



NĀ ALA HELE
Hawai'i Trail & Access System

Hawai'i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council

June 12, 2025

Honorable Kimo Alameda
Mayor of Hawai'i County
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Dear Hawai'i County Mayor Alameda,

The State of Hawai'i's Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council for Hawai'i Island (NAH Council) would like to request a meeting with you concerning the Waipi'o Valley Access Road Emergency Closure. We have previously sent this request to Mayor Mitch Roth, with no response.

The NAH Council formed a Waipi'o Valley Access Permitted Interaction Group to work with the County of Hawai'i to encourage adequate accommodation of pedestrian public rights along the Waipi'o Valley Access Road.

Since the first emergency closure of the Waipi'o Valley Access Road in 2022, the NAH Council has been concerned with the loss of pedestrian access. These concerns are for hikers connecting to the State's Muliwai Trail (which extends to Waimanu Valley), fishermen, hunters, beach goers, kuleana owners, and exercise enthusiasts who have lost the ability to walk down that road. Many lack access to a four-wheel drive vehicle or the funds to pay commuting services into the valley.

The Waipi'o Valley Access Road was originally constructed as a horse and pedestrian road in the mid-1800s based on ancient trail alignments. The "road" was used only by pedestrians and equestrians until 1862 when it became modified to accommodate four-wheel drive vehicle use. Furthermore, according to DLNR's Chairperson, pedestrian access is a constitutional right to public lands/waters/resources (including to kuleana parcels), in addition to being a customary and traditional practice. Pedestrian access on public lands is conducted at the user's own risk.

We recognize the legitimate safety concerns that have resulted in the closure to pedestrian use of the road and would like to discuss potential alternatives to safely accommodate public pedestrian use of Waipi'o Valley Access Road. What is the County's long-term public access plan for the road?

We would greatly appreciate an opportunity to meet with you and discuss these questions and concerns.

The Nā Ala Hele Advisory Councils, which exist for Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, Maui, and Hawaiʻi Island, were established to provide advice and assistance to the DLNR in implementing the Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program (see HRS 198D-9). The Councils also assists and advises other public agencies in matters concerning trails and access.

To respond, please contact our Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program staff, Jackson Bauer at jackson.m.bauer@hawaii.gov or 808-657-8041.

Mahalo nui,



Terrence Noda, Chair,
Hawaiʻi Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council