

Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council Resolution
relating to the proliferation of commercial ocean recreation in and around Kāneʻohe Bay

Adopted September 7, 2022

WHEREAS in the early 1990's there were extensive community conversations that led to the development of the Kāneʻohe Bay Master Plan (KBMP); and

WHEREAS the purpose of the Kāneʻohe Bay Master Plan is to:

- *“Preserve and protect the unique natural resources of Kaneohe Bay for the continued enjoyment of the general public;*
- *Resolve conflicting uses problems between recreational users of the Bay, the general public, and commercial ocean recreation operations; and*
- *Assess the environmental and ecological impacts of activities on the Bay”;* and

WHEREAS a key component of the KBMP was a community compromise to manage commercial recreation through limits on the number, size, and capacity of operations to protect and preserve the natural resource and respect its cultural significance, which has endured for the past thirty years; and

WHEREAS without the limits established in the KBMP in 1992, and now with 10 million visitors annually, Kāneʻohe Bay would certainly suffer from overuse; and

WHEREAS in recent years, additional unpermitted commercial recreation operations have been occurring daily in and around the Bay that have the potential for significant impacts on the natural resources of Kāneʻohe Bay, including but not limited to: kayak rentals from Heʻeia State Park; kayak rentals and other commercial activity at Heʻeia Small Boat Harbor and from Kāneʻohe Marine Corps Base Headquarters; kayak rentals along Kamehameha Hwy at Pokole beach; kayak rentals fronting Kualoa Regional Park and from Waiahole Park; and, increasingly, kayak rentals from private lands around Kāneʻohe Bay, as well as various commercial ocean recreation activities occurring on Sundays by Kualoa Ranch from the shoreline of “Secret Island” in Hakipuʻu including snorkeling, kayak rentals, stand-up paddleboarding and canoe rides; and

WHEREAS recent proposed legislation was designed to clarify that the commercial recreation compromise agreements that were reached to protect the Bay include the rental of kayaks, canoes, standup paddleboards and other related watercraft within the specific limitations of the KBMP; and

WHEREAS the commercial use of the Bay compounds the other stressors on the Bay's ecosystem such as land-based source pollution and coral decline due to climate driven ocean heat waves; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, tensions among different users of Kāneʻohe Bay have risen, necessitating action by DLNR to appropriately manage and steward the cultural and natural

resources in the Bay in accordance with the goals and management principles set forth in the Kāneʻohe Bay Master plan; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council urges DLNR to fully regulate and control commercial use of Kāneʻohe Bay and enforce existing rules regarding commercial operations, consistent with the limits set forth in the Kāneʻohe Bay Master Plan and to honor and strengthen community compromises agreed to in the Kāneʻohe Bay Master Plan to limit commercial ocean recreation on Kāneʻohe Bay in order to preserve and protect the natural resource; therefore, and

BE IT RESOLVED that DLNR conduct a carrying capacity study of Kāneʻohe Bay appropriated by the 2023 State Legislature that takes into account cultural and social considerations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council urges DLNR, working with the Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council, to consider developing additional clarifying rules to address the increasing proliferation of kayak rentals and other watercraft using Kāneʻohe Bay through a community process that places the protection of the natural resource and associated cultural significance at the forefront; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Honorable Mayor Rick Blangiardi; Honolulu City Council; Chair of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Administrators of the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation, Administrator of the Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement; Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; Senator Gil Riviere; Senator Keohokalole; Senator Lee; Representative Kitagawa; and the Kāneʻohe, Kahaluʻu, and Kailua Neighborhood Board Chairs.