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## Letter: Pie-in-the-sky ideas won't help DHHL

Jan. 25, 2026

An article recently noted that the state House plans to maintain funding oversight of the historic \$600 million allocated to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands in 2022 to reduce the beneficiary waitlist ("[The !\[\]\(faf942dc3e59ce8eb64b4ac481eca7e0\_img.jpg\) Democrats lay out their agenda for the 2026 session as future economic uncertainty !\[\]\(f6b0299e0b5e4340e509b71914970da0\_img.jpg\), !\[\]\(b5153706f6ea2fc2c42e8803b6804d18\_img.jpg\)](#), Star-Advertiser, Jan. 18).

DHHL Director Kali Watson is exploring the venture of geothermal energy as an additional revenue stream for his department. Hawaii's mandated goal is to reach 100% renewable energy by 2045. The Puna Geothermal Venture's output fulfills only about 20% of Hawaii island's needs. Sounds like a bad investment.

Time is not on DHHL's side, as it quickly reached the annual limit for loans provided under the federal government's Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act, or NAHASDA. A higher ceiling is expected to be discussed at the Legislature, but demand is high.

As they stand, Watson's plans for new funding will likely die this session, as will some of the 29,000 people on DHHL's beneficiary waitlist.

**Johnnie-Mae L. Perry**

Waianae

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