noted that despite extensive discussion, confusion and concern about the

environmental aspects remained, prompting her to second the motion to defer. She appreciated the developer's input on the risks involved and emphasized that differing levels of understanding among stakeholders warranted. The Commissioner asked for clarification on how deferral might jeopardize the project, and Russell responded that the motion to defer was tied to obtaining environmental information, noting that the Chapter 343 process was extensive and could take years to complete.

Christian O'Connor addressed the Commissioners candidly, stating that while the full process might take years, the current timeline was closer to nine months. He emphasized that successful development required openness to letting developers take on the financial and operational risks. He shared that he had personally invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into the project, underscoring his commitment to finding a viable path forward. He reflected on his decade of experience at Kamehameha Schools and stressed that the intention behind the current proposal was not to offer risky or contaminated land, but to create a foundation for long-term benefit and responsible development.

R. Kaupu interrupted to clarify that the Commissioner's question was about the impact of a potential deferral vote, which could last up to nine months to allow the environmental assessment process to run, on the developer's purchase transaction. C. O'Connor responded that they needed clarity on whether DHHL was truly willing to proceed with the project, as continued financial risk and investment without assurance was unsustainable for them.

Commissioner Kaleikini stated he was not advocating for the full completion of the Chapter 343 process before making a decision and asked Commissioner Lasua if that was his intention. Commissioner Lasua explained that his concern stemmed from the lengthy nature of the 343 process and the potential legal consequences of placing beneficiaries on land that might later prove problematic. He emphasized his responsibility to prioritize the well-being of beneficiaries above all else and reiterated the importance of thorough due diligence. He then asked how long the 343 process typically takes.

C. O'Connor explained that the Chapter 343 environmental process typically took nine to twelve months, sometimes up to eighteen, and cost between \$350,000 and \$750,000 depending on complexity. R. Kaupu clarified to Commissioner Lasua that determining the environmental status of the property began with a phase one environmental report, followed by a phase two report if recommended. He emphasized that this was standard due diligence for acquisitions or donations and that the current agreement positioned the department to evaluate these reports before deciding whether to proceed.

Commissioner Lasua confirmed that he wanted the Commissioners to understand the property's condition, especially based on what the Catholic Diocese had discovered. R. Kaupu agreed that the Commission could reconvene to vote on the donation once environmental information was available.

Commissioner Lasua asked if the phase one and phase two environmental reports were completed. R. Kaupu confirmed phase one was done, and C. O'Connor added that phase two was underway and would take a few months. Commissioner Lasua also asked about phase three, and C. O'Connor clarified there was none. Instead, phase two led to a remediation plan detailing how to address each concern, such as removing contaminated asphalt, with cost estimates and disposal instructions.

C. O'Connor explained that once phase two was complete, consultants and specialized contractors would execute the remediation. He acknowledged frustrations, especially from P. Tancayo, and emphasized that the developer was responsible for cleaning the land thoroughly each time it was disturbed. He reiterated that the project was not for housing but aimed to generate long-term income for DHHL. Despite concerns about environmental risks and litigation, he assured the Commission that the land would be properly cleaned.

Commissioner Namu'o expressed appreciation to R. Kaupu and emphasized the importance of understanding the process thoroughly rather than rushing to complete it. She stated that the priority was to ensure the trust and beneficiaries were protected. Given that the project was located on O'ahu, she believed it was appropriate

to continue discussions and decision-making, suggesting that the developer could provide further input at the next meeting.

Commissioner Marfil emphasized the importance of engaging with the community, especially considering traffic concerns in areas like Ewa Beach and Fort Weaver Road. She supported continuing the work requested by other Commissioners while also allowing time for clarification and dialogue. Commissioner Marfil acknowledged the broader goal of DHHL to generate its own income, as highlighted by Commissioner Kaneakua, and viewed the project as an opportunity to fulfill that mandate. However, she stressed that beneficiaries needed clarity and transparency and suggested that the department be given time to provide that before moving forward. She concluded by affirming her support for the motion to defer.

Commissioner Ornellas asked for clarification on the purchase price and the current stage of the escrow process. It was confirmed that the purchase price was \$6 million and that the transaction was in the due diligence phase of escrow, which was scheduled to end in December. C. O'Connor affirmed they were actively in escrow due diligence.

Senator K. Fevella disputed claims about the Catholic Diocese, stating that churches in his district were overcrowded and there had been a genuine need for a church and school. He argued that past school closures were due to limited space, not lack of demand, and criticized the suggestion that financial issues outweighed community needs. He cited a diesel spill that delayed the Campbell High School project to emphasize the seriousness of environmental concerns.

Commissioner Marfil then initiated a roll call vote on the motion to defer. Commissioner Marfil responded that they would proceed directly to the vote.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Lasua, seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini to defer Item C-1.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini		X	X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua	X		X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			RECUSED			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			
MOTION: [] UNANIMOUS [X] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes						

RECESS
RECONVENE

11:24 AM
11:35 AM

III. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

REGULAR ITEMS

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

**ITEM H-1 For Information Only – DHHL Biennium Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 2027
(Sufficient Sums Budget) (relating to H-2)**

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

None. For Information Only. Deputy to the Chairperson Katie Lambert presented the following:

Deputy Lambert explained that she was presenting DHHL’s Supplemental Budget request for fiscal year 2027, the second year of the biennium. She clarified that the workshop was intended to give Commissioners time to review and ask questions before the formal approval scheduled for the following day. She noted that unlike the June budget workshop, which occurred at the end of the cycle, this session marked the beginning of the process. She explained that the submittal’s narrative section aimed to clarify the department’s budgeting approach, which was shaped by the Nelson lawsuit and related appellate court rulings. She cited Article 12, Section 1 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution, which mandates legislative funding for four key purposes: lot development, loans, rehabilitation projects, and DHHL’s operating budget. These were referred to as Purposes 1 through 4, with Act 279 funds falling under Purpose 1 to support lot development and reduce the homestead waitlist. She concluded by noting that the lawsuit brought by beneficiaries focused on two main counts.

The Nelson lawsuit highlighted two key issues: the legislature’s failure to provide sufficient funding for DHHL programs and the department’s failure to request adequate sums. As a result, the Commission had a duty to annually request sufficient funds, which shaped the current two-part budget structure. The courts determined a base amount for Purpose 4—administrative and operating costs—based on records from the 1978 Constitutional Convention, while funding for Purposes 1 through 3 was left to legislative discretion. Purpose 4 included personnel, travel, utilities, and infrastructure maintenance for existing homesteads. Projects under one year were classified as operating costs and requested through general funds, while longer projects were categorized as CIP (capital improvement projects) and requested through general obligation bonds.

Deputy Lambert noted that all 200 authorized positions were funded in the last session, but 22 new positions were still needed, especially for neighbor island support. She introduced Diana Gabrillo, a new program budget analyst, and acknowledged Jeff Fukui’s contributions. She discussed Act 96 (Green Fee Bill), which required projects to be included in the budget and categorized them by financing method. Purpose 1 development details were in Attachment B, and loan funding requests under Purpose 2 had not yet been approved. Purpose 3 rehabilitation projects were based on priorities from the 2018 Pu‘uwalu conference and updated to reflect current progress. Since 2022, a \$10 million appropriation supported existing homesteads through competitive grants. She also mentioned Act 88, which created a \$7 million revolving fund for NAHASDA loans, and stated that DHHL would request to raise the loan ceiling to \$30 million in fiscal year 2027. The full summary was included in Attachment E, and she welcomed questions from the Commissioners.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Lasua asked how the funding amount for the current budget period was determined, specifically whether it was based on previous year balances and adjusted by a percentage. She clarified that it depended on the category, and for repair and maintenance, the department relied heavily on LDD to provide project-specific data. These figures were quantified and entered into spreadsheets to generate the budget numbers. For Act 96 projects, planning, LMD, and LDD collaborated to identify eligible projects that were already in the pipeline and had defined costs, ensuring they were actionable within the fiscal year 2027.

Commissioner Lasua confirmed that the budget was only for fiscal year 2027 and asked whether K. Fronda received district-level input from staff or independently reviewed expenditures.

K. Fronda explained that the biennium budget had been submitted with input from the Deputy and the Administrative Services Office. While funding was not received for Purpose 1 (lot development), Purpose 2 was awarded \$20 million. The team prioritized 2026 projects using that funding and began reprioritizing remaining needs for 2027, incorporating guidance on Act 96. Additions were made based on input from project managers and engineers across districts. The funding was compiled and aligned with priority needs, and for Purpose 4 (repair and maintenance), the department focused first on life and safety concerns

Commissioner Lasua expressed concern that the funding requests presented to the legislature were not being treated fairly, noting that the Commission had missed out on funding in the last round. K. Lambert explained that after the department submits its budget, the next step is presenting it to the governor, who incorporates it into the broader executive budget. Despite requesting \$106 million for repair and maintenance CIP, the department typically receives only a \$20 million lump sum. She clarified that while the department appeals and presents its Nelson ask during legislative briefings, the official budget remains the governor's. She emphasized that Commissioners and beneficiaries could support the department by lobbying their individual legislators to advocate for budget items not included in the governor's proposal.

Commissioner Ornellas requested examples of what would be categorized under personnel or services. K. Lambert identified the budget line of \$ 881,000 as funding for specially funded attorneys general, confirming it was for salaries. Commissioner Ornellas asked about a \$1.76 million item listed as "other rentals," and a \$285,351 item labeled "DP purchase."

D. Gabrillo explained that the item discussed was part of the IT budget related to system modernization, which included licensing fees. Commissioner Ornellas then asked whether the accounting department had a master standard operating procedure (SOPs) to guide new hires in properly booking transactions, especially in preparation for independent audits. D. Gabrillo responded that she would follow up with that information.

Commissioner Kaneakua asked about the importance of the NAHASDA funding line, emphasizing its critical role in helping beneficiaries facing challenges in accessing homesteads. K. Lambert explained that although NAHASDA funds are federal, they are included in the state budget due to a statute requiring the state to account for all funds. NAHASDA has a budget ceiling and includes 12 federally funded positions reflected in the state's total budget. She clarified that any increase in funding must be advocated at the federal level, and once awarded, the funds are processed through the state budget and finance to adjust the ceiling accordingly. Commissioner Kaneakua noted the importance of raising the ceiling and praised the department's performance with NAHASDA, stressing that more awareness of the program was needed among beneficiaries.

ITEM C-2 Approval of Project Developer Agreement with LEGACY VENTURES LLC for an Industrial-Commercial Mixed-Use Development Including Raceway - 139.297-acre Parcel in Kalaeloa, Oahu, TMK (1) 9-1-013:061

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Property Development Agent Russell Kaupu presented the following:

That the HHC: (i) approve the negotiated PDA between DHHL and LVL; and (ii) authorize and direct the HHC Chairperson to finalize, execute and deliver the PDA with such technical and "legal" revisions as recommended by our State Attorney General's Office.

R. Kaupu requested approval of a negotiated Project Developer Agreement (PDA) between DHHL and Legacy Ventures LLC. The agreement would authorize the Chair to finalize and execute it, pending any technical or legal input from the Attorney General's Office. While the full PDA was scheduled for review in executive session due to proprietary content, a term sheet outlining the basic terms was shared in open session. He explained that both parties required confidentiality and provided background on the process,

noting that in December 2023, Chair Watson formed a PIG to evaluate underutilized lands for commercial development to generate revenue for the trust and beneficiaries. Following beneficiary consultations, the PIG recommended specific properties for disposition, and the Commission directed the department to prepare them accordingly.

This project marked the first of those approved for advancement. Under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act section 220.5, DHHL issued a public RFQ/RFP for developers to propose public-private partnership projects. Despite broad outreach, only Legacy Ventures submitted a proposal and was selected in September 2024. Negotiations began, and the term sheet outlined the development structure: the developer would receive a right of entry for due diligence, followed by a general lease upon confirmation. DHHL would collect minimum rent and share in gross revenues from the business, forming the basis of the public-private partnership.

R. Kaupu clarified that Legacy Ventures LLC was composed of local individuals, not mainland developers, as previously claimed. The project site was located near the intersecting runways of Kalaeloa Airport and aimed to develop a motorsports entertainment and mixed-use facility supporting safety, education, recreation, and economic growth. The original one-year due diligence period was extended to three years due to the complexity of feasibility studies and the need to relocate current users, including PASHA and its sub-permittees. The developer could terminate the agreement at any time during due diligence without penalty, though they would bear upfront costs for studies and appraisals. If the developer terminated, DHHL would reimburse half the cost of environmental studies to retain the data for future marketing. Upon successful due diligence, a general lease would be executed, with base rent set by appraisal and revenue sharing increasing over time. Rent would begin either upon revenue generation or after 36 months.

The developer was required to negotiate a community benefits package directly with homestead associations, with DHHL ensuring the process was followed. Design and construction had to meet DHHL standards, with oversight from consultant Lance Wilhelm. The project had to reach substantial completion within 48 months, with possible extensions for justified delays. The developer was responsible for maintenance, securing financing from approved lenders, and meeting insurance requirements appropriate for motorsports. DHHL retained approval rights over any mortgage. The developer indemnified DHHL against third-party claims, and both the PDA and lease were cross-defaulted, meaning a breach in one could terminate both. The PDA governed the entire partnership structure.

DISCUSSION

L. Wilhelm explained that extensive and detailed discussions had taken place with the developer, resulting in an agreement that would be presented in full during the executive session. However, he wanted to outline the basic deal terms in a simplified manner for initial review and invited questions from the attendees. R. Kaupu asked if there were any questions regarding the basic deal terms. He indicated that if there were none, the developer would proceed with their presentation.

Commissioner Lasua raised a question about whether it was standard practice for environmental studies involving Hawaiian homes to be reimbursed at 50% for Phases 1 and 2 when the cost amounted to \$100,000 per month. R. Kaupu responded that this was not standard practice. He clarified that the approach being used was novel, involving a project developer agreement under a public-private partnership framework outlined in section 220.5. In contrast, under the general lease context typically handled by the land management division, such expenses were usually borne entirely by the lessee. He explained that the department had agreed to share half of the expense as a concession, aiming to act as a partner in the venture. This arrangement ensured that even if the project did not succeed, the department would still benefit from the due diligence reports.

Commissioner Kaleikini asked whether there were comparable world-class motorsports facilities in Nevada or California. L. Wilhelm replied that the developer would likely present examples of similar operations used as models for the current project. R. Kaupu added that he and L. Wilhelm had visited a facility in the Nevada desert, approximately an hour from Las Vegas. He described the visit as informative and eye-opening, highlighting the operational structure of such facilities, their diverse revenue streams, and their multifaceted

use. These included hosting racing events, allowing individuals to drive their own vehicles on the course, and offering driving instruction in various techniques. He emphasized that similar facilities existed in multiple locations.

Michael Woody-Oakland, representing Legacy Ventures, introduced his team to the Commission, including Pam Woody-Oakland, John DeSoto, Stanford Carr, and other members online. He shared his personal connection to motorsports, having grown up at Hawaii Raceway Park, and explained how its closure led him to pursue affordable housing development. Motivated by passion and local roots, he assembled a team with deep experience in motorsports and Hawaiian development, including experts like David Vodden, who built Thunder Hill Raceway, and Dwight Tanaka, VP of the Long Beach Grand Prix. The team also included Alakea Design, a local architecture firm, and Tilke, a global leader in racetrack design with facilities in over 32 countries.

The proposed project aimed to revive motorsports in Oahu, which had lacked a facility since the Raceway Park's closure. The vision extended beyond racing, emphasizing education, safety, and recreation. As a public-private partnership, the project prioritized collaboration with DHHL and its beneficiaries. The selected parcel, located southeast of the runway and surrounded by key landmarks like Ko'olina Resorts and Campbell Industrial Park, was currently used for industrial storage. The site had previously been considered for motorsports under the Base Reuse Enclosure Act and had an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). However, the team planned to revisit and update environmental studies, including noise and traffic assessments, to ensure compliance with Chapter 343.

The facility's design included multiple driving surfaces: a road course that could be split into two, a quarter-mile drag strip, a skid pad for driver training, and a multi-purpose track. Accessibility was a core goal, with plans to accommodate go-karts, e-bikes, and everyday vehicles to lower the barrier to entry. The venue would also serve as a community hub, featuring a concert venue, swap meet space, and potential convention center. Commercial and industrial square footage was integrated to support economic development, complementing growth in nearby Campbell Industrial Park.

The conceptual design featured a two to three-mile road course, a five to ten-acre skid pad, a race control center, classrooms, covered spectator seating, and entertainment zones with simulators. A 24-month construction timeline was proposed, contingent on extended due diligence. This included updated site studies, coordination with airport authorities regarding height restrictions, and an archaeological inventory study absent from the original EIS. The team acknowledged that designs would evolve with further consultation and environmental review.

P. Witte-Oakland acknowledged that Legacy Ventures had not yet begun formal community benefits discussions, but outlined three initial commitments. She shared that they had engaged with Kuhio Lewis of the Hawaiian Council and Michelle Kauhane of the Kapolei Community Development Corporation, with plans to present at their November meeting. The first commitment was a payment to beneficiary associations within a five-mile radius of the project site, amounting to three percent of the rent paid to DHHL, in addition to the rent itself. The second preference was for Native Hawaiian-owned businesses in the commercial and industrial spaces planned for the development. The third was the establishment of a \$100,000 annual scholarship fund to support youth pursuing post-secondary education in STEM fields, emphasizing the technical and academic nature of motorsports. She also noted that four beneficiary associations had been identified within the designated radius. She emphasized the importance of ongoing engagement, evaluation, and adaptation of the benefits program to meet community needs, drawing on her 30 years of experience in housing, healthcare, and human services.

J. DeSoto, a lifelong dirt bike racer and son of Frenchie DeSoto shared his personal journey and strong support for motorsports development in Hawai'i. At 78 years old, he was preparing to compete in a 24-hour motorcycle race in California, continuing a career that had taken him around the world, including stints in Czechoslovakia, Barcelona, and Tahiti. Despite suffering numerous injuries, including a broken back and multiple concussions, he remained passionate and credited motorsports with giving him purpose and

motivation. He lamented the lack of local facilities for motorsports, especially for young people riding electric bikes and cars, and called for a collaborative, win-win effort to restore opportunities.

Commissioner Ornellas inquired whether the agreed-upon revenue shares were standard practice, noting uncertainty about whether the question should be addressed to the department or the developers. R. Kaupu responded that he would address that matter during the executive session.

Commissioner Kaneakua asked for clarification as to the purpose of entering executive session, noting public concerns about decisions being made privately. R. Kaupu explained that both the department and the developer requested an executive session to review the full contract confidentially. He emphasized that this was the first of approximately ten development projects being advanced, with two others already in progress. He stated that certain negotiated terms in the current agreement were sensitive and revealing them could harm the department's negotiating position with other potential partners. Additionally, the developer had proprietary information in the contract that they wished to keep confidential due to competition from other parties pursuing similar ventures. Commissioner Kaneakua affirmed that decisions would not be made in secret and, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, any decisions would be disclosed to the public after the executive session.

Public Testimony – Senator Kurt Fevella – He voiced strong opposition to the proposed motorsports development, criticizing the lack of transparency and community consultation. He questioned the financial arrangements and land use decisions made by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, particularly concerning the leasing of valuable property to PASHA for minimal returns, while excluding beneficiaries from fair opportunities. He expressed skepticism about the developer's credibility, referencing past failed ventures and doubting their ability to deliver on promises. He argued that the proposal lacked meaningful support for dirt racing and failed to address the needs of local racers who had been sidelined since the track's closure. He also raised concerns about environmental impacts, traffic congestion, and the misleading portrayal of community benefits, emphasizing that the true value of the land—estimated at \$500 million—was being undermined. He concluded by urging Commissioners to reconsider the project and prioritize genuine benefits for the Hawaiian community.

Public Testimony - Cora Schnackenberg - expressed strong opposition to the C-2 proposal. She cited Act 187 and H.R.S. 92.5 to emphasize the legal requirements for consultation and transparency and criticized the Commission for overlooking key aspects of HHCA 220.5, including its provisions for commercial homesteads and multi-use development. She argued that the focus on entertainment was misplaced, especially when the community needed support for food and medical sustainability, and rehabilitation. She also stressed that proper beneficiary consultation had been neglected, noting that a single meeting was insufficient and that a thorough process was essential. Drawing from her experience with the 'Ualapu'e Settlement Plan on Moloka'i, she questioned why procedural standards were being ignored in current development agreements and urged Commissioners to prioritize the true needs of the Hawaiian people.

Public Testimony – Germaine Meyers - testified about the need to consider local community needs in the proposed motorsports development. She referenced a recent transportation town hall with Representative Darius Kila and state and city officials, where concerns were raised about speeding and the lack of safe venues for racing. She emphasized that while the project aimed to be world-class, it must also be affordable and accessible for locals to prevent street racing and ensure community benefit. She also noted the upcoming Pa'ākea Extension and fears it could be misused as a raceway, similar to other highways. She urged Commissioners to prioritize local opportunities and affordability in their deliberations.

Public Testimony – Homelani Schaedel – expressed appreciation for the clarity and detail in the C2 presentation, noting it was more informative than C1 and helpful for beneficiaries like herself. She shared personal experience with the land in question, including her family's use of PASHA storage during her son's military service. H. Schaedel asked about the lease term, which R. Kaupu confirmed was 65 years, and acknowledged challenges the department faced in monitoring leaseholders. She raised environmental concerns, referencing the presence of pueo (Hawaiian owl) near homesteads and past issues with Kalaeloa

Raceway Park, including a 2015 Department of Health cleanup order and legal action against SORT. She also highlighted a recent announcement by Mayor Blangiardi about a separate 20-acre motorsports site at Kalaeloa, questioning why DHHL was not involved in that land transfer and expressing concern over overlapping efforts for motorsports recreation.

R. Kaupu noted that the developer wished to respond to a question raised by H. Schaedel. M. Woody-Oakland explained that after meeting with Mayor Blangiardi, they decided not to include dirt components in their proposed parcel because the city was already addressing that aspect of motorsports on its own site. He emphasized that their development would focus solely on paved surfaces, allowing for complementary and coordinated uses across Kalaeloa. Chair Watson acknowledged the clarification, and R. Kaupu added that previous issues had stemmed from dirt-based operations.

Public Testimony – Kamaehu Keone of Ka’uluokaha’i testified that although he had reviewed Legacy Ventures’ slides and community benefits agreements (CBAs), he had never been contacted by them, which was why he did not know the organization personally. He emphasized the need for safe spaces for keiki to ride e-bikes off public roads. He expressed disappointment over the lack of outreach and transparency, especially given his leadership role. He urged Commissioners to note that despite claims of community engagement, Legacy had not reached out to him or the president of Kaupea, and he was still waiting for an invitation to participate in discussions about the CBA.

Public Testimony – Faith Chase – expressed strong opposition to the proposal, citing concerns over the lack of beneficiary consultation and objecting to the use of executive session. She questioned the transparency of the process, especially if Legacy Ventures was the only group to submit a proposal, and was confused about the need to protect proprietary information. Chase raised concerns about the potential displacement of existing beneficiary businesses and operations, including those involved in workforce development programs that support justice-involved Native Hawaiians. She acknowledged the importance of conducting a proper environmental impact statement, especially regarding the pueo, but emphasized that even small-scale displacements mattered. Reflecting on her past involvement and noting Russell’s shift from Commissioner to his current role, she found the situation puzzling and reiterated the critical need for thorough and inclusive beneficiary outreach.

Public Testimony – Kainoa Lei MacDonald - representing the Association of Hawaiians for Homestead Lands, testified that the proposed Project Developer Agreement (PDA) lacked key elements required by Section 22.5 of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, including definitions for commercial, homestead, and multi-purpose projects and safeguards for land improvements. She urged the Commission to seek clarity and emphasized that existing models, such as SCHHA Mokupuni Council and developments in Maui and Kapolei, had built trust through consistent beneficiary consultation. MacDonald advocated bringing project discussions directly to affected islands to ensure meaningful input and criticized the use of executive session under HRS 92.5, stating the project was not pono. It did not result in awards for waitlisted beneficiaries. She concluded by urging the Commission to uphold the law and defer the project for further input.

Public Testimony – Sherry Cummings – testified that projects should not be considered solely by the island but should benefit all Native Hawaiians statewide. She supported the idea that revenue-generating projects on Oahu could help reduce the waitlist of 29,000 across all islands. Cummings shared personal reflections, including her brother’s past leadership in motorbike riding, which she believed built strong community character. She raised concerns about the county’s involvement with a 20-acre parcel intended for grassroots racing, fearing that if the county’s project failed, there would be no space left for community members in the larger professional racing development. She urged Commissioners to carve out land for those without current options and to include the voices of waitlisters in decision-making.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaneakua, seconded by Commissioner Lasua, to convene in an executive meeting pursuant to Section 92-5(a)(4), HRS, to consult with its

attorney on questions and issues pertaining to the Commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities. The motion was carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION IN

1:13 PM

The Commission convened an executive meeting pursuant to Section 92-5(a)(4), HRS, to consult with its attorney on questions and issues pertaining to the Commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities on the following matter:

1. Item C-2 For Information Only – Approval of Project Developer Agreement with LEGACY VENTURES LLC for an Industrial-Commercial Mixed-Use Development Including Raceway - 139.297-acre Parcel in Kalaeloa, Oahu, TMK (1) 9-1-013:061

EXECUTIVE SESSION OUT

2:19 PM

The Commission continued with agenda item C2. After presentations in both open and executive sessions, Chair Watson called for a motion.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Lasua to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

ITEM C-3 Acceptance of the 2025 Annual Performance Report (APR) - Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant.

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

NAHASDA Government Relations Program Manager Lehua Kinilau-Cano presented the following:
Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission to the Acceptance of the 2025 Annual Performance Report (APR) - Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant.

DISCUSSION

L. Kinilau-Cano presented the 2025 Annual Performance Report for the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant, requesting its approval for transmittal to HUD. She explained that funding had grown from \$9 million to \$22.3 million and was targeted toward households earning no more than 80% of the area median income. NAHASDA funds supported infrastructure, planning for homestead projects like Ewa Beach, and developer financing to help secure low-income housing tax credits. In recent years, millions were committed to projects such as La'i Opua and East Kapolei, resulting in dozens of affordable single-family homes.

L. Kinilau-Cano highlighted homeowner financing partnerships with Habitat for Humanity, enabling families to secure homes with low or zero-interest loans. She detailed repair efforts in older homesteads, rental subsidies for 81 kupuna in Waimānalo, and a transitional housing facility for homeless beneficiaries on O‘ahu. Additional funds were used for water infrastructure and acquiring pre-built units to accelerate housing availability. She noted that increased demand for homeowner financing had pushed spending beyond the current \$7 million ceiling, prompting a request to the legislature to raise it to \$30 million to continue meeting beneficiary needs

Commissioner Ornellas praised the NAHASDA report’s thoroughness and the department’s work but expressed concern that Davis-Bacon wage requirements and the ban on self-builds hinder lessees, especially on Kaua‘i. Many families were eager to participate but couldn’t find contractors willing to meet wage rules. L. Kinilau-Cano explained the wage mandate is federal and can only be changed by Congress but noted that low-interest loans keep payments affordable. She cited success in PMKK and plans to expand the contractor list. Commissioner Ornellas suggested workshops to educate and recruit contractors, and L. Kinilau-Cano confirmed one is planned by year’s end, adding that better understanding could benefit both builders and workers.

Commissioner Kaneakua emphasized the importance of using NAHASDA funds to support economic literacy programs and help beneficiaries understand available resources. L. Kinilau-Cano responded that all families receiving NAHASDA assistance were required to complete housing counseling, currently provided by CNHA (formerly Hawaiian Council). She explained that this counseling helped families prepare for homeownership, especially those unfamiliar with mortgage payments, addressing the issue of “mortgage shock.”

Chair Watson discussed the department’s exploration of modular manufacturing as an innovative strategy to reduce housing costs, noting that factory workers are exempt from Davis-Bacon wage requirements, which could lower expenses. He acknowledged the high cost of labor and materials but emphasized the department’s creative financing efforts, citing the \$155 million Bowl-O-Drone project, which was funded through \$80 million in private activity bonds, \$41.7 million from the Rental Housing Revolving Fund, \$9.4 million in federal and state tax credits, and gap financing from Bank of Hawaii. This enabled early construction of a 23-story, 178-unit high-rise to serve over 11,000 wait-listed individuals. Watson highlighted similar efforts in Waipouli with 82 townhouses and plans for more high-rises statewide. He praised L. Kinilau-Cano and her team for securing \$22.7 million in NAHASDA funds over three years.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Ornellas, seconded by Commissioner Lasua to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A’OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini			X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu’o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas	X		X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

ITEM C-4 Approval of 2026 Legislative Proposals

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

NAHASDA Government Relations Program Specialists Oriana Leao presented the following: Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission to the Approval of 2026 Legislative Proposals.

O. Leao explained that the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) had drafted proposals that would undergo review by the Attorney General, Budget and Finance, and the Governor's Policy Team. The Commission retained the authority to amend or withdraw proposals during this phase. DHHL received 21 recommendations and narrowed them to 13 draft proposals, five of which were selected for potential inclusion in the Governor's package: housing development, land transfers, loan guarantee increases, lease conditions for criminal activity, and low-income housing tax credits.

She also summarized all 13 proposals, which included tax exemptions for DHHL housing and development projects, DHHL oversight of historic preservation reviews, and adding DHHL leadership to HHFDC and HCDA boards. Other proposals requested \$20 million for geothermal resource exploration, authorized land transfers from state agencies to DHHL, and increased the loan guarantee cap from \$100 million to \$500 million. Additional proposals sought funding for economic development under Act 96, amended lease conditions to prohibit criminal activity, expanded lease successorship to include nieces and nephews, raised the transient accommodation tax by one percent to support DHHL's General Loan Fund, and converted the Rental Housing Revolving Fund into low-interest home loans for DHHL projects using LIHTC. O. Leao concluded by offering to answer questions.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kaneakua expressed strong support for Proposal 10, which addressed criminal and illegal activity on Hawaiian Home Lands. He emphasized the importance of not tolerating such behavior and stated that lessees who engage in criminal activity should bear the liability themselves, rather than the department. He appreciated the inclusion of this proposal and commended the work done on the legislative package.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Lasua to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: ☒ UNANIMOUS ☐ PASSED ☐ DEFERRED ☐ FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

LAND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

ITEM E-1 Approval of Lease Award – Lālāmilo Subdivision Pre-Owned Residential Offering - Kamuela, Hawai‘i

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Acting LDD Administrator Kalani Fronda, Housing Project Branch Manager Michelle Hitzeman and Engineer 5 Neil Nugent presented the following:

Motion that the Hawaiian Homes Commission to the Approval of Lease Award – Lālāmilo Subdivision Pre-Owned Residential Offering - Kamuela, Hawai‘i.

M. Hitzeman recommended approval of 99-year lot lease awards in the Lālāmilo subdivision to the listed applicants. The approval was contingent upon the applicants' purchasing existing improvements on the lots through either a loan or cash.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Lasua to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

ITEM E-2 **Approval of MOA with County of Kauai, Board of Water Supply, regarding use of the Anahola interconnection that Links DHHL's Anahola Water System and KBWS's Anahola Water System**

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Acting LDD Administrator Kalani Fronda and Engineer V Neil Nugent presented the following:

Motion that the Hawaiian Homes Commission to the Approval of MOA with the County of Kauai, Board of Water Supply (KWBS), regarding the use of the Anahola interconnection that links DHHL's Anahola Water System and KBWS's Anahola Water System.

K. Fronda explained that the Anahola water system served around 45 farm lots and 30 residential lots with potable water from a single well, without a backup source. In the 1990s, the department built an interconnection near Kuhio Highway and Hokualele Road to allow reciprocal water sharing between DHHL and KBWS. A 1995 agreement governed emergency use of this interconnection, and the proposed new agreement expanded responsibilities for maintenance, repair, and replacement of the pipeline and related infrastructure. He outlined five key benefits: addressing emergency deficiencies, shared maintenance duties, cooperation for safe drinking water, mutual payment for water usage based on published rates, and provision of agency contact information. KBWS had approved the agreement on November 21, 2024. The agreement

aimed to enhance health and safety for DHHL Homestead lessees by ensuring emergency backup water from KBWS. He also referenced the July 2014 Water Policy Plan, which supported the development of alternative water sources. K. Fronda concluded by respectfully requesting approval of the motion.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ornellas inquired whether any agreement specified the frequency of water testing, such as whether samples are sent monthly like private well owners do, and requested clarification on the scientific process behind water testing in light of the planned interconnection between the county and the department. K. Fronda responded that there was currently no established matrix or framework regarding water quality monitoring, but acknowledged that discussions had taken place between KBWS and the department to explore how monitoring and communication could be clarified. He offered to follow up with the planning office and engineering team to determine what monitoring procedures and language existed related to the question asked.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Marfil, seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini			X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua		X	X			
Commissioner Lasua			X			
Commissioner Marfil	X		X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

LAND MANAGEMENT DIVISION

ITEM F-1 Approval to Extension of Lease Terms Scheduled to Expire for various General Leases, Kaei Hana I Industrial Subdivision, Waiakea, South Hilo, Island of Hawaii, TMK Nos. (3) 2-2-060:084, (3) 2-2-060:046, (3) 2-2-060:055, (3) 2-2-060:017, (3) 2-2-060:016

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

LMD Income Property Manager Kahana Albinio presented the following:

Motion that the Hawaiian Homes Commission to the approval to Extension of Lease Terms Scheduled to Expire for various General Leases, Kaei Hana I Industrial Subdivision, Waiakea, South Hilo, Island of Hawaii

K. Albino explained that the recommended action was for the Hawaiian Homes Commission to approve a 10-year extension to the lease term and a modification of the ground lease rent, as authorized under Chapter 171-36B of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes. This amendment would result in a total lease term of 65 years, combining the original 55-year term with the new 10-year extension, for each of the general lessees located within the Kaei Hana Industrial and Kaei Hana 1 Industrial Subdivision in South Hilo. The approval was to be subject to ten listed conditions.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kaleikini asked whether all tenants were in compliance with rent and other requirements, and whether they had been consistent in doing so. K. Albinio confirmed that all tenants were up to date and had maintained consistent compliance. The motion was then put to a vote, received unanimous approval, and was carried.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Lasua to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: ☒ UNANIMOUS ☐ PASSED ☐ DEFERRED ☐ FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

PLANNING OFFICE

ITEM G-3 Accept the Beneficiary Consultation Report for the Hawaiian Islands Fiber Link land use request for an easement at TMK: (3) 2-1-011:005 (por.)

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Acting Planning Program Manager Lillianne Makaila presented the following:

Motion that the Hawaiian Homes Commission accept the Beneficiary Consultation Report for the Hawaiian Islands Fiber Link land use request for an easement at TMK: (3) 2-1-011:005.

L. Makaila presented the beneficiary consultation report for the Hawai'i Island Fiber Link land use request, which involved a proposed easement of approximately 122 square feet along Puhi Bay. She asked the Commission to accept the report as complete, explaining that a long-term land disposition for non-homesteading use triggered the consultation. The in-person consultation took place at Keaukaha Elementary on July 8, and outreach included sending 2,590 postcards to Hilo beneficiaries—both applicants and lessees. A project website was created to host meeting materials. Around 20 people attended, with 14 identifying as beneficiaries, though no official letters of support or commentary were received from beneficiary organizations. No comments were submitted during the 30-day comment period. Beneficiaries raised concerns about how the project would benefit the trust and homesteaders, the impacts of construction and cable removal, and compliance with Chapters 343 and 6E, which were still pending. They also questioned service quality improvements and suggested pathways for homesteaders to engage in the broadband industry through workforce training and collaboration with the university. She also clarified that the Commission's action was to confirm completion of the consultation process, not to approve the project itself.

Commissioner Kaneakua remarked on the low turnout of 20 attendees from 2,600 postcard recipients, acknowledging that many beneficiaries face challenges attending meetings, and asked how else they could submit input. L. Makaila responded that a standard 30-day comment period followed the in-person

consultation, with options to email, call, or mail comments. She noted that while two people called with questions, neither submitted formal comments. Others she spoke with at the airport indicated awareness of the process but did not plan to attend. She expressed confidence that beneficiaries were informed, even if the topic did not generate strong engagement. Commissioner Kaneakua emphasized the importance of outreach and praised L. Makaila's efforts, recognizing the challenges of conducting consultations with limited staff and affirming the Commission's commitment to community engagement. She also added that the report had been ready but was respectfully held until the Commission could present it in person on the island. Chair Watson then called for a vote, and the motion was unanimously carried.

LAND MANAGEMENT DIVISION

ITEM F-2 **Approval to Issue Right of Entry Permit to Hawaiian Island Fiber Link LLC ("HIFL"), Keaukaha, Island of Hawaii, TMK No.: (3) 2-1-011:005 (por.)**

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Income Property Manager Kahana Albinio and Land Agent Andrew Sante presented the following: Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission for Approval to Issue Right of Entry Permit to Hawaiian Island Fiber Link LLC ("HIFL"), Keaukaha, Island of Hawaii.

DISCUSSION

A. Sante explained that the recommended action was to authorize a one-year Right of Entry (ROE) permit for HIFL to conduct due diligence and apply for necessary permits on approximately 122 square feet of Hawaiian Home Lands in Keaukaha, with an option to extend for another year under the same terms. The ROE would not be executed until beneficiary consultation requirements were completed, which had just been fulfilled. The Commission was also asked to approve a \$20,700 fee for the one-year ROE term, grant conditional approval for a future non-benefit license agreement subject to permit approvals and rental rate determination, authorize the chair to negotiate and execute the ROE and license agreement in the trust's best interest, and allow the chair and Commission to prescribe any additional prudent terms.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Lasua to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

PLANNING OFFICE

ITEM G-1 Accept the Beneficiary Consultation Report on Proposed Amendments to Hawai‘i Administrative Rules relating to Pilina-Based Priority and Lessee Leave of Absence.

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Acting Planning Program Manager Lillianne Makaila and Planner V Julie Cachola presented the following: Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission to Accept the Beneficiary Consultation Report on Proposed Amendments to Hawai‘i Administrative Rules relating to Pilina-Based Priority and Lessee Leave of Absence.

J. Cachola explained that the beneficiary consultation process involved 17 in-person and five virtual meetings, each documented in detailed reports she distributed to the Commissioners. The reports included meeting dates, attendance, number of comments, and categorized feedback. She emphasized that comments were often more meaningful than attendance numbers and noted that the reports also contained participant status and visual data like pie charts to show composition.

She highlighted strong conceptual support for the Pilina-based priority wait list, which gives preference to lineal descendants, aligning with Hawaiian values of kuleana and ancestral connection to land. Beneficiaries understood and agreed with the intent, though concerns remained about implementation details, especially regarding the existing wait list. One proposed method to prove Pilina was to trace genealogy through historical records, a process that would be explained further by Kaipo.

The Pilina proposal outlined three ways to demonstrate connection to a homestead: current or past residency, ancestral ties through a living relative, or genealogical lineage. While beneficiaries supported the concept, many felt the process was too complex and worried it would unfairly prioritize new applicants over those already on the waitlist. To address this, a 20-year residency requirement was proposed to ensure genuine community ties, and amendments were suggested to limit applicants to one Pilina claim and apply the Pilina waitlist only to kuleana homesteads. The strong demand for kuleana homesteads across communities reflected indirect support for the Pilina concept.

Regarding the leave of absence rule, beneficiaries expressed strong opposition, viewing it as invasive and overly restrictive. Concerns included privacy, caretaker qualifications, and the broader issue of abandoned homes leading to unauthorized occupancy and community disruption. Beneficiaries urged DHHL to conduct audits to identify which lessees were actively occupying their lots and to use data-driven enforcement rather than imposing blanket rules. They emphasized that the issue was not just enforcement but lease management, and that future proposals should be backed by clear rationale and community impact data.

Chair Watson explained that the rule amendments were designed to give Native Hawaiians preference in homesteading areas like Hana, King’s Landing, Miloli‘i, and Kahana Valley. He noted that agencies like DLNR and OHA had approached DHHL about transferring lands, but OHA lacked leasing authority. He emphasized that many DLNR lessees lacked entitlements and survivorship rights, and DHHL could offer better terms, including long leases and access to resources. Chair Watson recommended changing the residency requirement from 20 to 18 years to align with mortgage eligibility. Additionally, the rules would be expanded beyond kuleana areas to include improved lots, allowing for broader application in future homestead communities.

He further stressed that these rule changes were not yet finalized and would require further beneficiary consultation. He acknowledged that some ideas were new and might be received differently across communities. He highlighted that Native Hawaiians with expired DLNR leases were sometimes treated unfairly and that transferring lands to DHHL could correct this by offering proper leases and support. J. Cachola asked if the rules would apply beyond kuleana areas, and Chair Watson confirmed they should include improved lots to ensure communities with existing infrastructure were not excluded.

L. Makaila clarified that the pushback received during consultations was specifically related to rulemaking for leave of absence and caretaker provisions. At the same time, there was overwhelming support for moving forward with rulemaking based on Pilina. She explained that beneficiaries questioned the necessity of formal rules for leave of absence, noting that the current process, handled on a case-by-case basis at the Chair's discretion, was sufficient and not overly burdensome. Most beneficiaries preferred to approach the department when needed rather than have the department impose rules. Chair Watson agreed, stating that the leave of absence process should remain administrative, with decisions made quickly and simply at his discretion to avoid unnecessary complications.

J. Garcia explained that the current rules under section 10-2-16 delegate authority to the Chairperson to approve leave of absence requests. Still, they do not provide any criteria or conditions for making such decisions. He noted that this lack of guidance could be problematic for future Chairs. Chair Watson responded that he did not feel burdened by responsibility and preferred to keep the process simple and efficient rather than shifting it to the Commission, which would require a rule change. L. Makaila asked about the frequency of such requests, and Garcia confirmed they were very rare, indicating it was not a significant administrative issue. He expressed comfort with maintaining the current process unless the Commissioners preferred otherwise.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kaleikini explained that the Leave of Absence (LOA) rule discussion stemmed from beneficiary complaints about non-lessees occupying homestead homes, prompting the creation of a Permitted Interaction Group. Chair Watson noted that such concerns were more about enforcement than rulemaking, and consultation feedback showed beneficiaries opposed new LOA rules. J. Cachola added that while beneficiaries valued the ability to retain their lease during absences, they wanted a simple process. Commissioner Kaleikini supported that but pointed out the lack of formal criteria, as decisions were solely at the Chair's discretion.

Commissioner Kaleikini emphasized that lessees are required to occupy their homes, and violations were common. J. Garcia added that past practice focused on the lessee being directly affected. Still, consultations supported expanding leave eligibility to include family members listed in section 209, allowing lessees to request leave to accompany impacted relatives.

Commissioner Ornellas shared her concerns about the Pilina-based proposal, drawing from her attendance at meetings in Anahola and Kekaha. She noted that the initiative stemmed from communities like Hana, King's Landing, and possibly Pu'u'opae, which have unique but similar dynamics. She emphasized that there is already a waitlist with tens of thousands of names and questioned the need to create a new Pilina-based list, which could complicate the process and potentially unintentionally exclude groups.

She specifically highlighted the impact on the Ni'ihau 'ohana, many of whom have been transient between islands for generations and may not be able to claim Pilina to areas like Kekaha or Waimea. Commissioner Ornellas advocated for community-specific Pilina policies rather than broad legislation, warning that sweeping rules could exclude long-standing Native Hawaiian families and expose the department to legal challenges. She stressed that while the intent was to include, the result could be exclusion, and urged careful consideration to avoid unintended harm, especially to the Ni'ihau community.

L. Makaila acknowledged the difficulty in summarizing the diverse perspectives from 21 beneficiary consultations and commended Julie for providing a comprehensive overview. She highlighted Waimānalo on O'ahu as an area with a unique response, noting that residents were disheartened by their exclusion from kuleana homesteading opportunities despite being born and raised in older homestead communities. This reaction contrasted with the views of the Ni'ihau 'ohana in Kekaha, illustrating the wide range of sentiments surrounding the issue. Lehua Makaila emphasized the complexity of the topic and noted that further administrative rule amendments and testimonies were forthcoming.

J. Garcia explained that the Pilina-based administrative rule was originally intended only for kuleana lots, and expanding it to all awardable lots would place a significant burden on HSD staff due to the increased research required to verify applicant eligibility. He emphasized that limiting the rule to kuleana lots was a practical compromise to manage workload.

Public Testimony – Skippy Ioane- expressed deep appreciation for the department, saying it had taught him patience through years of waiting. He strongly supported the Pilina-based proposal, viewing it as a lifeline for struggling communities like Ni‘ihau and the Big Island, which he described as “dying together.” He emphasized the emotional toll of waiting and urged leaders to take bold action, comparing leadership to fishing, saying one must jump in the water, not wait on shore. He closed with heartfelt support for Pilina as a way to stop the decline, shared personal reflections, and warmly acknowledged Linda Chinn.

Public Testimony – Ainaaloha Ioane - thanked the department for supporting Kuleana subsistence homesteading and emphasized that the Pilina-based administrative rule change would help preserve their rural lifestyle, cultural traditions, and generational connection to the ‘āina. He explained that the change would strengthen their community’s settlement plan, offer comfort to kupuna, and ensure successors could return home. She stressed that expanding paper leases would protect King’s Landing from non-beneficiary encroachment and confirmed strong support from residents, naming several who wished to attend but couldn’t stay through the meeting.

Public Testimony - Gracie Flores - testified in support of Items G1 and G2, urging preference for King's Landing residents in lease awards. She shared her family's deep ties to the ‘āina, noting her grandfather William Kulakauka Pakani had stewarded the land since the 1960s and helped found the association in 1982. Flores, now a grandmother, emphasized her kuleana to pass down traditional practices and protect the sacred land. She quoted her grandfather’s 1977 statement detailing years of labor to develop the land for subsistence, and called for continued support of the rule change.

Public Testimony – Sherri Cummings - who had been vocal during Kaua‘i consultations, advocated for Ni‘ihau’s inclusion due to her lineal ties and Pilina to the island. She cited historical records from 1853 linking Ni‘ihau to the Kona Moku and Hanapepe River region, emphasizing her kupuna’s subsistence practices across those lands. She challenged assumptions about Ni‘ihau’s barrenness, highlighting its past agricultural success, and stressed that Ni‘ihau and Pu‘u ‘Opae were geographically distinct.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaneakua, seconded by Commissioner Lasua to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A’OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua		X	X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu’o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

ITEM G-2

Approval to Proceed to Public Hearing for a Proposed Administrative Rule to Establish a Priority Waitlist for Applicants with a Connection to a Place (Pilina-based Priority)

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Acting Planning Program Manager Lillianne Makaila and Cultural Resource Specialists Ku'upua Mossman presented the following:

Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission to Approval to Proceed to Public Hearing for a Proposed Administrative Rule to Establish a Priority Waitlist for Applicants with a Connection to a Place (Pilina-based Priority).

K. Mossman presented a detailed overview of the Pilina-based administrative rule amendment, explaining that it was developed in response to five years of DHHL planning and extensive beneficiary consultations. The rule aimed to prioritize Native Hawaiian beneficiaries with deep connections to rural communities, particularly in areas designated for Kuleana homesteads. She noted that the initial draft left the definition of “wahi” (place) broad, but due to varied interpretations and feedback, the term was removed and replaced with a process allowing each community to define its place through settlement plans. This change was intended to better include communities like Ni‘ihau in areas such as Pu‘u ‘Ōpae.

She addressed three major themes from the consultations: connection to place, residency qualifications, and application clarity. She explained that the rule was revised to eliminate the pathway allowing applicants to qualify through a family member’s residency, as it diluted the intent of place-based knowledge. Residency was further defined to require at least one generation, later clarified as 18 years. The application process was clarified to show that the Pilina-based wait list was optional, tied to specific settlements, and limited to one application per offering. If an applicant was not awarded a lot, they could return to the general wait list and reapply elsewhere. K. Mossman concluded by outlining the next steps, including internal reviews, legal evaluations, and eventual submission for public hearing and publication.

Chair Watson shared a personal experience from before his time with the department, when he tried to help a Waimānalo resident living in a bus by building a home, but was blocked due to the absence of formal rules. He expressed concern about limiting oversight and emphasized the urgency of expanding the administrative rule to include not just Kuleana homesteads but broader rural Hawaiian communities, some of which already had infrastructure but were restricted by DLNR leases that lacked succession rights and homesteading benefits. He noted DLNR’s receptiveness to conversion and highlighted the advantages of longer leases and access to loan products. To expedite support and avoid tragic delays, he proposed amending the rule to remove the term “Kuleana,” apply it to all homesteads, and reduce the residency requirement from 20 to 18 years. He then made a motion to approve these changes, which was seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Lasua raised the issue of the Ni‘ihau people, prompting Chair Watson to clarify that the Commission must identify specific areas for applying the lineal descent criteria. He questioned whether places like Ke‘anae and Hana had been officially designated. K. Mossman responded that only areas slated for Kuleana homesteads had been identified, not those outside that scope. Chair Watson then asked whether lineal descent for Ni‘ihau beneficiaries would be tied specifically to Hanapepe or extend beyond it.

Commissioner Kaneakua emphasized the importance of including individuals with direct ties to Kaua‘i, stating they should not be excluded from opportunities. Chair Watson agreed and suggested that this concern be addressed through an amendment. Commissioner Kaneakua recommended formally including Ni‘ihau in the motion related to Kuleana homesteads. Chair Watson supported the idea and proposed adding a catch-all provision to the rules to cover other areas like Kahuna Valley and any additional regions not yet identified but deemed suitable for homesteading.

L. Makaila explained that settlement plans typically defined areas and their connection to place, making them suitable for implementing homesteading policies. Chair Watson noted that the areas he referred to were

already settled with infrastructure and proposed converting DLNR leases in Hawaiian villages into homestead leases to provide better terms and succession rights. He emphasized that non-Native Hawaiians could retain their DLNR leases until expiration, at which point conversion could occur, as in the Waimānalo case.

MOTION/ACTION to AMEND

Commissioner Ornellas moved, and Commissioner Kaneakua seconded to amend the motion that the Pilina-based waitlist would apply to all homestead awards. The motion on the amendment was approved unanimously. Chair Watson asked for a vote on the main motion as amended.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Chair Watson, seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini		X	X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua			X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson	X		X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

ITEM G-4 Adopt the Final Waimea Nui Regional Plan Update 2025

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Acting Planning Program Manager Lillianne Makaila presented the following:

Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission to Adopt the Final Waimea Nui Regional Plan Update 2025.

L. Makaila noted that the previous plan was over 15 years old and that the Waimea Nui region had worked diligently to revise it. The planning process included a leadership meeting early in the year, followed by four beneficiary consultations held between April and August, with strong community participation and input. Priority project voting occurred in late June, and feedback from the consultations was incorporated into the final version. She reminded Commissioners that the draft had been presented the previous month and confirmed that the plan was now ready for approval. A motion was made by Commissioner Marfil and seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini, with one public testimony scheduled.

Public Testimony – Mike Hodson - agreed with Skippy Ioane about the lengthy nature of the regional planning process. He explained that the original intent of the regional plan, based on HART 10-6, was focused on rehabilitating Native Hawaiians, but over time, it became cluttered with unrelated issues like land management and development due to the department's limited involvement. He emphasized that infrastructure and land placement were the department's kuleana, while beneficiaries were responsible for shaping the regional plan to support self-sufficiency and self-determination. He also noted that updating such extensive plans every two years was unrealistic and that the process had become convoluted. He praised planner L. Makaila for her exceptional organization and ability to keep meetings focused and timely. He highlighted the vast scope of their region, covering nearly 85,000 acres with diverse land types and an active homestead community, and closed by commending the planning staff for their dedication.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Marfil, seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini		X	X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua			X			
Commissioner Marfil	X		X			
Commissioner Namu'o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: ☒ UNANIMOUS ☐ PASSED ☐ DEFERRED ☐ FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

ITEM G-5 Approve the Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation's County water credit allocation request for TMK (3) 6-4-038-011:0000, Waimea, Pu'ukapu, Hawai'i Island

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Acting Planning Program Manager Lillianne Makaila and Program Specialists IV Cherie Kaanana presented the following:

Motion the Hawaiian Homes Commission to Approve the Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation's County water credit allocation request for TMK (3) 6-4-038-011:0000, Waimea, Pu'ukapu, Hawai'i Island.

C. Kaanana requested approval for Waimea Nui CDC to receive up to 32 county water credits. The request was tied to the Waimea Nui Community Development Initiative Master Plan, which had been conceptualized for over 40 years and prioritized in both the 2012 and 2025 DHHL regional plans. A 65-year lease was approved in 2015, and in 2023, a federal grant was awarded to support infrastructure near military installations. The water credits, equivalent to future water meters, were part of DHHL's broader water policy plan adopted in 2014 to address the challenges of dry and remote homestead lands.

Waimea's CDC's request represented about 20% of the domestic water needs for the first phase of development, leaving 150 credits remaining from the original 741 allocated for Lālāmilo and Pu'ukapu. Although Waimea CDC fell under priority F in the water allocation policy, exception B allowed approval if no higher-priority homesteading plans were expected within four years. Due to development constraints at Lālāmilo and no plans for Pu'ukapu, the Commission was asked to approve the allocation. Support was noted from Hawai'i County Department of Water Supply and community representatives present.

L. Makaila thanked Kawika Uehara, Deputy Director of Hawai'i County Department of Water Supply, for his assistance with the Waimea Nui water credit request. K. Uehara addressed the Hawaiian Homes Commission to express full support for the request and DHHL staff's recommendation, emphasizing the value of collaboration between Hawai'i DWS and DHHL across both Hawai'i Island and O'ahu. He reaffirmed their commitment to supporting DHHL's mission wherever possible. Chair Watson responded with appreciation, highlighting the importance of continued cooperation in advancing residential and infrastructure projects, and thanked Deputy Uehara for attending.

Commissioner Kaleikini expressed appreciation for K. Uehara and the Department of Water Supply, noting their responsiveness and support.

Public Testimony – Mike Hodson - expressed gratitude to the Department of Water Supply (DWS), noting their collaboration since 2012 to address water delivery challenges in the county. He explained that the large parcel of land involved required significant water resources, which might exceed the county’s capacity. To mitigate this, they explored alternatives such as implementing a wastewater treatment system that could produce R1 water—usable for agriculture and sanitation but not for drinking. He also highlighted ongoing discussions over the past decade about drilling wells and reducing strain on county resources. He introduced Pono Asano and Jim to briefly share insights, emphasizing that their community development was extensive, with 119 homesteading parcels already active and nearly 200 more potentially transitioning to sewer systems. He stressed the importance of considering all options, especially in light of water limitations, and suggested that similar approaches might be necessary across homesteads statewide.

Public Testimony – Pono Asano - representing Water Tectonics, expressed gratitude to the Commissioners and Waimea Nui for their outreach and emphasized the importance of wastewater treatment in addressing cesspool conversions and conserving drinking water. He explained that outdated cesspool systems placed future burdens on landowners and advocated for forward-thinking solutions that support long-term development and generational continuity. He described Water Tectonics’ advanced membrane system that produces clean R1 water suitable for agriculture and sanitation, requiring minimal land use. He highlighted their ability to assist with financing, permitting, design, and operations, and stressed the unique opportunity to train DHHL beneficiaries to manage these systems before union regulations take effect. His message centered on empowering communities, preserving land, and supporting Waimea Nui’s development goals.

Commissioner Lasua asked for clarification on the term “R1” water, prompting an explanation that water classifications range from R0, which is ultra-clean with no contaminants, to R2, which has higher bacteria levels and has caused environmental issues such as lawsuits and beach closures. The speaker clarified that their system operated at the lower end of R1, meeting Department of Health standards and offering a safe, high-quality water option for land use. The goal was to ensure community safety and responsible land development.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Lasua, seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A’OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini		X	X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua	X		X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu’o			X			
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			8			1
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED Motion passed unanimously, Eight (8) Yes votes, One (1) Excused						

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

LAND MANAGEMENT DIVISION

ITEM F-3	For Information Only – Aina Mauna Koa Reforestation and Sustainable Koa Forestry Project - Na Kupaa O Kuhio
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RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

None. For Information Only. Income Property Manager Kahana Albinio and Property Development Agent East Hawai'i Kualii Camara presented the following:

K. Camara presented an informational update to the Commission about a proposed sustainable koa forestry project. The initiative aimed to revive a previously planned Climate Smart Commodities Grant project that had been halted due to federal funding cuts. He emphasized the ecological and cultural significance of the Aina Mauna region, particularly its unique Koa ecosystem, which supports aquifers, native birds, and biodiversity. He explained that koa forestry was identified in the 2009 Aina Mauna Legacy Program as the highest and best use of the land, offering both commercial and agricultural benefits while preserving native habitat and watershed functions. The proposed project would cover 500 acres within a 4,700-acre area and involve collaboration with Siglo Tonewoods and the nonprofit Nā Kupa'a Kūhiō.

He reviewed koa harvests from 2004–2010 that successfully regenerated canopy through scarification and noted failed competitive licensing attempts in 2012 and 2014 due to the challenge of balancing commercial, environmental, and beneficiary interests. He proposed a nonprofit partnership license model, similar to Kamehameha Schools, to reinvest koa value into long-term forest sustainability. The project area had already been harvested once, with many trees damaged by cattle; plans included fencing and replanting using advanced forestry methods. He introduced collaborators Nicholas Koch and Neil Hannahs.

Neil Hannahs, president of Nā Kūpā'a Kūhiō, commended the Commission's work and built on K. Camara's groundwork for the sustainable koa project. Drawing from his experience at Kamehameha Schools and the Water Commission, he stressed managing trust lands for economic, cultural, and environmental benefit rather than extraction. He envisioned future homesteads built with locally sourced wood and emphasized regenerative land stewardship.

He described threats such as invasive species and fire, noting Siglo Tonewoods' alignment with community-based forestry. He praised the company's high-value, low-volume koa use, technical expertise, and reinvestment of harvest value into land care. He closed by introducing Nick Koch of Siglo Tonewoods.

Nick Koch explained that Siglo Tonewoods founded in 2015 partners with Kamehameha Schools and others to restore koa forests for instrument wood. They established a seed orchard in Waimea and invested in local processing to reduce out-of-state dependence. Their 1,400-acre Hōnaunau project restored degraded pastureland through fencing and animal removal, reinvesting \$1.4 million and securing \$278,000 in grants. Success there led to a new Keālia license and plans for a Waimea sawmill using thin-sawing technology from Italy to conserve wood and build local industry.

Hannahs added that, at the Chair's request, he helped revive Nā Kūpā'a Kūhiō, originally formed in 2006 for a USDA grant, to again serve as a conduit for grants not directly accessible to the State—particularly in light of the Legislature's \$600 million appropriation. He and former KS colleagues restructured the board to support DHHL's conservation and housing goals.

For this project, Nā Kūpā'a Kūhiō would hold the license and contract Siglo Tonewoods, ensuring community engagement and job creation. Hannahs highlighted the role of *pilina* (connection) to land, emerging industry potential, and enthusiastic support from Keaukaha, Pana'ewa, and Waimea homesteads. He closed by expressing hope for continued collaboration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECESS

Chair Watson announced the conclusion of the day's agenda, thanked everyone for their patience and participation, and reminded attendees about the evening community meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at Keaukaha Elementary School cafeteria in Hilo. He also noted that the next day's agenda would begin at 9:30 a.m. with carryover items. The meeting was then recessed for the day.

RECESS

3:26 PM

HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

Minutes of Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.
Grand Naniloa Hotel, Sandalwood Ballroom, 93 Banyan Drive, Hilo, Hawaii, 96720,
and Interactive Conferencing Technology (ICT) Zoom

PRESENT Kali Watson, Chairperson
 Makai Freitas, West Hawai‘i Commissioner (ICT)
 Sanoë Marfil, O‘ahu Commissioner
 Lawrence Lasua, Moloka‘i Commissioner
 Michael L. Kaleikini, East Hawai‘i Commissioner
 Shaylyn Ornellas, Kauai Commissioner
 Walter Kaneakua, O‘ahu Commissioner

EXCUSED Pauline N. Namu‘o, O‘ahu Commissioner
 Archie Kalepa, Maui Commissioner

COUNSEL Rodney Char, Deputy Attorney General

STAFF Richard Hoke, Executive Assistant to the Chairperson
 Leah Burrows-Nuuanu, Secretary to the Commission
 Juan Garcia, Homestead Services Division Administrator
 Kahana Albinio, Land Management Income Property Manager
 David Hoke, Enforcement Administrator
 Ruby Nuesca, Office Assistant to the Commission

ORDER OF BUSINESS

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:38 am by Chair Kali Watson. Seven (7) members were present in person, two (2) were excused, establishing a quorum.

Chair Kali Watson announced public testimony would be followed by items H1 and H2, then several carryover items (C5, D1, E3, G6–G10). The J Agenda will follow. A lunch recess is scheduled before a contested case hearing at 12:30 PM, with plans to reconvene at 1:30 PM to continue the J Agenda.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

PT-1 Brad Leialoha – Item J-1

B. Leialoha expressed concern for Puhi Bay, where he had grown up fishing with family and learning Hawaiian traditions. He appreciated the Hans group’s efforts but felt many locals lacked respect and understanding of the area. He shared that his mother and siblings were buried in Hawai‘i and emphasized his desire to continue bringing his grandchildren and twenty great-grandchildren to the beach. As a retired Department of Corrections employee, he lamented the decline in the youth work ethic and the poor care of the bay. He hoped the community could rebuild the old Hawaiian village and restore the area’s cultural and natural integrity.

PT-2 DeMont Manaole – Item J-1

Supported Chair Watson’s remarks, urging trust beneficiaries to embrace self-determination as outlined in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. He criticized the habit of relying on the department for minor issues, like broken doors, and emphasized that Native Hawaiians are industrious, not welfare minded. He stressed the need to take personal responsibility for homesteads and warned that a functioning Native Hawaiian governing body could not exist if beneficiaries continued acting like welfare recipients.

PT-3 Alani Tamayose

A resident of Maui raised a concern about the Ho‘okumu grant for the County of Maui, stating she had previously submitted a detailed follow-up question to Leah but never received a response. She was unsure if the Chair or Commissioners had received it. Chair Watson acknowledged the issue, asked her to resend the message, and promised to refer it to the appropriate person for a reply. A. Tamayose confirmed she would send it immediately.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. REGULAR ITEMS

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

ITEM C-5	For Information Only - Status Report of DHHL Enforcement Unit Efforts and Statistics (August 11, 2025 - September 7, 2025)
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RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

None. For Information Only. Enforcement Unit Administrator David Hoke presented the following:

D. Hoke presented a monthly update covering August 11 to September 7. During this period, the unit received 17 investigation requests (127 total for the year), submitted 29 reports (303 total), and issued 21 official correspondences to beneficiaries. The team conducted its first site visit with M. Lambert from the Department of Law Enforcement to install high-tech traffic cameras in Maku‘u. On August 22, they attended a HWMO meeting about wildfire prevention in Nanakuli Valley. Evictions were carried out on August 25 and 29 at a commercial property in Mapunapuna following numerous complaints. Additionally, squatters were removed from a vacant home in Waianae Valley without a writ, thanks to new support from Director Lambert and the AG’s office, marking a more efficient enforcement approach. Monthly beneficiary engagement and interagency collaboration continued, and Hoke planned a workshop to improve the contested case hearing process.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kaneakua acknowledged the Enforcement Unit’s limited manpower, only four staff and one administrator covering 28 locations, and praised their efforts to support homesteaders despite ongoing neighborhood issues. He emphasized the need to strengthen associations to promote self-governance and reduce reactive enforcement. He responded by proposing a mediation system for the next legislative session, noting that many complaints stemmed from personal conflicts rather than lease violations. He believed a neutral party familiar with homestead dynamics could help resolve disputes efficiently, saving resources and addressing long-standing issues. Both Commissioner Kaneakua and Chair Watson thanked D. Hoke and his team for their continued dedication.

Commissioner Ornellas asked about ideal staffing and training needs for the Enforcement Unit. D. Hoke said he needed two investigators per district, three legal assistants, and dedicated support staff due to the high volume of cases. He emphasized that law enforcement experience, investigative skills, and the ability to de-escalate tense situations were essential. Commissioner Ornellas noted that security work now requires state licensing and suggested the Commission should fund necessary certifications. She expressed full support for empowering Hoke’s team with resources and legal tools to strengthen their enforcement role.

Commissioner Lasua asked if additional funding was needed for more personnel, and he confirmed it was necessary. He explained that although Chair Watson had advocated for it, funding requests often failed to pass the legislature. D. Hoke noted that even when granted one or two positions, the unit worked to maximize its impact and demonstrate results. He emphasized the importance of continuing to ask and gradually building capacity. Commissioner Lasua agreed and stressed that Commissioners should begin advocating more strongly for increased budget support, especially as issues on Hawaiian homestead lands continued to grow.

Commissioner Marfil suggested exploring partnerships with retired police officers or reserves, noting Chair Watson’s strong relationship with HPD. D. Hoke responded positively, sharing that one of their staff members, Chad Aoki, was a retired officer with community policing experience and could conduct in-house training. He explained that retired officers must be hired under an 89-day contract to retain their pensions, which can only be renewed a limited number of times—typically six. C. Aoki had completed four renewals, and the team was seeking a “hard to fill” exemption from the Department of Human Resources to allow longer-term employment. Without the exemption, they faced periodic staff turnover despite the benefits of hiring retirees.

Public Testimony – Jojo Tanimoto - followed up on her prior testimony about enforcement concerns in Kawaihae, specifically the fire break and evacuation route outlined in the regional plan. She noted that the community lacked direct communication and relied on meeting reports, unlike the association. She asked whether there had been a follow-up on the promised installation gate, as the subdivision was fenced on three sides with only the highway as an exit. She also raised concerns about the need for an archaeological survey, stating that ongoing activity had not addressed previous impacts. J. Tanimoto emphasized the importance of transparency and said she would raise the issue again during the J-agenda.

Public Testimony – DeMont Manaole - supported D. Hoke and his team’s funding and staffing needs, praising their essential enforcement work. However, he warned against following advice from M. Lambert, who, despite being respected, was not part of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, the Commission, or a licensed attorney. He criticized M. Lambert’s suggestion to bypass the legal ejectment process, calling it a breach of trust that could lead to decades of litigation. He urged the Commission not to let M. Lambert influence policy, stressing that Hawaiian Home Lands must follow proper legal procedures to avoid serious conflict.

ITEMS FOR DECISION MAKING

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OFFICE

ITEM H-2 Approval of Department of Hawaiian Home Lands Supplemental Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 2027 (Sufficient Sums Budget)

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

Deputy to the Chairperson Katie Lambert presented the following:

1. That the Hawaiian Homes Commission (Commission or HHC) approve the Department’s Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27)1 Operating and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget request (Sufficient Sums Budget) to the Governor for consideration in the Administration’s Executive Budget request to the 2026 Hawai’i State Legislature.
2. That the HHC approve the FY27 Operating and CIP budget request for presentation to the 2026 Hawai’i State Legislature.
3. That the HHC authorizes the Chair to revise the Operating and CIP budget request if technical adjustments are needed to address minor errors or omissions before it is incorporated into the Administration’s Executive Budget.

Deputy Lambert explained that the supplemental budget request included 22 new positions, with compliance officers supporting the enforcement team and land agents serving similar roles in district offices. She clarified that DHHL’s enforcement unit evolved from compliance officers in land management and development divisions.

She noted that if the legislature approved the request, neighbor islands could receive both compliance officers and land agents with overlapping functions. She paused to ask if there were questions about personnel or enforcement, and none were raised.

Deputy Lambert addressed Commissioner Ornellas’ earlier question about the “other rentals” line item, explaining that the \$1,764,300 was for debt service on the Kapolei main building, which would continue until 2032. She promised to provide more billing code details once received from the fiscal staff. She then read the recommended action, asking the Commission to approve the fiscal year 2027 operating and capital improvement budget request for submission to the governor and the 2026 legislature. She also requested authorization for the chair to make minor technical adjustments if needed.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ornellas asked about the timeline for the review period mentioned in the third recommendation. Deputy Lambert explained that the budget proposal would be submitted to the governor’s office for review. However, she was unsure of the exact deadline because she had recently received supplemental instructions that she had not yet fully reviewed. She estimated that there would be about four to six weeks available to refine and finalize the submission before sending it to the governor. Commissioner Ornellas asked about the nature of the projects listed for each island, questioning whether they were standing projects and how they compared to previous budgets. She noted the absence of year-over-year data and sought clarification on how categories, such as fire break and maintenance projects in Kaua‘i, were determined. She emphasized the need for analytical comparison rather than simply approving the current proposal.

Deputy Lambert responded that the best way to address her concerns was to provide the fiscal year 2026 budget details. She explained that some of the fiscal year 2027 requests were rollovers from the previous year due to a lack of funding. K. Fronda attempted to adjust the requests by excluding previously trust-funded items and focusing on forward-looking amounts. Deputy Lambert offered to share the settled fiscal year 2026 budget with Commissioner Ornellas, noting that he had not been officially part of the Commission when that information was originally distributed.

Commissioner Ornellas asked if the language in recommended action number three regarding minor errors and omissions allowed for such updates. Chair Watson then called for a vote, and with no further questions or comments, the motion was carried.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Marfil, seconded by Commissioner Kaleikini to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A’OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini		X	X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua			X			
Commissioner Marfil	X		X			
Commissioner Namu’o						X
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			7			2
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Seven (7) Yes votes, Two (2) Excused						

ITEM H-3 Approval to Transfer Hawaiian Home Receipts Fund Balance – End of 1st Quarter, FY26

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

None. For Information Only. Deputy to the Chairperson Katie Lambert presented the following:

Deputy Lambert presented item H3, the routine quarterly request to transfer funds. She recommended that the Commission approve transferring receipts deposited into the Hawaiian Homes Receipts Fund as of September 30, 2025, to the Hawaiian Home General Loan Fund. Commissioner Kaleikini made the motion, Commissioner Marfil seconded it, and with no questions raised, the motion was unanimously approved.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaleikini, seconded by Commissioner Marfil, to approve the motion as stated in the submittal.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini	X		X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua			X			
Commissioner Lasua			X			
Commissioner Marfil		X	X			
Commissioner Namu'o						X
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			7			2
MOTION: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED Motion passed unanimously, Seven (7) Yes votes, Two (2) Excused						

HOMESTEAD SERVICES DIVISION

ITEM D-7 Approval of Assignment of Leasehold Interest (see exhibit)

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

HSD Administrator Juan Garcia presented Item D7 for approval.

1. To approve the assignment of the leasehold interest, pursuant to Section 208, Hawaiian Home Commission Act, 1920, as amended, and subject to any applicable terms and conditions of the assignment, including but not limited to the approval of a loan.
2. To approve and accept that the transferees are of no less than the required 25% or 50% Hawaiian ancestry as appropriate pursuant to Section 208, Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended.

J. Garcia thanked the Commission for revisiting item D7, which had been deferred the previous day. He thanked Commissioner Kaleikini for his thorough review and apologized for the oversight that led to the deferral. He further explained that number 39 should have been removed from the submittal due to ongoing investigation into the condition of the home or property. The department was working with the State Department of Health and the enforcement team to resolve lease and condition issues. He requested approval of D7, excluding item 39.

Commissioner Kaneakua moved to approve, Commissioner Kaleikini seconded, and the motion was unanimously carried.

MOTION/ACTION

Moved by Commissioner Kaneakua moved to approve, Commissioner Kaleikini seconded to approve the motion as stated in the submittal, excluding Item No. 39.						
Commissioner	1	2	AYE (YES)	A'OLE(NO)	KANALUA	EXCUSED
Commissioner Freitas			X			
Commissioner Kaleikini		X	X			
Commissioner Kalepa						X
Commissioner Kaneakua	X		X			
Commissioner Lasua			X			
Commissioner Marfil			X			
Commissioner Namu'o						X
Commissioner Ornellas			X			
Chairman Watson			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT			7			2
MOTION: ☒ UNANIMOUS ☐ PASSED ☐ DEFERRED ☐ FAILED						
Motion passed unanimously, Seven (7) Yes votes, Two (2) Excused						

ITEM D- Homestead Services Division Status Reports**RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION**

None. For Information Only. Homestead Services Division Administrator Juan Garcia presents the following:

D-1 HSD Status Reports

- A. Homestead Application Totals and Monthly Activity Reports
- B. Delinquency Reports
- C. DHHL Guarantees for Hawaii Community Lending Permanent Loans
- D. DHHL Guarantees for Hawaii Community Lending Construction Loans

J. Garcia presented item D1, the monthly reports, and explained that Exhibit A, which usually includes homestead lease counts and applicant totals, was unavailable due to the department's transition to a new database system. He noted that technical issues were still being resolved with help from the modernization team and consultants, and he hoped to provide the missing data by next month. He also summarized Exhibit B as the delinquency report, Exhibit C as guarantees issued to Hawai'i Community Lending for permanent loans, and Exhibit D as guarantees for construction loans.

LAND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**ITEM E-3 For Information Only – East Hawaii Project Update****RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION**

None. For Information Only. LDD Acting Administrator Kalani Fronda and Homestead Housing Development Manager presented the following:

K. Fronda began by expressing gratitude for the NAHASDA program and shared a testimony of a lessee from Pu'u'hona, Maui, who had moved to Arizona in 2022 due to affordability issues. After waiting 38 years as an Undivided Interest Lessee and Kalima recipient, she received a project lease invitation, returned to Hawai'i, and qualified for a \$700,000 five-bedroom, three-bath home through NAHASDA with a 1% loan and zero down, paying \$1,600 monthly—less than her previous \$3,500 rent. He emphasized the program's value and transitioned to East Hawai'i project updates, starting with Honomū, where 16 lots had been awarded and infrastructure work was underway despite energizing delays. A blessing ceremony for the awarded lessees

was scheduled for October 1. He also announced that phase two in Honomū would begin with orientation for 51-acre subsistence agricultural lots in late February. This will be followed by awarding 50 lots in early April, urging those on the Hawai‘i Island Agricultural Waitlist to update their contact information.

Chair Watson clarified that subsistence agricultural awards did not require recipients to build homes, making them more accessible to existing residential lessees. If a lessee chose to build, they would need to transfer or relinquish their residential lease. These one-acre lots allowed for crop cultivation and livestock raising in partnership with CTAHR, aligning with Prince Kūhiō’s vision of reconnecting Hawaiians to the ‘āina. The program was popular, and the current location was highly desirable, with 50 new awards planned.

Commissioner Kaleikini asked about the orientation date, and K. Fronda responded that it was scheduled for the end of February, pending venue confirmation. He then provided updates on various land development projects. He noted that some homestead lots were still awaiting funding, but efforts continued with the planning office to move implementation forward. In Kaumana, work progressed to lot six, covering approximately 27,000 square feet, with visual updates showing before-and-after images.

K. Fronda discussed ongoing planning in Pana‘ewa, where multiple phases were anticipated. The department worked with NAHASDA to ensure eligibility and prepared reports and processes for infrastructure implementation. Project manager Kelbert Yoshida collaborated with district staff and consultants to explore alternative financing options to advance infrastructure ahead of state appropriations. He also mentioned land acquisitions in Kaumana under Act 279, presenting new opportunities.

The Keaukaha Phase 1 sewer improvements involved the department coordinating with the county to address water and wastewater issues across East and West Hawai‘i. He explained that subdividing large lots could help reduce the waitlist and highlighted the Keaukaha sewer master plan and lot 215A subdivision, which involved ongoing sewer line work. He addressed statewide compliance with Act 125, requiring assessments and planning for future upgrades. The department explored alternative technologies with consultants to meet the 2050 compliance deadline. He then returned to Lama Road, where 600 lots were being prepared. Orientation for project leases was scheduled for early February, with awards planned for late March. This initiative aimed to provide lessees with transferable leases and establish a focus group to support legislative funding requests. The presentation concluded with slides showing the Lama Road and Pana‘ewa-Ilima Road areas, referencing awarded lots and ongoing subsistence agricultural subdivision planning. He also noted that funding was needed and that these efforts were part of the island plan, with future budget proposals in development.

M. Hitzeman reported that Lokahi Pauole had handed over four scattered lots in Pana‘ewa—two with existing structures and two vacant—for upcoming awards expected by the end of the month. He was also preparing four additional homes, with two more awards to follow once ready. K. Fronda added that these lots were ideal for collaboration with Hawai‘i Community Assets and Hawai‘i Community Lending, who would assist lessees through financial assessments, securing financing, architectural planning, and contractor coordination. He emphasized the importance of such partnerships in supporting beneficiaries.

She continued by noting that Lokahi had also turned over seven vacant lots in Keaukaha, which were being prepared for offering with similar support from Hawai‘i Community Lending to help lessees build homes. She then highlighted a five-year agreement renewed in July 2022 with Hawai‘i Community College, allowing students to plan, design, construct, and landscape homes on homestead lots. By May 2025, the program had completed its 56th model home, which was currently in the offer process to an applicant deciding whether to accept. The 57th home, located on Deshaies, was in the lot-clearing phase and scheduled for offering in January 2026, with completion expected by May 2026.

Commissioner Kaleikini sought clarification on the timeline for Honomū Phase Two, confirming with K. Fronda that it involved 50 subsistence lots, with orientation scheduled for February and awards in April. He explained that only design funding was currently available, and additional funds, possibly from federal sources, were still needed for construction. He estimated that lessees would be able to occupy their lots in

about three to four years. Commissioner Kaleikini asked if this timeline applied to the 600 lots in Pana‘ewa. He responded that progress there could be faster due to active partnerships, with more details to be shared during orientation. Commissioner Kaleikini then asked about wastewater treatment plans for Pana‘ewa, recalling earlier discussions about extending sewer lines. He also stated that the department was pursuing alternative options because of pending county work, which would allow them to move forward without delay. Commissioner Kaleikini confirmed that the overall goal was to deliver 650 lots within three to four years.

Regarding sewer improvements in Keaukaha, Commissioner Kaleikini asked for a completion timeline, and he said he would follow up, noting that creative financing was being explored using funds from other areas. Commissioner Kaleikini also asked about the Ka‘ū water system, and Fronda confirmed that Phase One would be completed by December, allowing beneficiaries to access water from a single tank via a spigot, similar to the setup in Pi‘ihonua. For Phase Two, he explained that running water to the 25 lots would require further coordination with the county and overcoming specific hurdles. Commissioner Kaleikini expressed appreciation for the work being done, and K. Fronda acknowledged the efforts of the 25-member team managing projects from construction to awards. The discussion concluded with a note that one testifier was scheduled to speak next.

Public Testimony – John McBride - He addressed the Commission during the NAHASDA program discussion to revisit a case he had presented two years earlier involving Wallace Ishibashi’s mother, Patricia Puhala Delaris. He described her living conditions as severely inadequate, with water leaking into her home and an unstable platform that caused her to fall, requiring help from a neighbor. He had previously urged the Commission to prioritize her situation, and she was placed at the top of the NAHASDA list. However, two years later, he reported that Patricia still had not received a house, according to her granddaughter, and asked for clarification on her status.

K. Fronda invited NAHASDA Administrator Lehua Kinilau-Cano to respond to J. McBride’s concerns regarding Patricia Puhala Delaris. She explained that an environmental assessment had been completed and the house was demolished, including asbestos abatement due to its age. She stated that the Delaris family had not yet selected a contractor despite exploring options like Hawai‘i Island Habitat, and assured the Commission that they were actively working with the family to move the build forward. J. McBride countered that he had spoken to Patricia that morning, and he had not received any paperwork or filled out the NAHASDA application, which meant no contractor could proceed without financing. He expressed deep frustration over the two-year delay, emphasizing Patricia’s age and the urgency of her situation. He criticized the system, stating that beneficiaries had become victims of the very act meant to support them.

DISCUSSION

Chair Watson initiated a discussion about the financing status for Patricia Puhala Delaris’s housing situation. L. Kinilau-Cano from NAHASDA clarified that demolition had already occurred, indicating that some paperwork had been processed. She explained that complications arose due to multiple family members being involved, and that Wendy was the main contact. Although the family had spoken with contractors, including Hawai‘i Habitat, they had not proceeded with anything; she emphasized that contractor selection was not her decision.

L. Kinilau-Cano added that contractors must comply with Davis-Bacon regulations and certified payroll requirements, which sometimes made it difficult to find willing participants. She acknowledged this might have contributed to delays. J. McBride reminded the group that Patricia was 88 years old and emphasized the urgency. Chair Watson agreed, stressing the need to help her and committed to resolving the issue by ensuring a contractor was selected and the process moved forward.

Public Testimony – Pualani McBride – she testified about concerns regarding the pricing of the Nahale’a lot, questioning how the planning team determined a cost of approximately \$325,000 for a home on Hawaiian Homes land, which she emphasized was not fee simple but federal government land. She noted that the price resembled those in Honolulu and asked how the cost per board foot was calculated, especially since the home was built by community college students who likely were not paid hourly. P. McBride, who lived at 101

Desha Avenue and was 78 years old, stated she was still waiting for a house on her own property and expressed frustration over the affordability and lack of financing support. She estimated the lot size at 10,000 square feet and the home at about 1,200 square feet and asked for clarification on how Hawaiian Homes approved such pricing.

Chair Watson acknowledged her concerns, calling it a valid and ongoing challenge. P. McBride added that most residents did not earn \$125,000 to \$150,000 annually, with some making as little as \$10,000 due to the weak economy. She reiterated her request for an explanation of the price per board foot. Chair Watson thanked her again and agreed that reducing housing costs remained a persistent issue.

PLANNING OFFICE

ITEM G-6 For Information Only - Draft Maku‘u Regional Plan Update

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

None. For Information Only. Planning Office Acting Administrator Lilliane Makaila presented the following:

L. Makaila presented the draft update for the Maku‘u Regional Plan, which followed the original plan adopted in December 2010. The update process was accelerated, starting in June with leadership meetings, followed by beneficiary consultations in July and August. A priority project voting period occurred from August 14 to 28, and the final community consultation was held on September 4, where the draft plan was shared. The urgency stemmed from the need to complete the plan in time to access DHHL grant funding, supported by a historic earmark from the lieutenant governor. She explained that outreach focused solely on lessees, not waitlist applicants, due to the unique nature of the Maku‘u homestead, and credited the Maku‘u Farmers Hawaiian Homestead Association for hosting all consultations at no cost.

The planning team gathered input through small and large group discussions, shaping a regional vision and identifying priority projects. Instead of using the term "community values," residents preferred the term "kahua," meaning foundational elements, which better reflected their cultural and practical priorities. The kahua included principles such as aloha for one another, nurturing ‘ohana and kūpuna through education and culture, building economic resilience, and stewarding the ‘āina. The community’s vision emphasized self-sustainability rooted in ancestral knowledge and opportunities for future generations. Among the seven proposed priority projects, homestead safety and security ranked highest. This included concerns about unexploded ordnance (UXO) from the former Popoke military training area, which posed risks to farming and daily life. Longtime lessees and newer awardees faced different levels of awareness and engagement, with many lots unoccupied due to the agricultural designation, leading to increased vulnerability and limited law enforcement response. Residents expressed frustration over their inability to report illegal activity on neighboring lots, highlighting the complexity of safety challenges in the region. The next priority project identified was the Halau Initiative.

The Maku‘u Farmers Association hosted the beneficiary consultations and operated a large, successful Sunday market that served as a model for other homesteads. This market funded most of their community programs. It helped them meet compliance requirements for the upcoming Halau Initiative, which aimed to convert their outdoor spaces into a permanent enclosed community center. Another priority project focused on agricultural infrastructure, addressing the need for shared tools, equipment, and processing facilities to support both five-acre farm lots and two-acre subsistence lots. While the farmers’ market provided a venue, additional resources were needed to build full agricultural capacity, similar to the KPFA hub on Railroad Avenue.

The community also prioritized alternative financing for Lava Zone 2 and kupuna housing. NAHASDA funds excluded areas in Lava Zones 1 and 2, which affected some homesteaders who were originally designated in Lava Zone 3 before Fissure 8 shifted the boundaries. These residents, now ineligible for federal funding, sought direct loan options from DHHL to build dwellings on agricultural land. There was also strong interest

in reviving a kupuna housing project previously proposed by the Lunalilo Trust, which had planned 22 units for elders and caregivers. Lastly, water governance emerged as a complex issue, with debates over groundwater development versus rainwater use, and concerns about whether water infrastructure served Maku‘u homesteaders or adjacent communities. The Farmers Association currently uses a domestic water meter despite agricultural use, and residents expressed interest in becoming trained water operators. These discussions were included in the priority projects, and the draft plan remained open for comments until later in the month, with final adoption expected in October.

ITEM G-7 For Information Only - Evaluation of Supplemental Dwelling Unit (SDU) Pilot Program

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

None. For Information Only. Planning Office Acting Administrator Liliane Kamaila and Planner V Nancy McPherson presented the following:

N. McPherson explained that discussions around SDUs, also known as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), began around 2015–2016 in response to increased interest in tiny homes. The department focused on residential homestead leases, as agricultural and pastoral leases already allowed additional dwellings. A task force was formed, and beneficiary consultations were held in 2018. Initially, the program was proposed for O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island, but beneficiaries insisted that it be available statewide. The pilot was set for five years, with a three-year evaluation point. Rulemaking began in 2019, followed by public hearings and Commission approval in 2021. The governor signed the rule amendments in December 2021, and an update was provided in 2022.

The application process officially launched in January 2023, with the first application received that same month. The team worked to streamline the process, aiming for an electronic workflow due to the challenges of routing hard copies across islands. A fillable PDF was created, and SharePoint was tested as a filing system, although it encountered usability issues due to staff turnover. While Commission approval wasn’t required to extend the program, the team presented the update to share progress and gather feedback. The application process remained complex, requiring planning review in addition to HSD’s standard improvement request procedures. Efforts were made to digitize the process, but electronic signatures and online submission capabilities were still lacking. The team hoped to integrate the workflow into DHHL’s modernization efforts. The application form continued to be refined based on feedback, and a checklist was being finalized to improve review efficiency. Once approved by the Commission, applicants could submit building permits, but they were required to comply with county ADU regulations, including maintaining a smaller square footage than the primary residence.

Chair Watson expressed concern over the high number of homeless Native Hawaiians and emphasized the urgency of addressing the issue. He highlighted that while the department had over 8,000 residential units and was expanding, overcrowding and lack of utilities had forced many to abandon their homesteads. To combat this, he supported integrating Supplemental Dwelling Units (SDUs), also called Ohana units, into both new and existing homesteads. These units could be attached, partitioned, or standalone, and would allow families to house relatives in need, creating a permanent solution rooted in community support.

He further explained that \$3 million had been earmarked in the department’s budget, and the state had allocated \$20 million for Kauhale projects. While he acknowledged the governor’s support for Kauhale as a temporary measure, he advocated for Ohana units as a more sustainable approach. He believed these units would empower families to provide housing, care, and oversight for their own members, offering both social and financial benefits. He assigned staff members to lead the initiative and urged N. McPherson to collaborate with them, pursue available funding, and increase outreach to homesteaders. He stressed the importance of swift action, noting that lives were at stake. N. McPherson noted that most applications for Supplemental Dwelling Units had been intended for family members, but the construction costs were high, often around \$150,000. She emphasized that financial assistance would be very helpful and expressed her willingness to collaborate with Chair Watson’s team.

Public Testimony – Kahikina Whittle – expressed appreciation for the discussion on homelessness and raised a question about the applicability of Supplemental Dwelling Units (SDUs) on agricultural and pastoral lands. She noted that county planning allows for workman’s quarters, which she felt were distinct from SDUs, and asked whether pastoral and agricultural lessees could also build SDUs under Hawaiian Homes guidelines. L. Makaila responded that while the department had prioritized residential leases in its research, it remained open to exploring SDUs for ag and pastoral lands. She acknowledged the need for further research, especially considering county standards and existing agreements, and proposed creating a handout to clarify the issue.

K. Whittle added that pastoral lessees could help address homelessness due to their larger land holdings. Chair Watson supported the idea and shared plans to activate unused lands for agricultural production, including citrus orchards and cattle operations, which would also provide workforce housing. He emphasized the importance of combining housing with employment opportunities to ensure sustainability. Chair Watson mentioned ongoing efforts to develop revenue-generating projects like a raceway park and proposed incentive programs to encourage farming on underutilized lands. He also announced the hiring of Lehua Abrigo to lead agricultural initiatives, filling a long-vacant position.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

PLANNING OFFICE

ITEM G-10 For Information Only - Native Hawaiian Development Program Plan Workshop

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

None. For Information Only. Planning Office Acting Administrator Liliane Makaila and Grant Specialist Gigi Cairel presented the following:

G. Cairel presented remotely alongside Consultant Cedric Duarte from the Kālaïmoku Group, who would assist with the consultation process. The plan, originally developed 15 years ago, aimed to improve the social welfare of Native Hawaiians through educational, cultural, political, and community programs that promote self-sufficiency and self-determination. It authorized various initiatives, including community grants, trainings, puuwalus, and support for agricultural and pastoral lessees. Due to changes in socioeconomic conditions, beneficiary needs, and funding opportunities, the plan required updating to better reflect current realities. He was prepared to present the outreach and consultation strategy, which was scheduled to begin in the fall.

C. Duarte presented the intent to update the Native Hawaiian Development Program Plan, a long-range strategic framework authorized under Section 213F of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and governed by Hawaii Administrative Rules 10.6.1. He explained that the plan, last updated about 15 years ago, needed revision to reflect evolving beneficiary needs and funding opportunities. The update would follow a three-phase process: current internal coordination, followed by research and community engagement through beneficiary consultations, and concluding with public hearings and submission of the final draft in early 2026. He emphasized that while the timeline was subject to change, the team aimed to complete consultations in the fourth quarter and return with the draft plan in the first quarter of 2026.

REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Chair Watson resumed leadership of the meeting and initiated the J-Agenda, reminding participants to keep their testimonies concise and efficient due to time constraints. He requested that remarks be limited to 10 minutes to ensure everyone had a chance to speak, expressing appreciation for their cooperation in maintaining a productive and timely session.

J-1 Ka'aka Swain – Keaukaha Community Association Re: Puhi Bay/Keaukaha Beach

Representing the Keaukaha Community Association (KCA), presented a proposal for a co-management partnership with the Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL) to oversee Keaukaha Beach Park and Puhi Bay. She requested that DHHL remain the landowner while KCA takes on stewardship responsibilities, with DHHL continuing to cover operational costs. She emphasized Puhi Bay's cultural, environmental, and social significance, noting its historical role as a gathering place and resting site for the community. Due to increased park usage post-COVID and limited DHHL staffing, concerns had risen about proper oversight. KCA proposed managing scheduling, volunteer coordination, cultural and educational programming, and stewardship activities such as limu planting and coral restoration. They requested a one-year pilot agreement with measurable benchmarks and regular reporting, and suggested forming a working group to define roles and expectations. Chair Watson acknowledged the proposal and raised questions about cost coverage, noting that in some cases, counties handle expenses, while in others, DHHL retains responsibility.

LMD Acting Administrator Linda Chinn explained that DHHL collaborated with county governments to manage several parks on the east side of Hawai'i and O'ahu. On Maui, specifically at Paukūkalo, DHHL retained full management responsibility, including maintenance and scheduling through the district office. She acknowledged that there were various models for park management and expressed willingness to work with Ka'aka Swain on her new request. Chair Watson confirmed that Ka'aka's organization was a nonprofit and suggested they pursue grants to support the initiative. He acknowledged limited resources but emphasized the importance of community involvement, especially given concerns about the park's declining condition. He welcomed KCA's participation and proposed working together to find funding solutions.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kaleikini expressed strong support for Ka'aka Swain's proposal on behalf of the Keaukaha Community Association (KCA) to co-manage Puhi Bay and Keaukaha Beach Park. He praised the initiative as a model of community-driven problem-solving and emphasized the importance of incorporating best practices from other DHHL-managed parks. He acknowledged the close relationship between KCA and the East Hawai'i district office and highlighted Puhi Bay as a cherished and heavily used community resource. He also humorously noted the effective, though unofficial, parking arrangements at the site.

Chair Watson raised the possibility of using funds from the shopping center as a steady source of financial support for the initiative. L. Chinn clarified that \$15,000 had been received from the Y Care Center by KCAI. Still, there was ongoing discussion about separating KCA and KCAI to ensure funds were directed appropriately to KCA. Chair Watson confirmed that the funding stream was stabilizing and that efforts were underway to support distribution, with proactive involvement from LMD staff.

L. Chinn announced plans to meet with all seven communities to amend the MOA and clarify fund allocation. Chair Watson proposed directing a portion of those funds toward the beach park initiative and emphasized the importance of community contribution and collaboration moving forward.

Public Testimony – Patty Iwaone - a resident of Pana'ewa, Waiakea, testified online to express her belief that the proposed partnership for managing Keaukaha Beach Park should include not only the Keaukaha Community Association (KCA) but also all beneficiaries, including lessees and those on the waitlist, regardless of association membership. She emphasized the importance of shared ownership and inclusion to give the initiative deeper meaning. She supported the idea of involving nonprofits to access grant funding, which could align with and support the Kea'au Regional Plan. She also suggested exploring revolving funds as a financial model, allowing resources to be used and replenished continuously, drawing a parallel to ongoing efforts in limu and coral restoration. She concluded by highlighting the importance of sustainability and the cycle of life.

Public Testimony - Terri Napeahi - Representing the Keaukaha Action Network, voiced strong support for Ka'aka Swain and the community's proposed management plan. She shared that a meeting held on Wednesday drew about a hundred concerned residents who were deeply worried about losing access to Puhi

Bay for recreation and cultural practices due to unclear or inadequate management. Although many of those individuals could not attend the current session, she spoke on their behalf to ensure their concerns were heard. She emphasized the importance of maintaining community access and stewardship of the area.

J-2 Maile Lu'uwai – Keaukaha Pana'ewa Farmers Association – Master Plan

M. Lu'uwai expressed appreciation to several individuals and teams for their support, including Commissioner Ornellas for her thoughtful engagement with the Commission, D. Hoke and his enforcement team for assisting Pana'ewa, G. Cairel for grant support, and L. Makaila from the planning team. She provided a detailed update on the Pana'ewa Hub Project, which had a right of entry to 10.6 acres and had completed its master plan, environmental and historic preservation reviews, boundary and topographic surveys, and was currently developing schematic plans. The original \$17 million build cost was revised to a phased \$8 million plan, with \$5.5 million already secured through DHHL grants. She was seeking additional funds to complete phase one and aimed to have construction documents ready by April or May next year. M. Lu'uwai also planned to submit a business plan with a revenue component in October and was managing six grants and seven consultants while working full-time.

She shared her goal to help other community associations and described plans for a commercial project on a nearby 10-acre site to generate revenue and reduce reliance on grants. She addressed a homeless issue adjacent to the project site, explaining how she handled a water line incident and requested land management's help in creating a buffer zone. She also mentioned upcoming coordination with K. Fronda and Rochelle regarding 600 new homes nearby, emphasizing the importance of unity and collaboration between communities. Additionally, she discussed plans for a one-lane exit road and a stoplight to improve safety, noting DHHL's commercial development behind her property and expressing willingness to partner on infrastructure improvements. She concluded by thanking the Commissioners for their service and support.

Chair Watson thanked M. Lu'uwai for her presentation and emphasized the importance of collaboration between DHHL and community leaders. He praised her objectives, projects, and improvements as impressive and aligned with successful efforts in other communities. He supported her initiative and noted that DHHL also aimed to activate additional lands to generate revenue and fund infrastructure for the upcoming 600 homes. He acknowledged the shared goals and encouraged continued partnership to achieve mutual progress.

J-8 Pat Kahawaiolaa - Keaukaha Concerns

P. Kahawaiolaa spoke on behalf of the Kūpuna Ho'opulopula Committee to express deep concerns and historical context regarding Puhi Bay and Keaukaha. He recalled how, in the 1980s, community members began cleaning the overgrown area at no cost to DHHL, leading to cultural programs like limu gathering and net-making for children. He described past proposals to restore the Hawaiian Village and build facilities for kupuna, many of which were approved but never implemented. He emphasized the importance of keeping Puhi Bay under DHHL's control, citing its designation in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and opposing any transfer to county management. Kahawaiolaa also addressed the proposed development of 600 homes near his residence, advocating for the preservation of agricultural use and suggesting that unused cleaned lands be repurposed for subsistence agriculture. He stressed that occupation and purposeful use of land were key to preventing homelessness and urged the Commission to ensure future development supports both housing and agricultural needs.

J-3 Ainaaloha Ioane – MAHA (Malama ka Aina Hana ka Aina)

A Ioane expressed deep gratitude for the progress made in the King's Landing settlement plan and administrative changes supporting rural village life. She reflected on the 45-year legacy of stewardship by her father and kupuna, and how MAHA had evolved from being seen as a problem to being recognized as a pioneer in subsistence living. She raised concerns about gate security, explaining that past drug activity from the adjacent Lehia park had spilled into King's Landing, prompting the installation of gates. However, due to

Commission turnover and a past directive to leave the gate open, the area had since experienced increased crime, derelict vehicles, and unauthorized residents, affecting the safety of beneficiaries.

She requested a feasible plan to restore security and protect current and future lessees. She also revisited the idea of acquiring a small tract of county land adjacent to King's Landing, currently stewarded by a beneficiary, to expand the settlement and manage it as a DHHL beach park. She highlighted the importance of architectural design rights under the Kuleana Subsistence Homesteading model and shared that MAHA had applied for multiple grants, though some were canceled due to federal funding instability. She proposed that DHHL include architectural design support in its budget for broader application. Lastly, she asked for clarity on MAHA's homestead association recognition to ensure inclusion in East Hawaii beneficiary packages and future funding opportunities, emphasizing the need for King's Landing to be part of the seven homesteads under consideration.

RECESS
RECONVENE

12:30 PM
1:50 PM

J-4 Kahikina Kaae-Whittle – Hui Aloha Pu‘ukapu

K. Kaae-Whittle reported that Hui Aloha Pu‘ukapu launched a DHHL-funded community grazing program to reduce wildfire risk using paniolo methods. They fenced 175 acres, held two community workdays, and planned to introduce four calves to build a sustainable herd. In August, they hosted a fire safety workshop with local experts, including Anakala Kimo Ho‘opai and Dr. Mark Thorn, whose research showed grazing can slow fire spread by 72% with just 24% land coverage.

The hui also formed road and safety committees, held six meetings to address community concerns, and gathered feedback through a survey that showed moderate understanding of the commencement issue. Residents cited roads, dust, fire risk, and overgrowth as priorities, underscoring the need for continued outreach. They plan to pursue new grants to expand mitigation efforts, having already secured funding from Richard Smart and the Atherton Family Foundation.

She thanked DHHL and specifically L. Makaila for her strong regional support and responsiveness, and Commissioner Freitas for recognizing her leadership in strengthening communication with DHHL staff. Kaae-Whittle noted steady progress on the grazing project, though participation has been limited because few residents raise cattle. Sheep fencing has been prepared, and an informational brochure will be distributed by December to boost engagement. She reaffirmed that the hui is a nonprofit sustained by grant funding, committed to protecting and empowering the community.

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J-5 Bo Kahui – La‘i‘Ōpua Community Development Corporation

He highlighted his roles in various organizations, including Habitat for Humanity and West Hawai‘i Parks and Athletics, and shared past accomplishments such as the development of a medical center, dental center, and community kitchen under La‘i‘Ōpua 2020. He revisited his June testimony requesting a boat and vehicle storage facility at Honokaha, Boat Harbor, noting recent discussions with the mayor and stakeholders about a potential land swap involving 200 acres. He emphasized the importance of preserving the proposed 11–12 acres for boat parking because community rules prohibit boat storage on residential lots.

B. Kahui also raised concerns about the stalled NEXAMP renewable energy project, which had been expected to reduce energy costs for beneficiaries, and requested a status update from the department. He reported ongoing efforts to secure funding for a preschool project, with hopes to meet with the governor for support. He praised the acquisition of the Holualoa water source, which could support 800 homes. He discussed security concerns at the isolated Holualoa coffee house property, offering assist as an agent to maintain the site. He voiced support for Maile Lu‘uwai’s economic development initiatives and stressed the need for revenue-generating programs in Kona. Reflecting personally, he shared his long wait for a pastoral lease and

urged the department to prioritize pastoral housing options alongside residential development. He concluded by emphasizing that his work was driven by community need and a desire to leave a lasting legacy.

J-6 Terri Napeahi - Keaukaha Action Network

Representing the Keaukaha Action Network, she provided a detailed update on the group's involvement in the NHPA Section 106 consultation process for the Pua Force Main project tied to the Hilo Wastewater Treatment Plant. She explained that the network originated to address toxic release inventory facilities in Keaukaha and Pana'ewa and had actively participated in the comment period for the wastewater project, which involved installing a parallel pipe through Hawaiian homelands. She emphasized that this federal action warranted mitigation due to its impact on DHHL lands and the surrounding community. The network formed a delegation team and submitted a list of mitigation requests, including expanding the area of potential effects to include the outfall and ocean, which was denied. She criticized the narrow scope of the blueprint and argued that the cumulative environmental and health impacts on Native Hawaiian families—such as water contamination, illness, and lack of signage—had been ignored for decades.

She advocated for the removal of the outfall at Puhi Bay and presented data compiled with the National Wildlife Federation showing multiple non-compliant toxic facilities located on Hawaiian homelands. She outlined the timeline of submitted comments and testimony, including support from lineal descendants, and noted that the county took seven months to respond, ultimately denying the mitigation request. She contacted the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., to seek guidance on next steps and judicial challenge options. The council confirmed that SHPD (State Historic Preservation Division) would make the final determination. She also requested clarification on the delegation of authority between the Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Management, which was found to be absent. She concluded by stating that the Section 106 process remained ongoing and urged SHPD to include the delegation team in the final decision, emphasizing the cultural significance of the shoreline that had been compromised.

J-7 Replacement Ron Kaipo

R. Kaipo presented three requests to the Commission: to remove his late wife Charmaine Keitel's name from the mortgage and replace it with his grandson's; to resolve missing application documents for his daughter in Nevada; and to partition his five-acre parcel so his daughter receives the improved three acres and his grandson the remainder. He recounted prior Commission approval for the subdivision and asked that the term "partition" be used instead. Expressing frustration over lost records and delays, he appealed for help to secure his family's legacy, citing Prince Kūhiō's vision and concern over shortened lease terms.

Homestead Services Administrator Juan Garcia confirmed that his office was working with the East Hawai'i District Office on the matter and explained that if the subdivision had been approved, R. Kaipo would need to work with a surveyor and the county before DHHL could amend the lease and issue a new one to his grandson. Chair Watson expressed concern about the lengthy process and suggested a faster path.

J. Garcia proposed adding the grandson as a co-lessee to immediately secure his interest. R. Kaipo agreed and asked that his daughter also be included so both could inherit. Garcia explained that multiple co-lessees could hold the lease as tenants in common, a solution Chair Watson supported to avoid future disputes. R. Keitel expressed gratitude and relief, emphasizing his wish to protect his family's legacy and prevent future conflict.

J-9 Luana Keakealani, Sherilyn Wahinekapu – Various Concerns

L Keakealani testified about ongoing problems on her family's ranch land in Honoka'ia, including theft and safety concerns caused by nearby squatters. To help secure the area, she requested additional acreage on behalf of her mother but had not received guidance from the Land Management Division. Unsure of the correct process or terminology, she sought clarity on whether to request a "right of entry" or "additional

acreage.” She stressed the need to protect their tools and equipment essential to hand-ranching and voiced frustration at the lack of response.

She also raised concerns about water insecurity, referencing the Waimea Nui Regional Plan’s proposed pipe stand and questioning how to pursue it. She pointed out that a DWS water tank powered through Hawaiian homelands did not serve Native Hawaiian families, calling it environmental racism. She described the tank’s location on land appearing part DHHL and part crown, and asked for help obtaining water access. She urged DHHL to allow water hauling, address deteriorating systems, and fill vacant positions in the West Hawai‘i District Office, while suggesting that social workers could help families overcome complex social barriers.

L. Keakealani explained that her family holds two pastoral leases totaling 300 acres, awarded to her late father, James Akeona Sr. She requested additional acreage to support ranching operations and protect against squatters who built non-permitted structures, kept livestock, and subleased to others on DHHL land. Despite past enforcement and signage efforts, she and her mother maintained that squatters occupied DHHL property accessed via a Department of Water Supply road. Chair Watson confirmed there was no lessee and asked for historical lease records, noting the difficulty of issuing new acreage but openness to cooperative or caretaker models.

L. Keakealani, founder of the Hawai‘i Youth Rodeo ‘Ohana, announced plans for a Paniolo Academy to promote food sovereignty and support families not living directly on the land. Chair Watson expressed interest in collaboration, aligning it with DHHL’s subsistence agriculture and cattle initiatives. J. Garcia reported that Mark Sayers had begun as the new West Hawai‘i District Office supervisor. L. Keakealani closed by emphasizing that food access is key to family stability and thanked the Commission for revisiting the discussion.

Public Testimony – Daniel Adams / Sherilyn Wahinekapu –

S. Wahinekapu testified about DHHL’s failure to respond to her formal request for government records under the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA), which she submitted on March 25, 2025. The records pertained to the succession of two Hawaiian homestead leases in Honoka‘ia following the death of her brother, James P. Akeona Jr., with whom she was a co-lessee. Despite following all procedures and providing identification, she received no acknowledgment or response within the legally required timeframe. Over the next several months, she sent six emails and made multiple phone calls, including to the DHHL Chairperson’s Office and staff in Kapolei, but received no substantive reply. Her efforts included quoting legal statutes and offering further verification, yet the department remained silent, causing emotional distress and jeopardizing her family’s homestead rights.

She emphasized that this issue reflected broader systemic failures within DHHL, particularly in West Hawai‘i, where many Native Hawaiian beneficiaries face long delays, lack of transparency, and unresponsive staff. She warned that such inaction could lead to forfeiture of land and loss of family legacy. She urged the Commission to investigate DHHL’s handling of information requests, enforce stricter UIPA compliance, and implement oversight measures like mandatory response tracking and penalties. She concluded by reaffirming her connection to the land and her ancestors, offering to provide documentation of her efforts, and calling for immediate release of the requested records or a lawful explanation.

L. Keakealani responded by clarifying that her and her mother’s efforts were grounded in policy, not just personal grievance, and that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was a federal statute supporting their request for access to documents. She stressed that her mother’s request for a contested case hearing was compromised by the department’s refusal to release necessary records, which prevented proper preparation. She also noted that requests for additional acreage were supported by Hawai‘i Revised Statutes and should not be affected by unrelated legal matters. Commissioner Freitas clarified he had not meant to challenge the acreage request and committed to following up with J. Garcia and the new district office manager to ensure the family received the documents needed.

L. Keakealani concluded by emphasizing that the contested case hearing was based on concerns over document handling and thanked the Commission for its attention.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

Chair Watson thanked attendees and announced the adjournment of the meeting to proceed to the next scheduled session. He invited anyone not addressed under the J agenda to submit written testimony for inclusion in the next month's agenda. He confirmed that the next regular meeting would take place on October 20th and 21st at the Pukakalo Community Center in Maui, beginning at 9:30 AM and continuing at 6:30 PM on October 20th.

ADJOURNMENT

3:13 PM

Respectfully submitted:



Kali Watson, Chairman
Hawaiian Homes Commission

Prepared by:



Leah Burrows-Nuuanu, Commission Secretary
Hawaiian Homes Commission

Approved on:

October 21, 2025,

Hawaiian Homes Commission Meeting, Paukukalo, Maui, Hawaii.

Attachments:

1. Slide Presentation – Item C-4 2026 Legislative Package
2. Slide Presentation – Item G-2 Public Hearing for Admin Rule
3. Slide Presentation – Item G-3 Beneficiary Report
4. Slide Presentation – Item G-4 Waimea Nui RPU Final Plan
5. Slide Presentation – Item G-6 Draft Makuu RPU Plan
6. Slide Presentation – Item G-8 Status Update
7. Slide Presentation – Item G-10 Update NHDPP
8. Public Testimony – John Dean
9. Public Testimony - Melanie Ioane
10. Public Testimony – Kalani Wong
11. Public Testimony – Item C-2 OHA Chairperson Kaiali'i Kahele
12. Public Testimony – Item C-2 Honolulu Mayor Rick Blandiardi
13. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Lono Koholua
14. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Amy Mahikoa
15. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Brooklyn McBrayer
16. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Danielle DeLima
17. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Sharon Pualani Freitas
18. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Wendy Kaniupio-Crespo
19. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Maykayla Hirahara-Kawelolani
20. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Jo Canon
21. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Kaimana Kawelolani
22. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Kinau McBrayer
23. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Isaiah Fowler

24. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Shaylee DeMello
25. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Iwalani Laybon-McBrayer
26. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Timothy McBrayer
27. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Kingston Doyle
28. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Kaai Westbrook
29. Public Testimony – Item C-1 Detta Laybon



HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION · DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

C-4: Approval of 2026 Legislative Package

OCH - NAHASDA

September 15-16, 2025



Review Process

Hawaiian Homes Commission



REVISED*

HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

January 21, 2025 (Tue)	HHC Mtg. Kapolei - (No Community (CMTY) Mtg)
January 22, 2025 (Wed)	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu
February 18, 2025 (Tue)	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, CMTY Mtg - Kapolei, O'ahu
February 19, 2025 (Wed)	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu
March 17, 2025	HHC Mtg. Waimanalo, Hawaii*, CMTY Mtg - Kailua
March 18, 2025	HHC Mtg. Waimanalo, Hawaii*
April 21, 2025	HHC Mtg. CMTY Mtg - Kailua, Maui
April 22, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kailua, Maui
May 19, 2025	HHC Mtg. CMTY Mtg - West Maui
May 20, 2025	HHC Mtg. West Maui
June 12, 2025	HHC Budget Workshop, Kapolei, O'ahu
June 16, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei - (No CMTY Mtg)
June 17, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu
July 21, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu, CMTY Mtg - Papeete, O'ahu
July 22, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu
August 18, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu, CMTY Mtg - Waimanalo, O'ahu
August 19, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu
September 15, 2025	HHC Mtg. CMTY Mtg - Hilo, Hawaii*
September 16, 2025	HHC Mtg. Hilo, Hawaii*
September 16, 2025	HHC CMTY Meeting ONLY - Kailua*
October 20, 2025	HHC Mtg. Wailuku, Maui CMTY Mtg - Pukalani, Maui
October 21, 2025	HHC Mtg. Wailuku, Maui
November 1, 2025	HHC CMTY Meeting ONLY - Linal City*
November 17, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu
November 18, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu
December 15, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu, CMTY Mtg - West O'ahu
December 16, 2025	HHC Mtg. Kapolei, O'ahu

O'ahu meetings are held at Hale Pono 1, DMH, 81 3420 Kapolei Parkway, Kapolei, O'ahu.
CMTY meetings are held in the evenings, except on dates where it will be held during the day.
No Community meetings are scheduled for O'ahu in January and June.

*Revision Approved 06/16/2025

Review Process

-Department of the Attorney General

-Department of Budget and Finance

-Governor and Governor's Policy Team

*Final bill version submitted by November 21, 2025

Legislative Session: January – May

2025 SESSION CALENDAR											
Note: All session days (days when members convene) are listed regardless of whether the session day occurs against a live or on the on-the-range, the date, time, [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [31]											
Year	Month	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Notes: All sessions start at 9:00am unless otherwise specified. The session day occurs against a live or on the on-the-range, the date, time, [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [31]				
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MARCH											
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APRIL											
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31											



Governor's Administrative Package

- HHL-01(26) Relating to Housing
- HHL-07(26) Relating to Land Transfers
- HHL-08(26) Relating to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended
- HHL-10(26) Relating to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended
- HHL-13(26) Relating to Low Income Housing Tax Credits



Housing

Exempts any development of homestead lots or housing for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands from general excise and use taxes.



Tax Exemption

Exempts all development projects for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands from general excise and use taxes.



Historic Preservation Reviews

Allows the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to assume review of the effect of any proposed project on historic properties or burial sites for lands under its jurisdiction. Request an appropriation for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) position to be filled by a historic preservation specialist.



HHL-04 (26)

Hawaii Housing and Finance Development Corporation

Adds the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission or the Chairperson's designee to the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation as a voting member.



HHL-05 (26)

Hawaii Community Development Authority

Adds the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission or the Chairperson's designee to the Hawaii Community Development Authority as a voting member.

Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (Geothermal)

Request an appropriation of \$20,000,000 dollars for the next steps in the investigation, exploration, and identification of geothermal resources on Hawaiian Home Lands.



HHL-07 (26)

Land Transfers

Authorizes the transfer of certain lands under the jurisdiction of certain State agencies to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.



HHL-08 (26)

Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended (Loan Guarantee Increase)

Amends Section 214 of the HHCA to increase the limit of the State's liability for moneys borrowed by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands or loans made to lessees that are guaranteed by the Department from \$100,000,000 to \$500,000,000.



HHL-09 (26)

Economic Development

Request an appropriation of funds for projects that meet the criteria of Act 96, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025.



HHL-10 (26)

Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended (Lease Condition for Criminal Activity)

Amends section 208 of the HHCA to prohibit lessees, any other person who resides in or has access to the premises through the lessee, or any member of the public from violating any federal, state, or local law, or activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the lessee or other persons residing on the leased premises or neighboring properties and neighboring residents.



HHL-11 (26)

Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended (Nieces and Nephews)

Amends section 208 and section 209 of the HHCA to include nieces and nephews as qualifying relatives of lessees for the purposes of lease transfer and lease successorship.

Tax Revenues

Beginning on 1/1/2027, increases transient accommodations tax rates by 1 percentage point and deposits the increased revenues into the Hawaiian Home General Loan Fund established under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended.



HHL-13 (26)

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

Converts the Rental Housing Revolving Fund into a Low Interest Loan for Department of Hawaiian Home Lands projects developed with LIHTC.



Mahalo



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HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION · DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

For Action – Approval to Proceed to Public Hearing for Administrative Rule to Establish a Priority Waitlist for Applicants with a Connection to Place

G-2

September 15-16, 2025



Purpose

01

How did we get here?

Feedback received during beneficiary consultation and meetings with the wider Native Hawaiian communities regarding developing new homestead communities in rural areas included a strong and clear call for DHHL to develop a preference policy for beneficiaries who have a connection to place.

02

Why develop a preference policy?

Maintain a continuity of settlement by beneficiaries who have a relationship to the area, which creates a solid foundation for individual and community success.

Success is achieved by having a strong network of family members and close communities, and the generational and place-based knowledge of the resources and landscape.

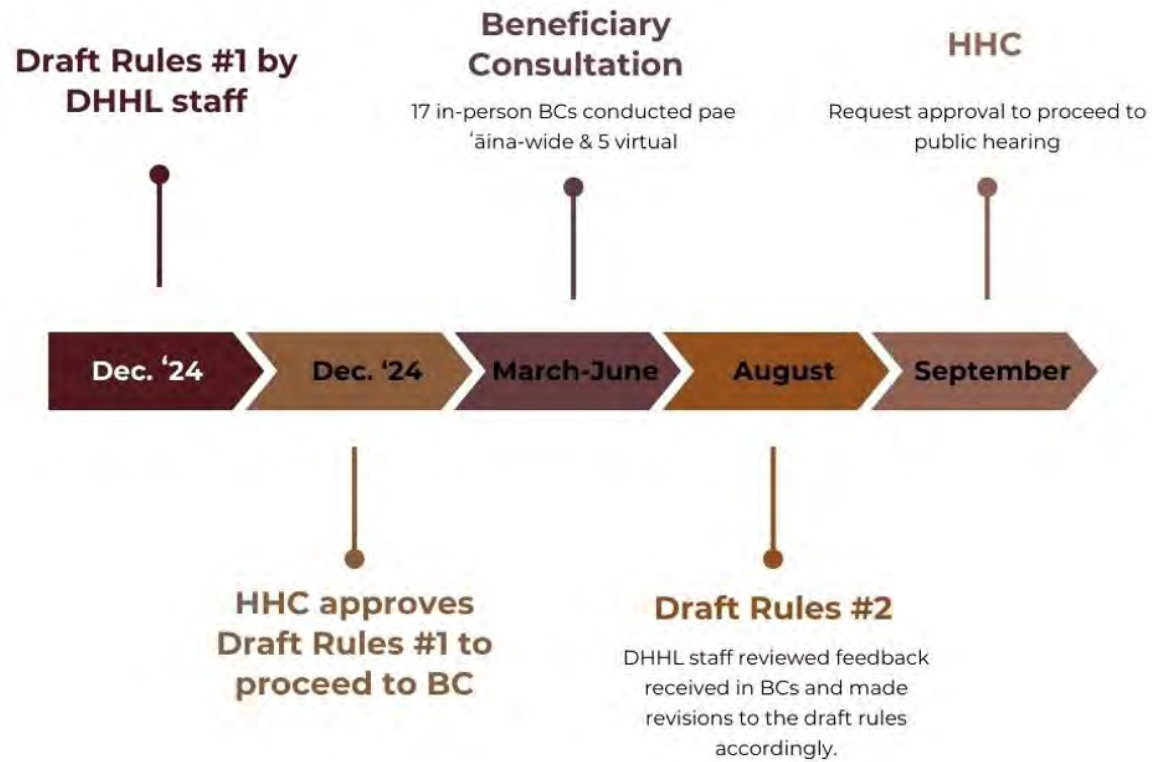
03

How does the preference policy come to fruition?

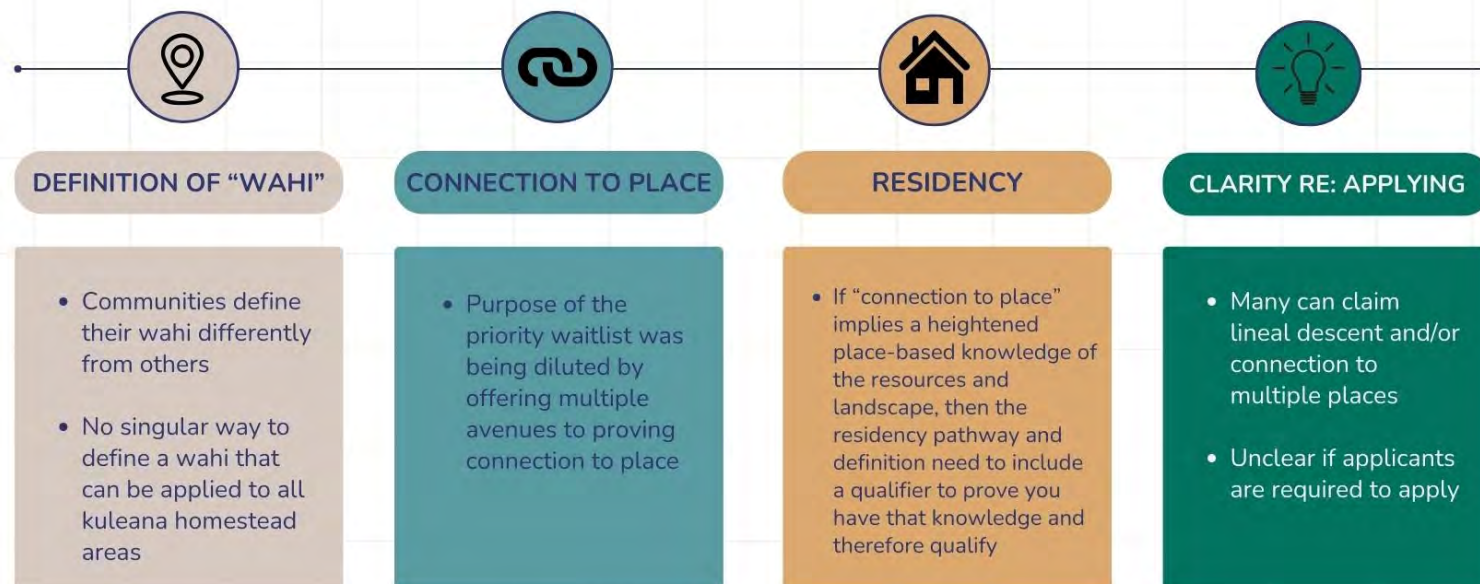
DHHL staff propose a rule that introduces a place-based priority waitlist for lineal descendants and former and current residents of areas where DHHL is planning kuleana homestead lease awards.



Timeline



Major Themes from Comments Received

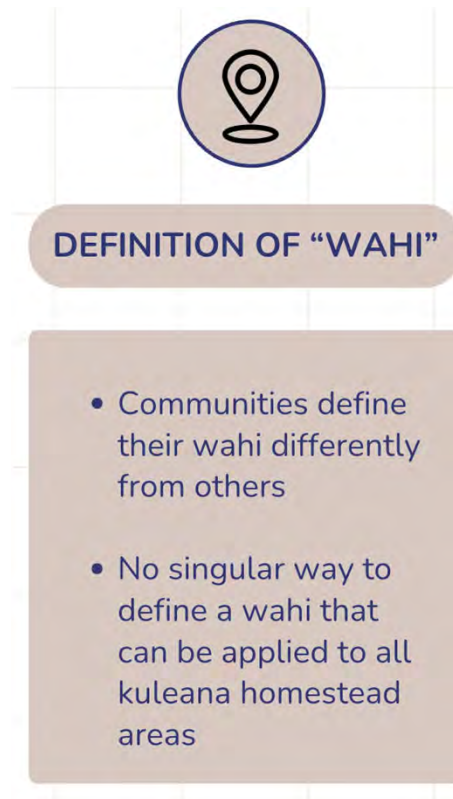




Revisions to the Rule

Revisions

1. Remove "wahi" from definitions and eliminate use of the term throughout the rule
2. Added language clarifying that "place" will be defined in the settlement plan
 - Settlement plans are designed in consultation with beneficiaries, which allows each community where kuleana homesteads are being planned to define their place for purposes of the priority waitlist
3. Clarify that "place" for an existing kuleana homestead is defined in the settlement plan that was approved by the HHC for that homestead



Reasoning

1. The term "wahi" didn't need to be included in the rule if we weren't going to provide a definition in the rule
2. Allows the communities where DHHL is planning kuleana homestead awards to define their place by their standards
3. More flexibility to define "place" from community to community by not providing a static definition in the rule

Revisions to the Rule

Revision

1. Eliminate "familial connection to existing resident" to prove a connection to place

Pathways to prove a connection to place:

1. Lineal descendancy;
2. Former or current residency; or
3. ~~Familial connection to the place by establishing that a relative is a current resident of the place~~



CONNECTION TO PLACE

- Purpose of the priority waitlist was being diluted by offering multiple avenues to proving connection to place

Reasoning

1. Feedback from BCs indicated that this option is a stretch for establishing a connection to place and dilutes the purpose of the proposed waitlist
2. Proving that a family member is a current resident does not prove that the applicant has the place-based knowledge that would make him or her a successful homesteader nor contribute to a successful homestead community

Revisions to the Rule

Revisions

1. Include "twenty years" to the definitions for "residency" and "resident"

"Residency" means the act of living in a particular place for a minimum of twenty years."

"Resident" means an eligible applicant who previously or currently resides in the place in which the award is being made for a minimum of twenty years and can verify his or her residency acceptable to the department."



RESIDENCY

- If "connection to place" implies a heightened place-based knowledge of the resources and landscape, then the residency pathway and definition need to include a qualifier to prove you have that knowledge and therefore qualify

Reasoning

1. Previous draft of the rule was unclear regarding how long a person needed to live in a place for his or her residency to prove a connection to place
2. Feedback from BCs indicated that it would take at least 20 years for a person to become familiar with a place and its resources in a way that proves a connection to place



Revisions to the Rule

Revisions

1. Added language clarifying that the priority waitlist is optional
2. Added language clarifying that if an applicant can establish a connection to multiple places, he or she must choose one place to apply to be part of the priority waitlist for



CLARITY RE: APPLYING

- Many can claim lineal descent and/or connection to multiple places
- Unclear if applicants are required to apply

Reasoning

1. Feedback from BCs indicated that it was unclear whether applicants were required to apply for the priority waitlist if they knew they were eligible to apply
2. Many beneficiaries indicated that they could establish their connection to multiple places across Hawai'i and asked what to do in the event kuleana homestead awards were made in multiple places they could prove their connection to
 - Although the priority waitlist expires with the project, added language clarifying this

Next Steps



Recommended Motion/Action:

The Hawaiian Homes Commission grant its approval to proceed to public hearings for the proposed administrative rule to establish a priority waitlist for applicants with a connection to place.



Mahalo



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HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION - DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

ITEM G-3

Accept the Beneficiary Consultation Report for the Hawaiian Islands Fiber Link land use request for an easement at TMK: (3) 2-1-011:005 (por.).

September 15-16, 2025



PROJECT AREA



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS – PLANNING OFFICE



BENEFICIARY CONSULTATION PROCESS

- **Beneficiary Consultation Meeting:**
 - In-person on July 8, 2025
- **2590 postcards were mailed to beneficiaries in Hilo:**
 - 1566 applicants with a mailing address with a Hilo zipcode
 - 1024 lessees
- **Presentation: see Exhibit B**
- **Website:** <https://dhhl.hawaii.gov/po/hawaii-island/hilo-hifl-beneficiary-consultation/>



PARTICIPATION

Beneficiary Consultation Meeting	Participants	No. Self-ID as DHHL Beneficiaries/Beneficiary Organizations
July 8, 2025	20	14
Comment Period	0	0



BENEFICIARY COMMENTS

- Beneficiaries questioned how this land disposition benefit beneficiaries or the Hawaiian Home Lands trust.
- Beneficiaries expressed concern about the potential impacts from the construction and long-term operation and maintenance of the cable and landing site.
- Beneficiaries expressed concerns over the quality of service available on the HHL and the cost of service.
- Beneficiaries asked how homesteads could get involved in the industry, either as service providers or as a part of the workforce.
- Some discussion with DHHL's broadband staff regarding improvements being overseen by the Department. Implementation of these proposed improvements should be pursued and community conversations should be continued to ensure positive impacts to the homestead communities.



Next Steps & Recommendation

Next-Steps

- HHC acceptance of this beneficiary consultation report
- DHHL broadband staff to address beneficiary concerns to follow through with the proposed “last mile” of installation of fiber at community institutions in the homestead to ensure access to the improved broadband service for Keaukaha Elem., DHHL EHDO, and the KPFA hub.
- HHC issuance of a Right of Entry for due diligence (compliance with Ch. 343 and Ch. 6E)
- HHC issuance of a long-term land disposition with conditions to address beneficiary concerns

Recommendation

- Staff respectfully requests that the Hawaiian Homes Commission approves the recommended motion to accept this beneficiary consultation report as complete.



Mahalo



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Item G-4

Adopt the Final Waimea Nui Regional Plan Update (2025)

September 15-16, 2025

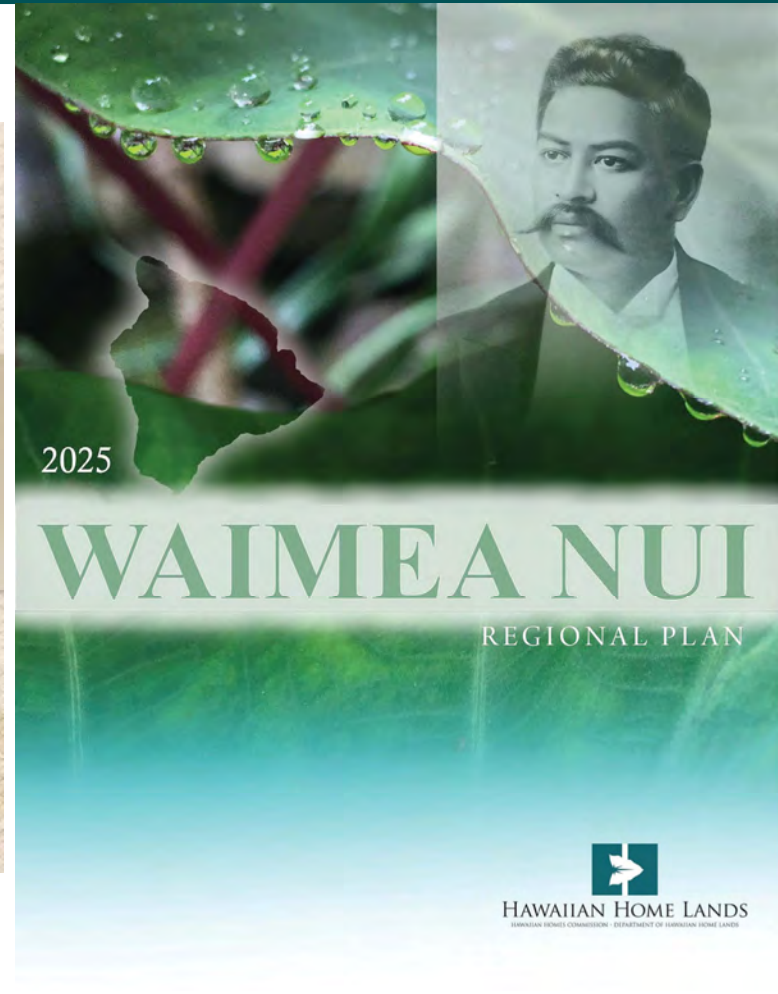


Waimea Nui Regional Plan

WAIMEA NUI REGION

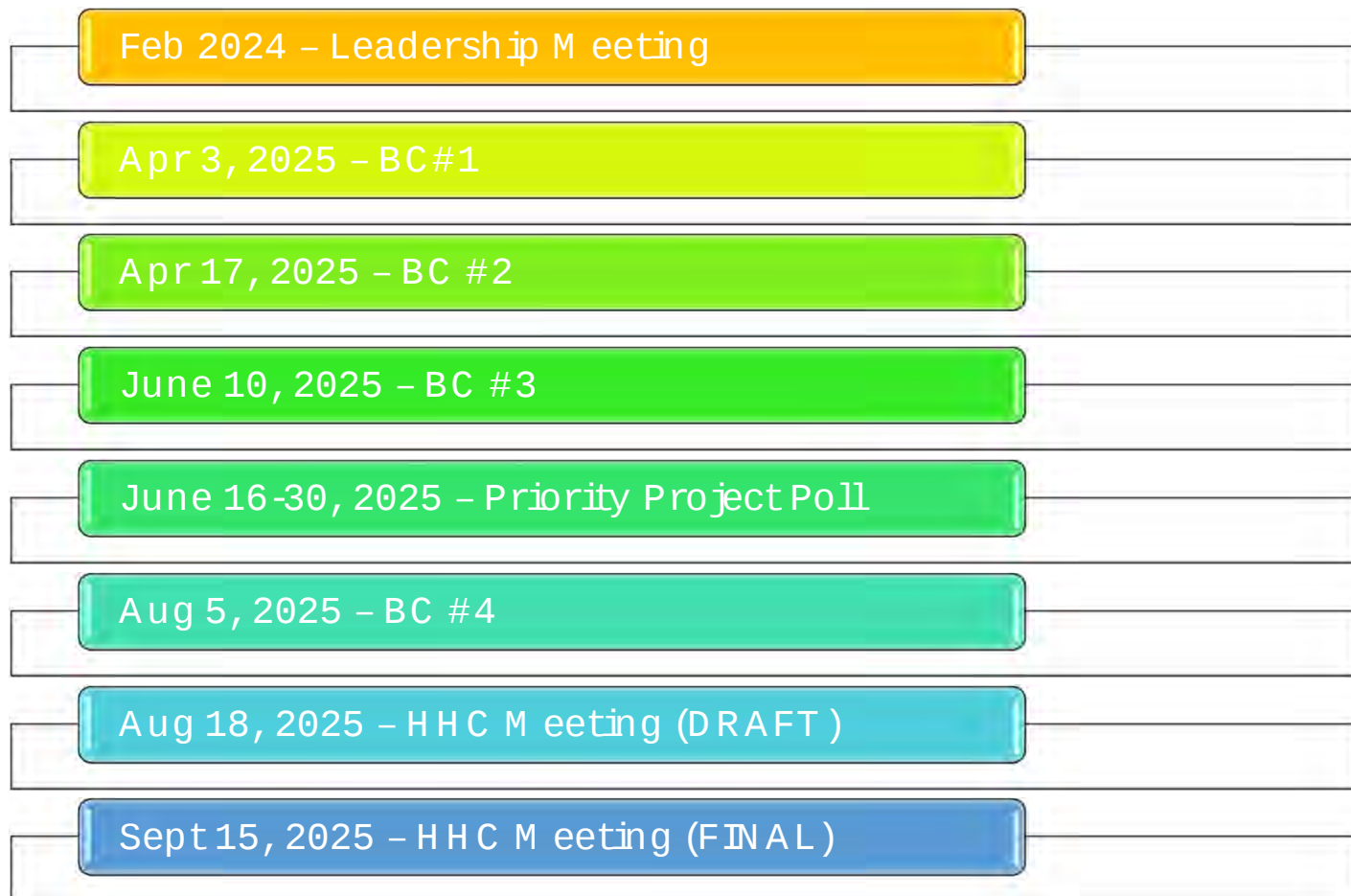


JANUARY 2012





Planning Process & Timeline





Outreach & Engagement

- Outreach:

- Project website: <https://dhhhl.hawaii.gov/po/hawaii-island/waimea-nui-regional-plan-update-2025/>
- Postcard mailings (*878 recipients - current lessees & applicants in 96720 & 97627*)
- Email announcements & reminders
- Assistance from the WHHA & Hui Aloha Pu'ukapu to notify membership

- Meeting Series:

- BC #1 – values, vision, issues & opportunities (*34 attendees + keiki*)
- BC #2 – confirm values & vision and draft Projects list (*25 attendees + keiki*)
- BC #3 – create and refine project ideas list (*26 attendees + keiki*)
- Priority Projects Poll – 107 participants, able to vote via hardcopy mailer, online via Google Forms, by email, & by telephone.
(*35 lessees, 42 successors, 12 applicants & 18 other members of the homestead*)
- BC #4 – review & comments on Draft Regional Plan (*21 attendees + keiki*)



Community Vision & Values

“Waimea Nui is a community rooted in the old ways of living. We live in balance with the world around us, guided by the voices and ‘ike of our kūpuna. We know the names of our ‘āina and the names of our people. Across the different homesteads, we work together, advocate for one another, and uphold our values through self-governance. We grow and raise our own food and are sustained by our own ‘āina. We strive to build a relationship of trust with DHHL, staff, and Commissioners who work with us and for us. This way of life is our foundation, and it is what we pass down to the future generations of Waimea Nui.”



Caring for the
Wellbeing of
Our Kūpuna



Creating a Safe
and Secure
Community



Perpetuating
our Cultural
Traditions



Building
Pilina



Being Self-
Sufficient and
Self-Governing



Collaborating and
Building Shared
Kuleana with DHHL



Priority Projects

PROJECT	LESSEE VOTES	SUCCESSOR VOTES	APPLICANT VOTES	OTHER VOTES	TOTAL VOTES
Waimea Nui Hawaiian Homestead Community Initiative	85	144	27	22	278
Equitable and Sustainable Water Access	43	38	14	25	120
Strategize and Initiate Subdivision/Commencement Date	9	6	8	14	37
Homestead Safety and Security Improvement Program	13	7	3	13	36
Waimea Nui Agricultural and Pastoral Pilot Program	13	10	4	7	34



Next Steps

- Aug 18-19, 2025 – HHC Meeting (*Draft for info only*)
- Aug 25, 2025 – End Comment Period on Draft Plan
- Sept 15-16, 2025 – HHC Meeting (*Final for adoption*)



Mahalo



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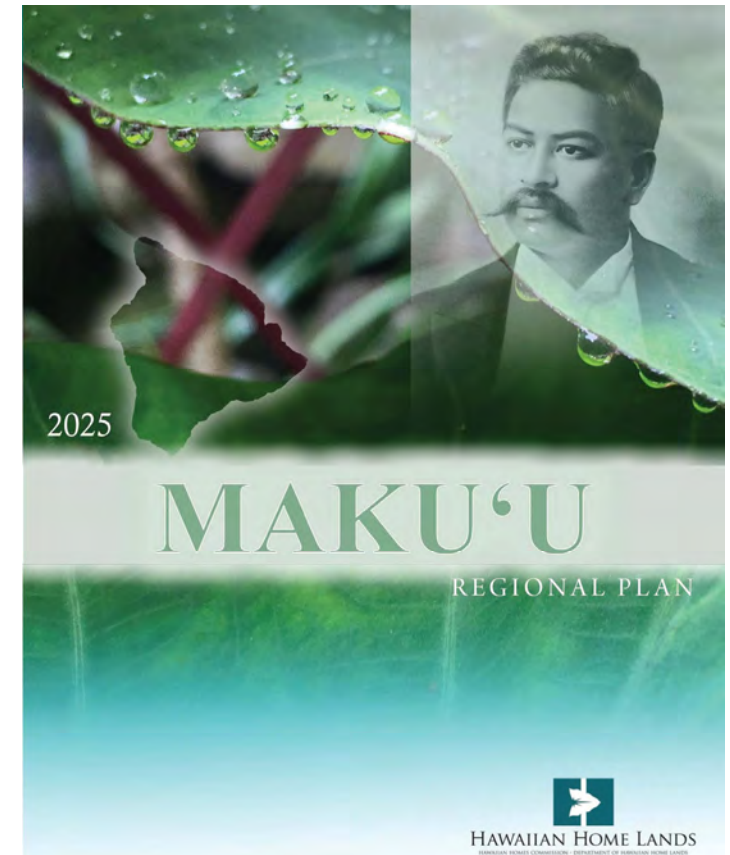
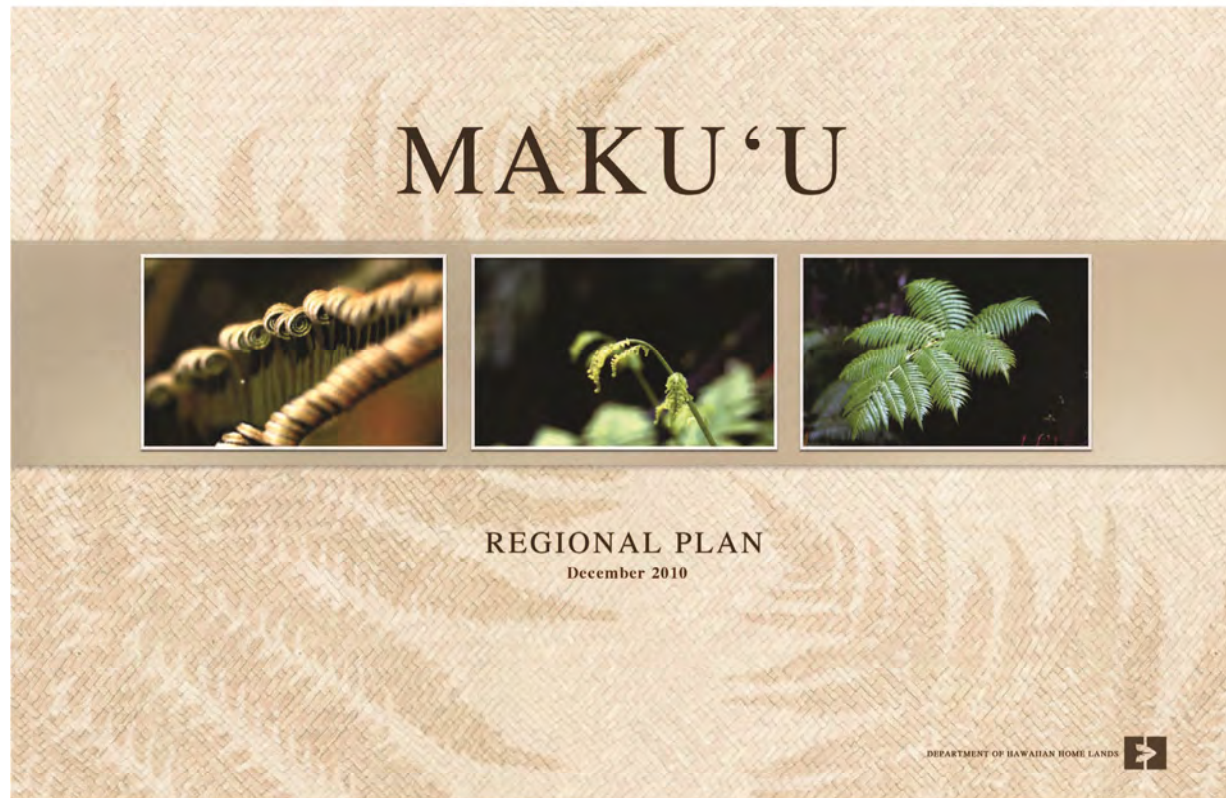
Item G-6

For Info Only – Draft Maku'u Regional Plan Update (2025)

September 15-16, 2025

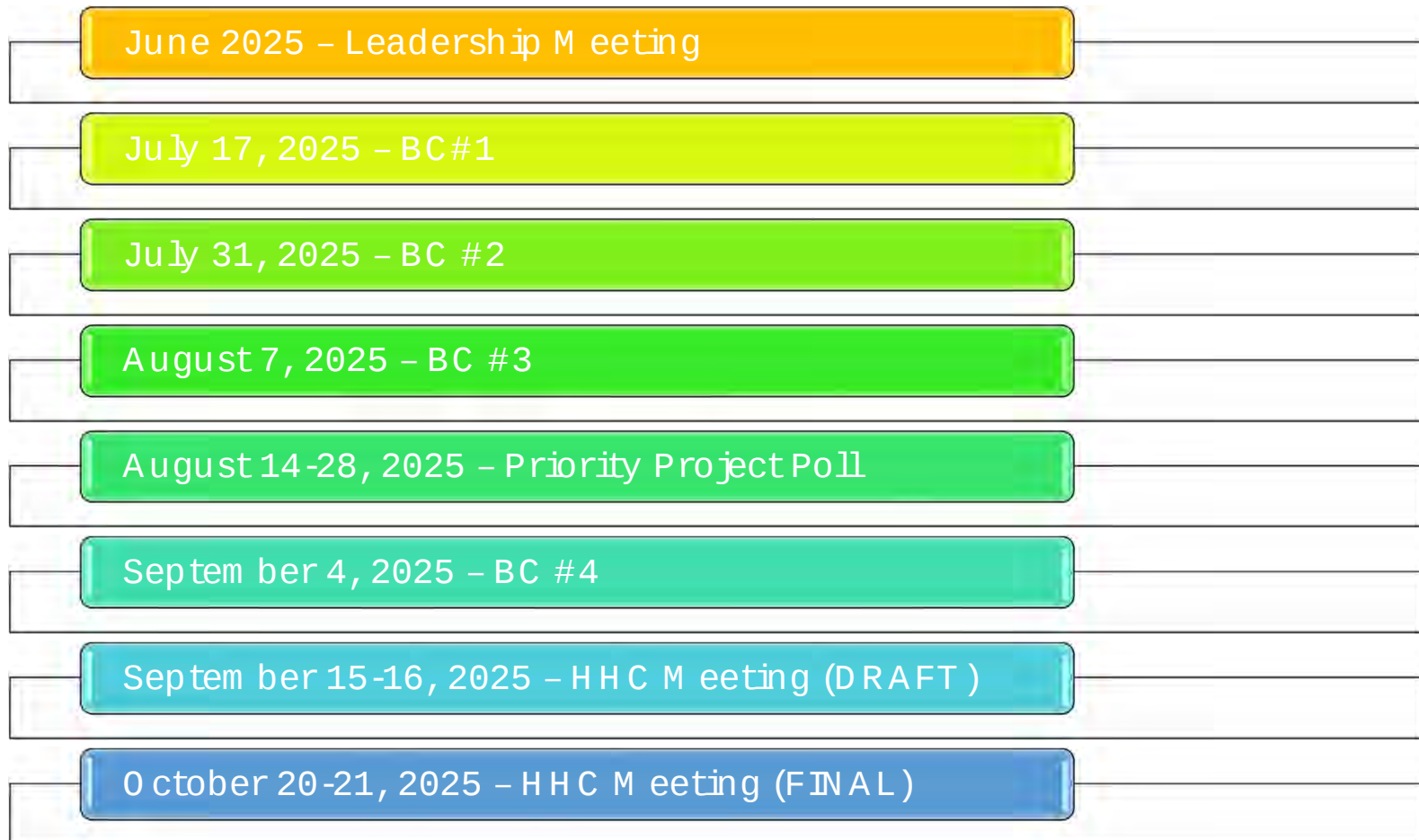


Waimea Nui Regional Plan





Planning Process & Timeline





Outreach & Engagement

- Outreach:

- Project website: <https://dhhl.hawaii.gov/po/hawaii-island/makuu-regional-plan-update-2025/>
- Postcard mailings (*151 recipients – existing Maku‘u lessees*)
- Email announcements & reminders
- Assistance from the Maku‘u Farmers Hawaiian Homestead Association (MFHHA) to notify membership and hosting every beneficiary consultation meeting

- Meeting Series:

- BC #1 – values, vision, issues & opportunities (*12 attendees + keiki*)
- BC #2 – confirm values & vision and draft Projects list (*7 attendees + keiki*)
- BC #3 – create and refine project ideas list (*14 attendees + keiki*)
- Priority Projects Poll – 13 participants, able to vote via hardcopy mailer, online via Google Forms, by email, & by telephone (*13 participants, only 12 could be verified as lessees*)
- BC #4 – review & comments on Draft Regional Plan (*5 attendees*)



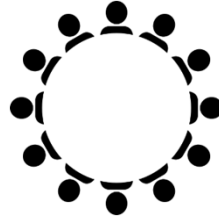
KAHUA



Aloha kekahi i
kekahi



Aloha nā akua



Nurturing 'ohana (keiki
to kūpuna) through
education, culture, and
community



Building community
capacity and economic
resilience



Sustaining community
through cultural practice
and knowledge



Honoring, caring for, and
continuing the legacy of
our kūpuna



Stewarding
the ahupua'a



Strengthening community
through gathering space



Honoring and
understanding Pele



VISION

As established by the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, Maku'u strives to ho'opulapula and perpetuate Native Hawaiian values and traditions. We support our 'ohana to become self-sustaining by being grounded in 'ike kūpuna and growing through educational and employment opportunities for future generations.



Priority Projects

PROJECT IDEAS	LESSEE VOTES
Homestead Safety and Security	25
Hālau Initiative	8
Support for Agricultural Use & Infrastructure	8
Alternative Financing Program for Lava Zone 2 and Kūpuna Housing	7
Water System Governance, Infrastructure, & Community Benefits	5



Next Steps

- September 15-16, 2025 – HHC Meeting (*Draft for info only*)
- September 25, 2025 – End Comment Period on Draft Plan
- October 20-21, 2025 – HHC Meeting (*Final for adoption*)



Mahalo



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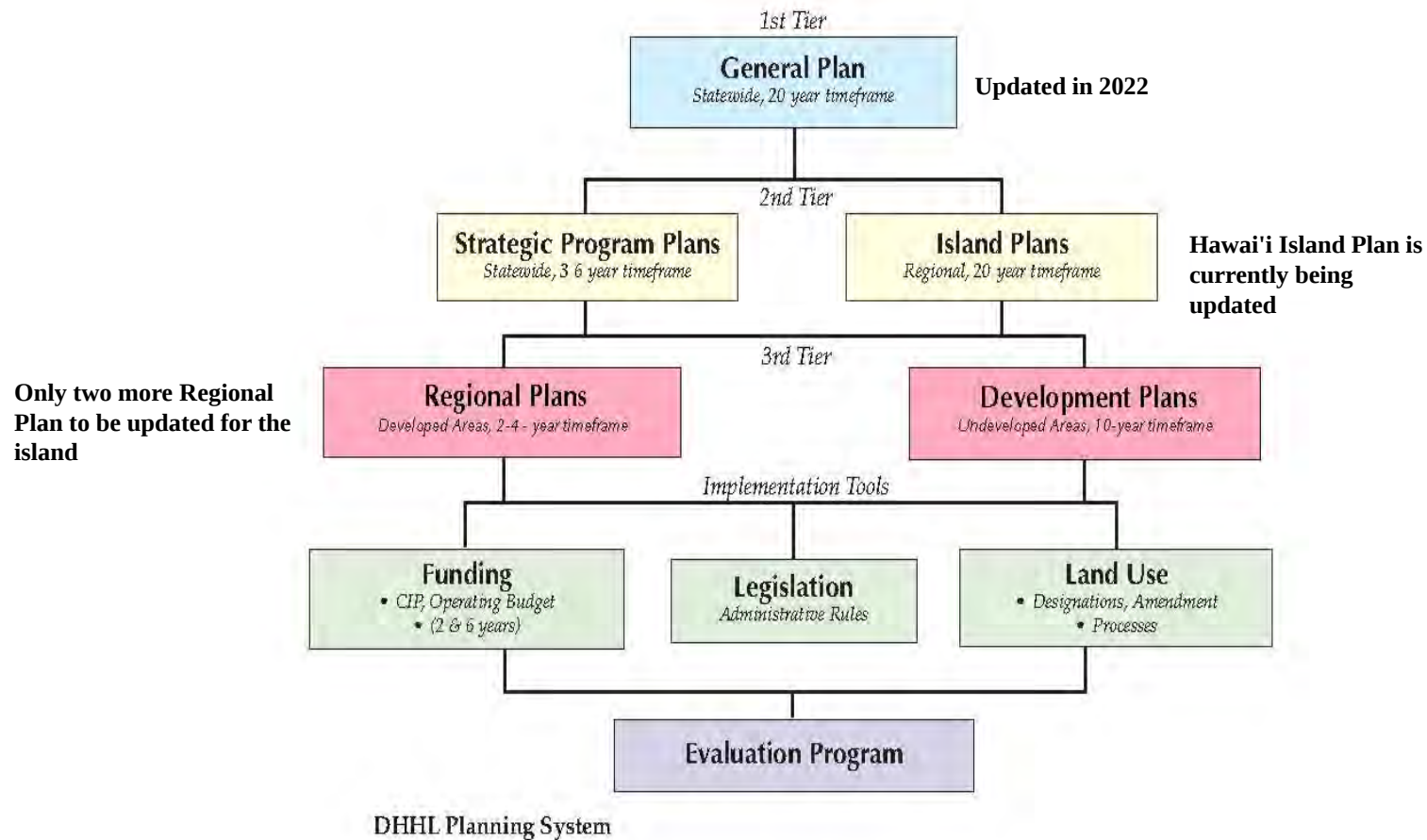


Item G-8

For Information Only – Status Update on Plan
Implementation in the East Hawai`i: Hawai`i Island Plan
and Regional Plans in the moku of Hilo, Puna and Ka`ū

September 15-16, 2025

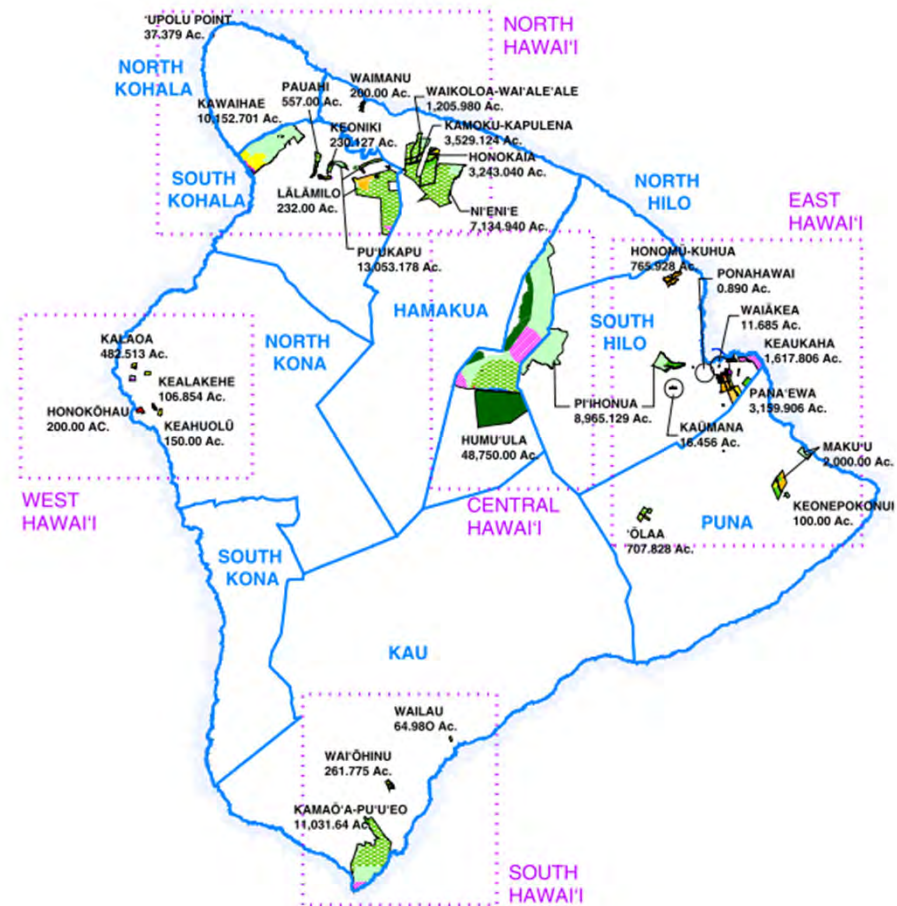
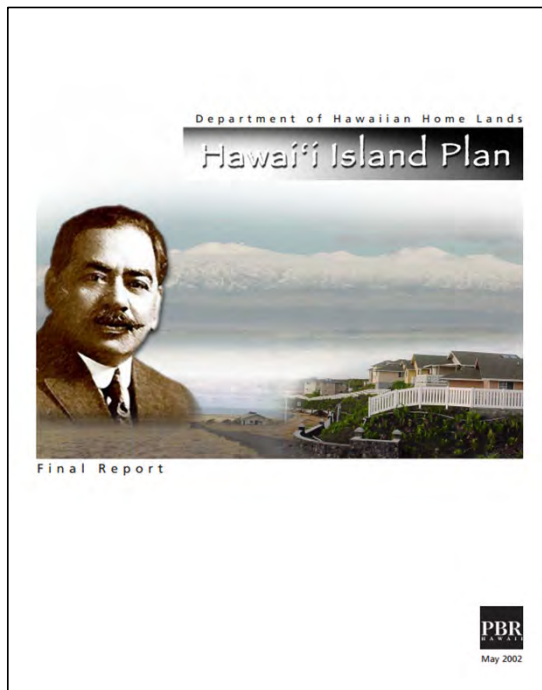
East & South Hawai`i Plan Implementation Update



East & South Hawai'i Plan Implementation Update

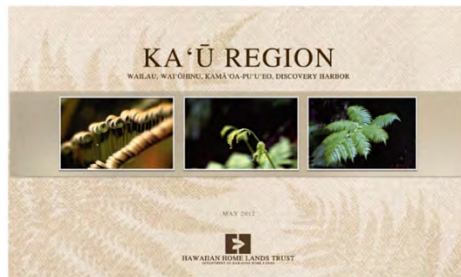
Hawai'i Island Plan

- PBR Hawaii
- Kick-off Aug 2023
- 30-month process
- Beneficiary consultations began in Aug 2024.
- Next round of meetings will be in December 2025.

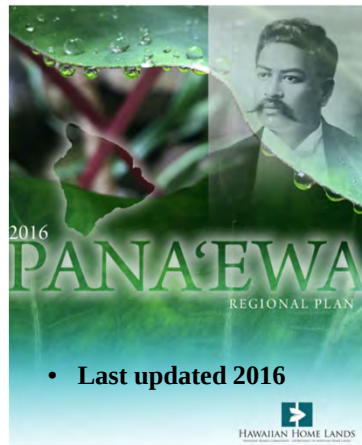


East & South Hawai'i Plan Implementation Update

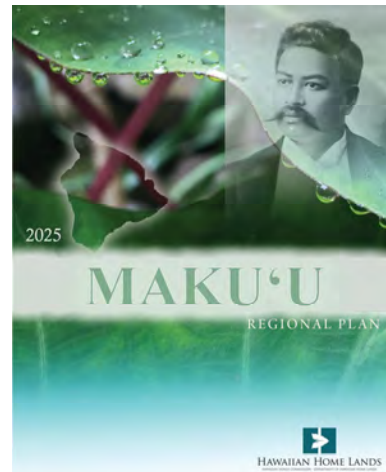
East & South Hawai'i Regional Plans



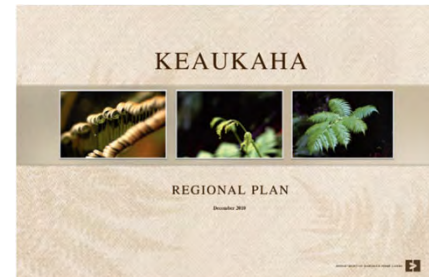
- Currently in procurement, scheduled to begin early 2025



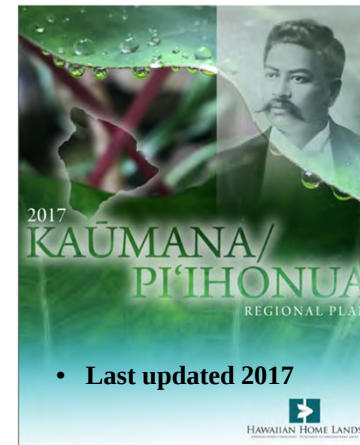
- Last updated 2016



- Scheduled to be completed October 2025



- Consultant selected, scheduled to begin in late 2025

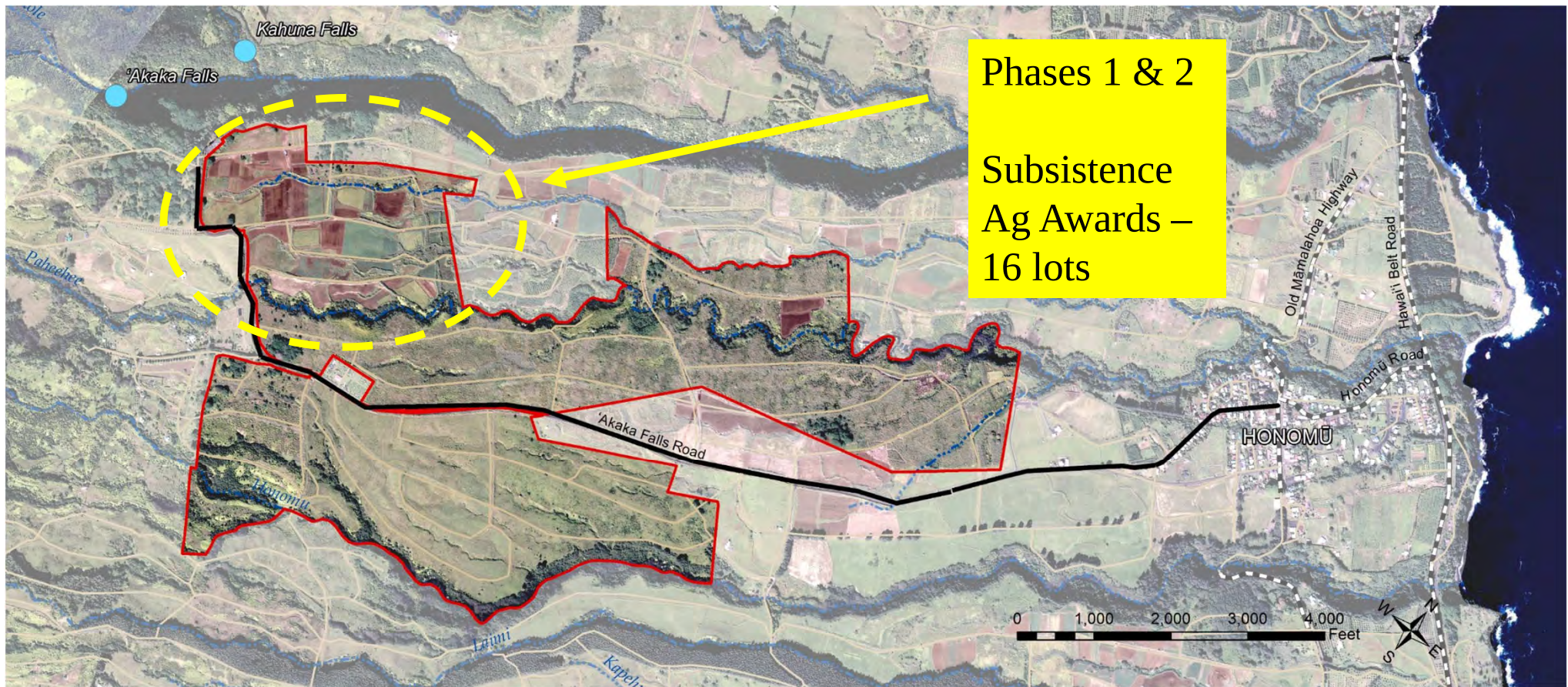


- Last updated 2017

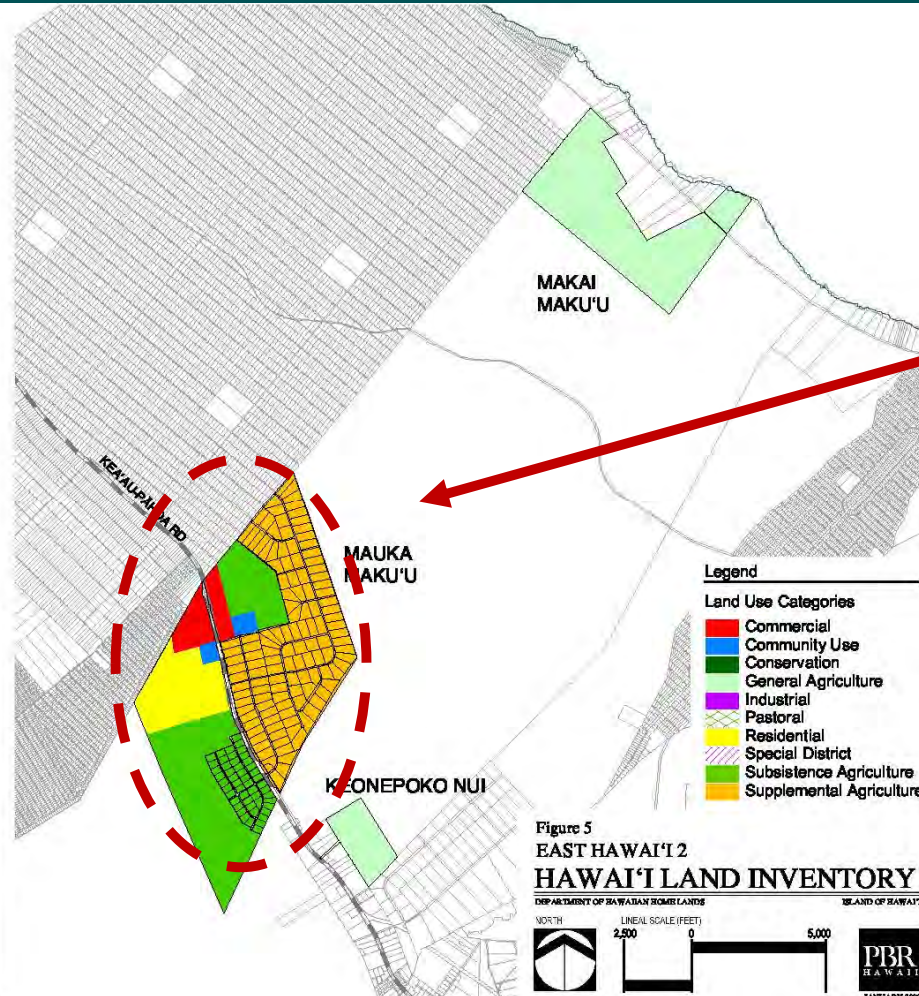
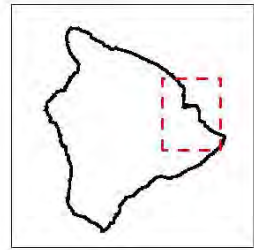


East & South Hawai'i Plan Implementation Update

Honomū Subsistence Agriculture Subdivision



East & South Hawai'i Plan Implementation Update



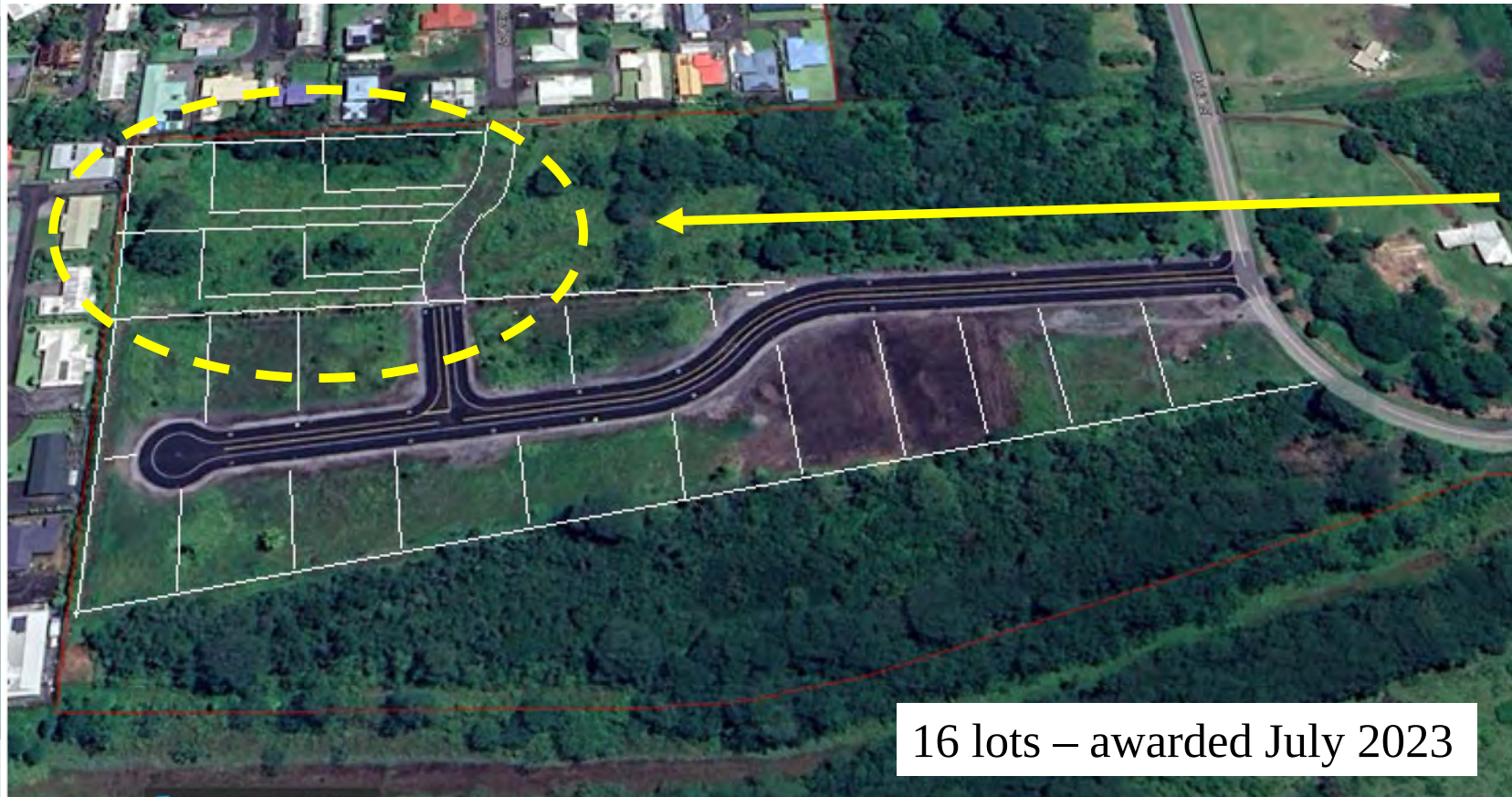
Subsistence
Ag Awards –
32 lots

Supplemental
Ag Awards –
20 lots



East & South Hawai'i Plan Implementation Update

Pana'ewa Subsistence Agriculture Subdivision



Future 6 Lots are being planned for development in the near future with waterline and road improvements to Kinai Street

16 lots – awarded July 2023



East & South Hawai'i Plan Implementation Update

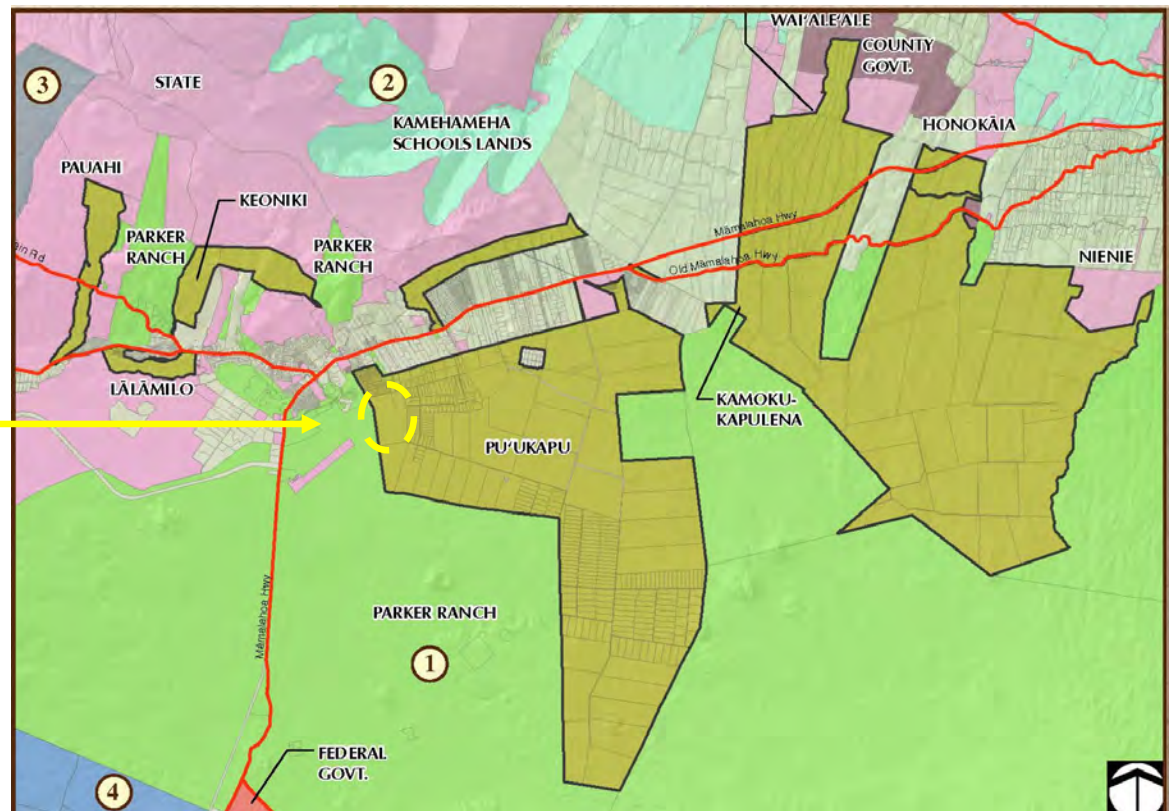
Hana Laulima Lāhui O Ka'ū Land Use Request



Hazard Mitigation Efforts – Island wide

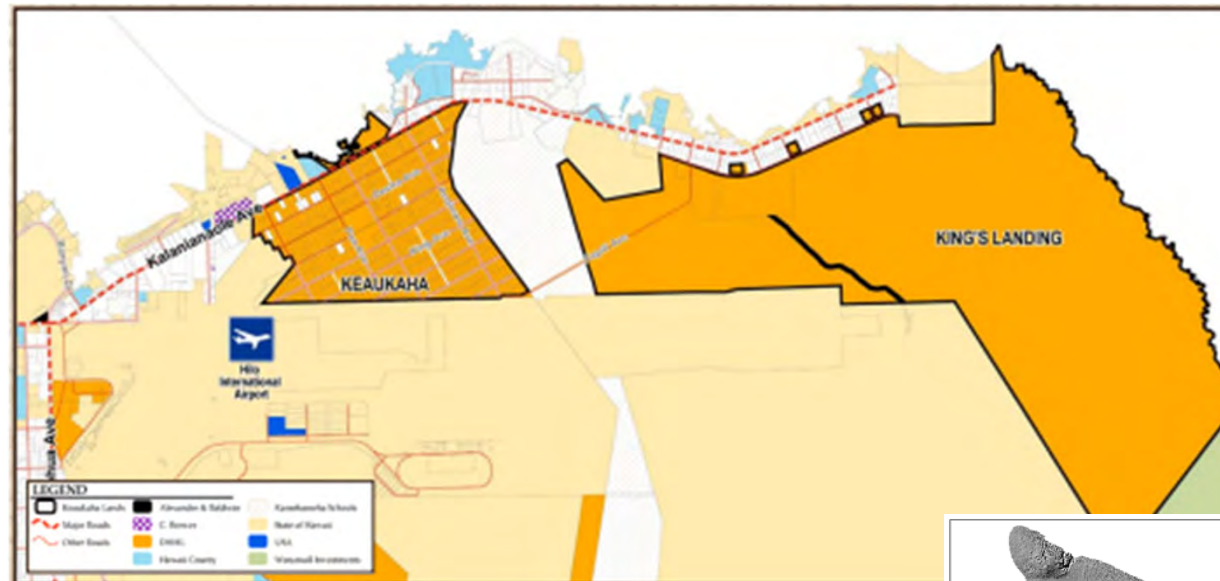
Waimea Nui Emergency Operations Center

- Project includes completing infrastructure (roadways and utilities) for the Waimea Nui Community Initiative Project
- Includes construction of a 7,000 sf emergency operations building to house equipment and software to improve coordinated response to emergencies, including wildfire
- Federal Grant for \$6.8M from DOD OLDCC



East Hawai`i Plan Implementation Update

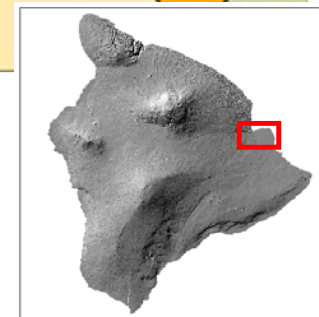
Keaukaha Regional Plan



Priority Project:

Keaukaha Hawaiian Community Pavilion

**In-Progress,
more needed**

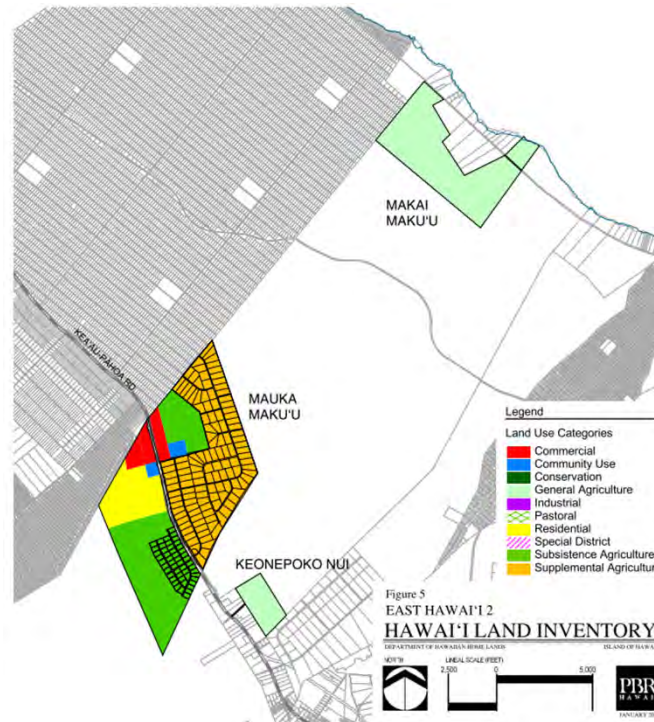


East Hawai`i Plan Implementation Update

Maku`u Regional Plan

Priority Projects:

- Homestead Safety and Security
- Hālau Initiative
- Support for Agricultural Use and Infrastructure
- Alternative Financing Program for Lava Zone 2 and Kūpuna Housing
- Water System Governance, Infrastructure and Community Benefits

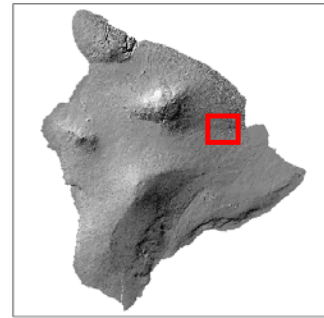
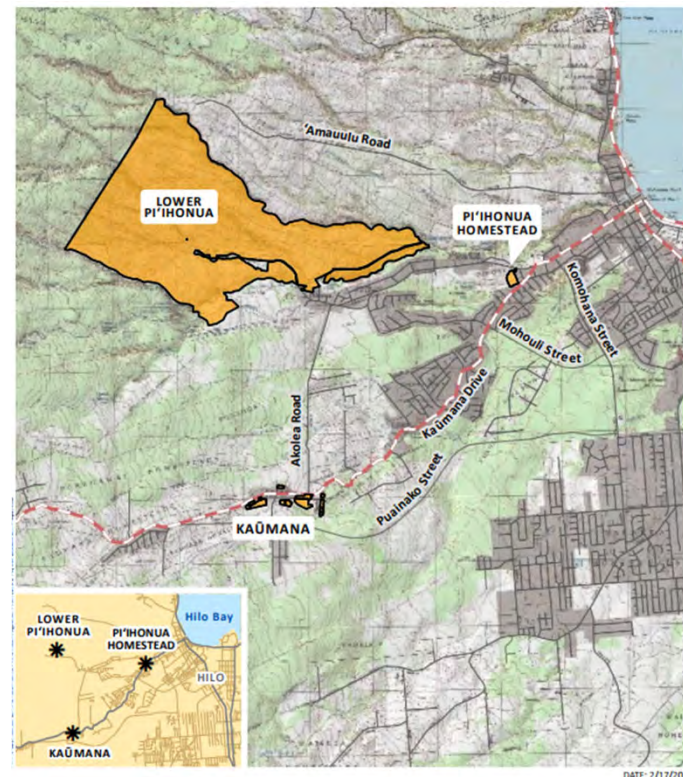


East Hawai`i Plan Implementation Update

Kaūmana-Pi'ihonua Regional Plan

Priority Projects:

- Kaūmana-
Pi'ihonua Community Center **In-Progress**
- Agriculture Sustainability –
Community Pasture **In-Progress,
more needed**
- Community Tool-Shed
and Work Days **Not Started**
- Pest-Control Mitigation and Removal
(Kaūmana Only) **Not Started**

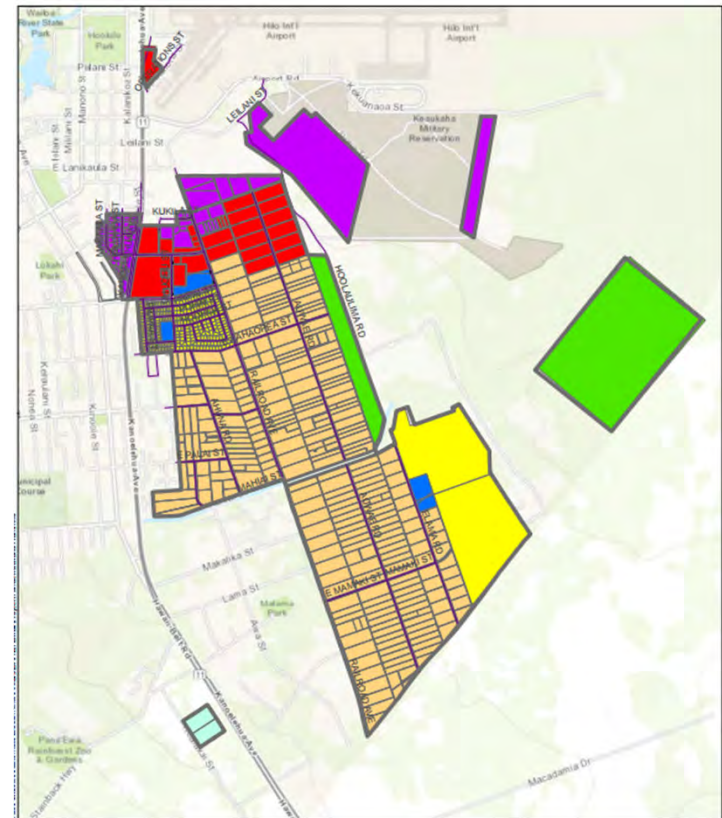
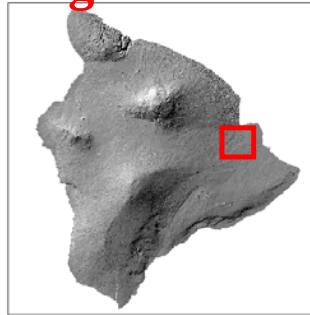


East Hawai'i Plan Implementation Update

Pana'ewa Regional Plan

Priority Projects:

- Project Kamoleao **In-Progress**
- Pana'ewa Park & Family Center **In-Progress**
- Agricultural Capacity Building Marketing & Training Center **In-Progress**
- Traffic Calming & Safety Improvements on Railroad Ave. and Auwae Ave. **In-Progress**
- Hawai'i Island Plan Update (East) **In-Progress**

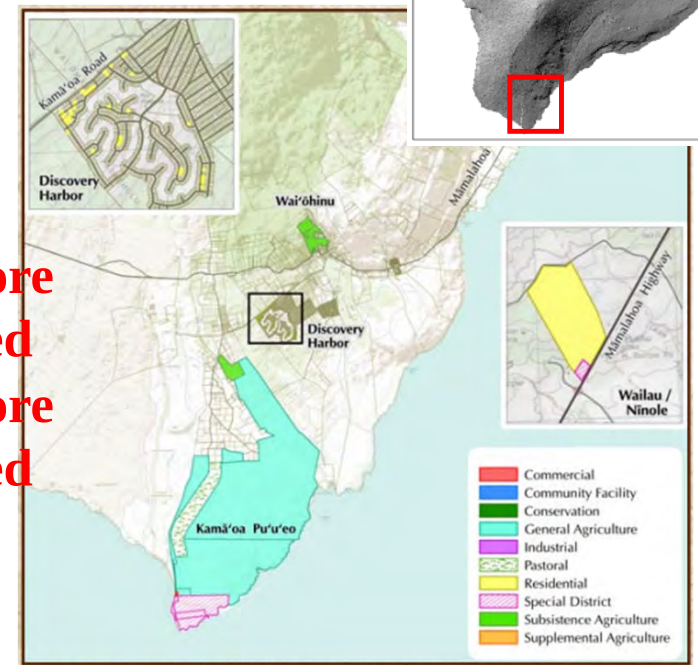


South Hawai`i Plan Implementation Update

Ka'ū Regional Plan

Priority Projects:

- Support Development of Affordable Homestead Alternative in Ka'ū **More needed**
- Create a Ka'ū Homestead Community Association **Completed**
- Obtain Additional Water for Homestead Lots in Kamā'oa, Pu'u'eo, and Wai'ōhinu **In-Progress, more resources needed**
- Protect and Preserve Cultural Sites and Natural Resources in Kamā'oa **In-Progress, more resources needed**
- Agricultural Homestead Leases at Wai'ōhinu and pursue partnership with DLNR for Hawaiian Homesteading **In-Progress, more needed**





Mahalo



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

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Item G-10

Update Process for the Native Hawaiian Development Program Plan (NHDPP)

September 2025



Purpose

- To notify the Hawaiian Homes Commission of DHHL's intent to update the NHDPP
- To summarize the legal and procedural framework for the update
- To outline the approach and timeline



What is the NHDPP?

Native Hawaiian Development Program Plan (NHDPP)

- A long-range strategic plan to guide DHHL programs that support Native Hawaiian beneficiaries
- Mandated under Section 213(f) of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act
- Governed by Hawai'i Administrative Rules § 10-6.1-1
- Last adopted in 2012; extensions authorized by Commission through June 2025 (Item G-1)



Legal Foundation

- HHCA § 213(f): Authorizes development of program plans for community and economic development
- HAR § 10-6.1-1:
 - Requires periodic review and update of the NHDPP
 - Mandates submission to the Commission and public hearings
 - Establishes reporting requirements and plan content



Why Now?

- The current plan is about 15 years old
- Socioeconomic conditions, beneficiary needs, and funding opportunities have evolved
- Commission authorized a revised update schedule in Item G-1 (June 2025)



Update Approach

Three-Phase Framework

- 1. Alignment & Planning:** Scoping, legal review, internal coordination, Commission consultation
- 2. Research & Engagement:** Technical data collection and Beneficiary Consultation
- 3. Drafting & Adoption:** Public hearings, final draft, submission to Hawaiian Homes Commission



Proposed Timeline

Subject to Change

Phase	Activities	Timing
Phase 1: Planning	Scoping, legal review, consultation	June-Sept 2025
Phase 2: Engagement	Beneficiary outreach, research	Oct-Dec 2025
Phase 3: Draft & Approve	Hearings, final draft, HHC review	Jan - June 2026



Next Steps

- Finalize project scope and planning framework
- Conduct Beneficiary Consultations
- Return to HHC in Q1 2026 with draft plan
- Launch beneficiary engagement by Summer 2025



He Nīnau 'Oukou

- Questions and Discussion

Mahalo



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

www.dhhl.hawaii.gov/beneficiary-consultation-statewide-projects/

September 15, 2025

Kali Watson, Chair
Hawaiian Homes Commission
91-5420 Kapolei Parkway
Kapolei, HI 96707

Peter "Kahana" Albinio, Jr.
Acting Administrator,
Land Management Division
Department of Hawaiian Homelands
91-5420 Kapolei Parkway
Kapolei, HI 96707

Chair Watson and Mr. Albinio,

I am writing to express my strong support for the approval of the leasing of TMK 41008002 in Waimānalo to the Friends of Waimānalo, a 501©3 organization.

The leasing of this property would allow this organization, not just to continue, but to expand its workforce development programs. These programs today provide skills for native Hawaiian Beneficiaries, men and women in transition and for veterans that allow them to return to the workforce, and most importantly, with livable incomes. Examples of these programs include the certification for heavy equipment, such as forklift, scissor lift and gradall lift – to name a few. Friends of Waimānalo has already partnered with unions and private companies to employ these men and women upon completion of these certifications.

I was introduced to Friends of Waimānalo over five years ago by its very capable leader, Scotty Reis-Moniz. Scotty has proven to be a dedicated and an inspirational leader in the area of social services for Waimānalo for more than 25 years. He truly believes in, and practices, the Hawaiian values of 'ohana, aloha, mālama, pono and kuleana. And for all of these reasons, I express my strong support for the approval of the leasing of TMK 41008002 to the Friends of Waimānalo.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John C. Dean", written over a horizontal line.

John C. Dean, Chair
Emmett R. Quady Foundation
41-467 Kalanianaʻole Highway
Waimānalo, HI 96795
808-291-6029

Public Testimony Packet

Hawaiian Homes Commission Meeting
September 15 & 16, 2025
Grand Naniloa, Hilo, Hawaii

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
To: [Burrows-Nuuuanu, Leatrice W](#)
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony
Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 6:33:30 PM

Name

Melanie Ioane

Email

melanie.ioane5@gmail.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

Keaukaha Beach Park

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

Aloha DHHL Commissioners,

My name is Melanie Ioane and I am proud product of the Keaukaha and Panaewa community. My Ohana are the Ioane and Kamoku Ohana. My great grandfather Isaac Kamoku was one of the first to receive Keaukaha Homestead. My Ioane Ohana resides on multiple streets in Keaukaha.

I am writing to have clarity on a special place I call my home, Keaukaha Beach Park or otherwise known as Puhi Bay. I was blessed with the opportunity to be raised at Puhi Bay by my village of ancestors. I hold in my pu'uwai memories that I will forever treasure and will continue to fulfill the legacy left by my ancestors. It was brought to my attention along with other community members that DHHL is considering leasing Puhi Bay to the County Of Hawaii (Hilo). I have heard this from Mr. Jeremiah and I've heard this from the President of the Keaukaha Community Association.

I am not sure if all of you are aware of what happened many years ago at Puhi Bay in October 1993. I remember it clearly as I was in school. My parents came to get my siblings and I and brought us down to Puhi Bay. I saw my world demolished by heavy equipment. It was traumatizing. The structure (that all could use) was being torn down, aunties and uncles were being arrested and there I was crying watching this all happen.

Puhi Bay is more than just Keaukaha Beach Park. It is a place of healing, a place of safety, and a place where we as Native Hawaiians can come and enjoy and also a place where we can preserve our culture (Aina and Kai). For many years Puhi Bay has been cleaned by the uncles and aunties of the community. Many of the aunties and uncles are no longer here but if they were here and you were to ask them why they would clean and take care of the beach, their response would be this, "We did it all because we love our community, we love seeing generations of kids grow up at Puhi Bay, and we love Puhi Bay." They did everything out of Love!

The clarity we need is what is the reasoning Hawaiian Homes wants to transfer over Puhi Bay, Keaukaha Beach Park to the County of Hawaii?

What are your expectations from the Native Hawaiian Community in regards to Puhi Bay, Keaukaha Beach Park?

What are you going to do for us the Native Hawaiian Community to upkeep and maintain our beach?

I've heard KCA needs to take care of it, and that isn't a response, currently Keaukaha Beach Park is under DHHL so it is the responsibility of all of you to take care of it and keep it under DHHL for us the Native Hawaiian Community. Isn't DHHL trustees responsible for the land management? We can be

there as a community and do our part but at the end of the day its each of you seated as a commissioner are appointed to malama ceded lands for the best interest of its beneficiaries.

Being an adult and taking my nieces and nephews to Puhi Bay I have that opportunity to pass on everything I have learned from my village and help create that family atmosphere for them. One of the most recent occurrence was on August 31, I took my niece to the beach with 2 bamboo poles. We used 1 and left the other to the side. I had about 6 kids come by us and with just a simple bamboo pole I was able to build that trust and connection with the kids like the aunties and uncles did with me. I was able to talk to their parents and grandparents just because time was taken to invest in the kids and embrace them as Ohana.

On behalf of multiple families another concern is camping at Puhi Bay. Puhi Bay is a touchy subject, I hope that camping at Keaukaha Beach Park and Ownership of Keaukaha Beach Park will be addressed at Keaukaha Elementary on September 15th.

Mahalo,

Melanie Ioane

September 11, 2025

State of Hawaii
Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
Kali Watson, Chairperson
Hawaiian Homes Commission
91-5420 Kapolei Pkwy
Kapolei, HI 96707

Dear Chairperson Watson,

I am writing in support of Legacy Ventures' proposal to develop a motorsports and mixed-use facility at Kalaeloa. I believe that a dedicated motorsports venue is long overdue. Our island has lacked a safe place for drivers and enthusiasts.

The development will deliver more than just a racing venue. As a Native Hawaiian and race enthusiast myself, I can see the future potential that building a facility like this can have not only for the economy, but also our youth. This development will create a positive outlet for their energy and passion, the facility can help steer them toward constructive activities, mentorship, and skill-building opportunities. At the same time, the development will create a meaningful business and employment opportunities for Native Hawaiians, supporting local entrepreneurship and helping families thrive.

My support also comes from a personal journey I am on to earn my pro drift license and compete professionally. The absence of a local motorsports track has meant that I must travel out of state to pursue my dream, a process that can be both time consuming and expensive. It would be incredible to have a world class facility right here in Hawai'i, where local aspiring drivers could train and grow. There is so much untapped talent in Hawai'i, and this project would give us a safe, positive, and inspiring outlet to develop our skills while staying connected to our roots and keep the money circulating within our state.

I believe this proposal represents a unique chance to meet community needs, support DHHL's mission, and create something future generations can be proud of.

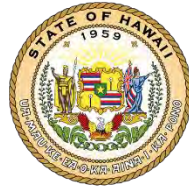
Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

Kalani Wong
Drift Racer/CEO
Mobile Fleet Hawaii LLC
1186 Mikole Street, Honolulu, HI 96819

Kaiali'i Kahele
Chairperson
Board of Trustees

Phone: (808) 594-1855



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96817

September 12, 2025

Mr. Kali Watson
Chairperson, Hawaiian Homes Commission
State of Hawai'i Department of Hawaiian Homelands
91-5420 Kapolei Pkwy., Kapolei, HI 96707

Dear Chairperson Watson,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Project Developer Agreement between the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) and Legacy Ventures, and their proposed development of a world-class motorsports and industrial-commercial mixed-use facility at Kalaeloa, O'ahu (TMK No. (1) 9-1-013:061).

The proposed location for this project, situated on commercial lands at the former Barbers Point Naval Air Station, is not ideally suited for homesteading or long-term residential use. Instead, it presents a unique opportunity to put undeveloped and underutilized commercial land to productive use in a way that aligns with DHHL's trust responsibilities by generating revenue that can directly support the Department and beneficiary needs.

Since the closures of Hawai'i Raceway Park (2006) and Kalaeloa Raceway Park (2014), our community has lacked a dedicated racing venue. This project fills that gap while also advancing public safety, education, recreation, and business opportunities through its mixed-use components. Additionally, the financial structure of this project is designed to directly advance DHHL's mission. Lease payments and revenue participation from the facility's diversified revenue base will create a stable, recurring income stream for the trust, to the maximum extent possible at full market value. These funds will directly support DHHL's beneficiaries and empower the Department to expand homestead development. Equally important, the development team has committed to prioritizing direct benefits for DHHL beneficiaries through scholarships, direct payments, and preferential leasing for Native Hawaiian-owned businesses. These measures are not just add-ons—they are necessary safeguards to ensure that economic development efforts deliver tangible value to the people the trust was created to serve.

At the same time, DHHL's core mission is to provide homesteads for Native Hawaiians and reduce the homestead waitlist. Any development on DHHL lands must complement—not compete with or distract from—that mission. This project has the potential to strengthen DHHL's housing efforts by creating new revenue streams that can be reinvested in homestead development, while ensuring that the Department remains focused on its responsibility to place beneficiaries back on their ancestral lands.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if there are additional ways I can support this important endeavor.

Respectfully,

Kaiali'i Kahele
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Office of Hawaiian Affairs

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
KE KE'ENA O KA MEIA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 300 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-4141 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



MICHAEL D. FORMBY
MANAGING DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKELE

KRISHNA F. JAYARAM
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O HO'OKELE

September 12, 2025

Mr. Kali Watson
Chairman
Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
Hawaiian Homes Commission
91-5420 Kapolei Pkwy.
Kapolei, Hawai'i 96707

Dear Chairperson Watson:

I am writing to express my strong support for Legacy Ventures and their proposed development of a world-class motorsports and industrial-commercial mixed-use facility at Kalaeloa, O'ahu (TMK No. (1) 9-1-013:061). This project has the potential to bring lasting benefits to Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) beneficiaries, strengthen public safety, and create a vibrant destination that supports both community and economic growth.

The proposed facility will serve as a catalyst for regional and island-wide activity, complementing surrounding resort, commercial, and industrial uses while breathing new life into Kalaeloa. It will also enhance public safety by providing a controlled venue for motorsports and driver training, helping to reduce traffic fatalities and discourage illegal street racing. Furthermore, the site's proximity to the State of Hawai'i airport runway provides an ideal setting for motorsports, where existing aviation activity already mitigates typical noise concerns.

This initiative is closely aligned with the City and County of Honolulu's dirt track development and is supported by prior City Council Resolutions in support of the establishment of dedicated motorsports facilities. Together, these projects will provide a comprehensive network of facilities capable of meeting nearly all the motorsports community's needs while ensuring safe, well-managed opportunities for enthusiasts.

Since the closures of Hawai'i Raceway Park (2006) and Kalaeloa Raceway Park (2014), O'ahu has lacked a permanent motorsports venue. This project addresses that gap by providing a safe, sustainable, and multi-purpose facility that advances recreation, education, and economic development.

Mr. Kali Watson
September 12, 2025
Page 2

I am confident this initiative will be a transformative asset for our island. It will revitalize Kalaeloa, create jobs, honor commitments to beneficiaries, and provide a safe and exciting destination for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Blangiardi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Rick Blangiardi
Mayor

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 1:56 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
Lono Koholua
Email
lonokapolei@yahoo.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Both - Submit Testimony Below
Message
As the Kaupe'a Kupuna Council, HFD retired Fire captain and former Kaupe'a board member I support C-1 because it is a rare opportunity to deliver tangible, visible benefits within the same year the property is transferred. The revenue, infrastructure funding, and community support will be real, measurable, and impactful. That is what beneficiaries want to see.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:06 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Amy Mahikoa

Email

amymahikoa@gmail.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Both - Submit Testimony Below

Message

I support the donation because it includes programs like the Pahu Manō entrepreneurship fund and a paid internship for beneficiaries. These initiatives grow the next generation of leaders and innovators who will carry the HHCA mission forward. The Commission should recognize the long-term value of this structure.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:08 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Brooklyn McBrayer

Email

kaupeanssw@gmail.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

I support the donation will be productive, profitable, and will start generating returns for DHHL immediately.
That alone makes C-1 worth approving.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:13 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Danielle DeLima

Email

danielle@superiorstaffingandservices.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

I am a Kaupe'a Board member and an entrepreneur, I support the donation because it comes from a Native Hawaiian beneficiary developer who is giving back to the trust. This is proof that beneficiaries themselves can create opportunities that grow DHHL's resources. Approving C-1 is both a practical and symbolic step in building a cycle of giving and growth.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:15 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
Sharon Pualani Freitas
Email
ronpua37@yahoo.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Written Only - Submit Testimony Below
Message
I support the donation because it comes from a Native Hawaiian beneficiary developer who is giving back to the trust. This is proof that beneficiaries themselves can create opportunities that grow DHHL's resources. Approving C-1 is both a practical and symbolic step in building a cycle of giving and growth.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:19 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
Wendy Kaniaupuni-Crespo
Email
w crespo89@gmail.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Written Only - Submit Testimony Below
Message
I support the donation because it fulfills the HHCA's purpose — to create self-sufficiency, self-determination, and cultural preservation for Native Hawaiians. By expanding the land base with income-producing property, DHHL gains the resources needed to house families, support communities, and preserve culture. Approving C-1 is an act of living up to the law's intent.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:21 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
Maykayla Hirahara-Kawelolani
Email
hiraharamakayla@gmail.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Written Only - Submit Testimony Below
Message
I support the donation because it delivers benefits on multiple levels — immediate revenue for DHHL, direct funding for infrastructure, and income for local homestead associations. Few projects are structured to produce such a balanced and comprehensive impact. By approving C-1, the Commission ensures that the trust, the beneficiaries, and the community all win.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:25 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
Jo Canon
Email
unkojo@icloud.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Written Only - Submit Testimony Below
Message
I support the donation because it demonstrates how a Native Hawaiian beneficiary developer can partner with DHHL to grow the land base and produce ongoing revenue. This project could serve as a model for future agreements, showing that beneficiary-led initiatives can yield strong returns for the trust. Approving C-1 will send a clear message that DHHL supports innovative, mutually beneficial partnerships.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:30 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
Kaimana Kawelolani
Email
kaimana809@gmail.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Written Only - Submit Testimony Below
Message
I support this item. This donation means new revenue can flow into housing projects, infrastructure work, and community programs. This is not a long-term promise with uncertain timelines — it is immediate, measurable impact for beneficiaries. The Commission should not delay in approving C-1.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:39 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Kina'u McBrayer

Email

krkmcbrayer@yahoo.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

As the successor for my parents Hawaiian home in Kaupe'a also a college senior with a minor in business law, I see many business potential and opportunities. I support C-1 because it includes profit participation, rent escalations, audit rights, and continuous operation requirements. These provisions ensure that DHHL's revenue will grow over time and that the tenant remains accountable to the terms. Acquiring a property with such a favorable, protective lease is a strategic win for the trust and should be approved. My children will benefit from business moves like this from the Trust.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:42 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Isaiah Fowler

Email

AOACHAWAII-ISAIAH@GMAIL.COM

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

I support the donation from a Native Hawaiian beneficiary developer because it includes a 2% revenue-sharing commitment directly to nearby homestead associations. This ensures that not only DHHL, but also local communities, see a direct benefit from the property's success. That kind of built-in, localized support is exactly what we need to strengthen the connection between trust assets and the people they serve. The Commission should approve C-1 to make this model a reality.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:44 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Shaylee DeMello

Email

shayleedemello@aol.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

I support the donation in C-1 because the lease dedicates a full 6% of gross rent directly to DHHL infrastructure improvements. Every homestead community depends on roads, water, and utilities to bring beneficiaries home, and this agreement provides a dedicated funding source for those needs. It is rare to see such a direct connection between a revenue stream and a critical trust responsibility. By approving C-1, the Commission ensures immediate, targeted investment in the foundations of our communities.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:46 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Iwalani Laybon-McBrayer

Email

kaupeahomesteads@gmail.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

As the President of Kaupe'a Homestead association I support the donation in C-1 from a Native Hawaiian beneficiary developer because it adds high-value, income-producing commercial property to DHHL's land portfolio. Expanding the trust's holdings in this way strengthens the financial base needed to carry out our mission under the HHCA. This parcel comes ready to produce revenue, creating new resources without draining the trust's existing funds. By approving C-1, the Commission ensures DHHL has more land, more income, and more capacity to deliver on its promises to beneficiaries.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:51 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Timothy McBrayer

Email

timothymcbrayer37@gmail.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

My wife is the Homestead President, as a previous construction business owner I see this as economic development, I 100% support the donation in C-1 from a Native Hawaiian beneficiary developer because it adds high-value, income-producing commercial property to DHHL's land portfolio. Expanding the trust's holdings in this way strengthens the financial base needed to carry out our mission under the HHCA. This parcel comes ready to produce revenue, creating new resources without draining the trust's existing funds. By approving C-1, the Commission ensures DHHL has more land, more income, and more capacity to deliver on its promises to beneficiaries.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:56 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
kingston Doyle
Email
kingston.doyle@yahoo.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Written Only - Submit Testimony Below
Message
I support C-1 and what it can do to bring more land inventory to our Trust and generate income to the department and to the homestead communities

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:57 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name
kaai Westbrook
Email
ladykaai@yahoo.com
Please Identify Agenda Item(s):
C-1
Pick One:
Written Only - Submit Testimony Below
Message
I support this donation because the Ewa parcels will be shovel ready. This means DHHL will take ownership of a revenue-producing asset without having to wait through decades of planning, permitting, and construction. There is no development risk to the trust, and no delay in generating income that can be reinvested in beneficiary services. Opportunities like this are rare — the Commission should seize it and approve C-1 now.

From: dhhl.icro1@hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:59 PM
To: Burrows-Nuuanu, Leatrice W
Subject: New submission from Submit Agendized Testimony

Name

Detta Laybon

Email

roll1964@yahoo.com

Please Identify Agenda Item(s):

C-1

Pick One:

Written Only - Submit Testimony Below

Message

I support C-1 because it is a stable commercial revenue stream that can support housing programs even in tough markets. Diversification makes the trust more resilient and better equipped to fulfill its responsibilities. The Commission should approve this as a strategic portfolio move.