

TESTIMONY - HAWAII BIG GAME FISHING CLUB, INC.
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES 8/25/2023

Relative to the BLNR meeting scheduled for Friday August 25, 2023 I would like to submit testimony on behalf of our organization, Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club, Inc. as we appear in Agenda Item J-2, second attachment - specifically Slide #23.

The Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club (HBGFC) is currently a DOBOR tenant under Revocable Permit #6. HBGFC has applied for a long term lease - and - HBGFC has applied for nominal rent **to be reinstated** under HRS 171-43.1 as HBGFC is a qualifying 501(c)3 organization. HBGFC was charged nominal rent in the early 2000's but was temporarily redetermined by the IRS as a 501(c) 4 about 2012 at which time DOBOR raised the rent. In 2019 HBGFC was redetermined as 501(c)3 and immediately applied to have nominal rent reinstated. HBGFC meets all the criteria to be granted nominal rent under HRS 171-43.1.

It is our understanding under HRS 171-43.1 that only the Board of Land and Natural Resources has the power to negotiate nominal rent so we volunteers appreciate not having to spend an endless amount of time and resources justifying our existence to DOBOR staff when we could be doing more of the good stuff we already do. This has been a bad Catch 22 for HBGFC for 5 years!

Mahalo for the opportunity to stand before the BLNR now!

Through this process, we have learned that there appear to be many misconceptions about HBGFC:

HBGFC is located in the Honokohau Harbor on the Big Island of Hawaii. HBGFC lands rented from DOBOR are not waterfront and all improvements have been scratched out of a'a lava and scrub. Our club house is a simple shell and our luau grounds are open air under a metal roof. There is nothing "elite" about our members - or - the fanciness of our facility. Our facilities are as basic as they can be and the members and users of the facility come from every single walk of life and culture found throughout Hawaii. Founded in 1914, HBGFC is the 2nd oldest saltwater fishing club in the USA.

A. DOBOR Assessment of HBGFC Community Benefit and Charitable Programs is over simplified and simply incorrect

HBGFC disagrees with DOBOR staff assessment of HBGFC scope of benefits to the community as stated in Slide #23: *"Staff believes that its charitable activities benefit a narrow group of individuals and not the general public."* Here is a partial list of programs HBGFC operates:

1. HBGFC has launched a Maui Fishery Community Relief Fund and is working with the community on Maui to ID folks who have lost everything in the fires, and are sending them "bridge cash" to get through the early phase of the disaster until things settle out.

HBGFC has currently processed about 35 applications and sent more than \$17,500.00 in \$500.00 checks to Maui fishery community folks of all types, affected by the fires.

- 2) HBGFC hosts Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meeting many times a week, at a nominal charge of \$25 per meeting.
- 3) HBGFC hosts many different organizations - most are 501(c)3 - producing keiki fishing tournaments that are also fundraisers for causes such as HUGS Hawaii, Keiki Come First, Miloli'i Hipu'u Virtual Academy Charter School and more
- 4). HBGFC hosts Hospice of Kona's fund raising fishing tournament
- 5) HBGFC established a \$5,000.00 scholarship program at charter school West Hawaii Explorations Academy at the Natural Energy Lab, for 2 college bound students studying marine science - each year.
- 6) The County of Hawaii recognized the broad reach of HBGFC community service importance during COVID and granted HBGFC special permits to operate during the pandemic.
- 7) HBGFC members support the scientific research initiative known as The Kona Project which has established that the Kona eddy system and Hawaiian islands are the most important spawning ground/nursery in the entire North Pacific Ocean for the valuable istiophoridae species - benefiting fishing communities on a Pacific Wide scale. WO partners with both U-Hawaii Manoa scientists for ocean current modeling and is solidifying a partnership with PIFSC to process NMFS larval samples.
<https://wildoceans.org/kona-project/>
- 8) HBGFC hosts funeral and end of life celebrations for community members
- 9) HBGFC has taken over most of the maintenance responsibility for the public fish weigh scale at Honokohau because the managers of the Fuel Dock are not fishing people, and have no interest in maintaining the scale or keeping it working for the fishing community. DOBOR is not taking care of the scale either.
- 10) HBGFC supports conservation efforts such as tag and release and through its tournaments, promotes this practice in high profile manners to participants and the public.

B. DOBOR assessment of HBGFC Sources of Revenue: is oversimplified and simply incorrect.

HBGFC also disagrees with DOBOR staff assessment that some of the sources of revenue for HBGFC are "bad" and therefore eliminate HBGFC from qualifying for nominal rent.

Membership sales are entirely normal for most natural resource oriented NGO's. The Nature Conservancy has members, as does even the Hawaii Alliance of Non-Profit Organizations etc:

<https://hano-hawaii.org/join/>

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/membership-and-giving/donate-to-our-mission/become-a-member/>

Why are low priced, low gross revenue membership revenues perceived as "Bad" by DOBOR staff when in fact is as normal to NGO's as blue is normal to the Hawaii sky.

1) HBGFC membership fees are nominal and do not even cover rent.. \$75 for an individual \$100 for a family

HBGFC facility rentals revenues are severely limited by the IRS under our current 501(c)3 mission, and nominal fees are charged compared to other meeting spaces across Hawaii. Why are these bad?

2) HBGFC charges \$350.00 to rent the club house for local fishing families funerals and end of life celebrations

3) HBGFC charges \$575.00 per night for other 501(c)3 non-profit organization to rent the facility

4) HBGFC provides the facility **at no charge** for DLNR/DAR to hold public scoping meetings on the new recreational fishing license and also for DAR endangered species out reach etc. etc.

5) HBGFC run fishing tournaments generate revenue for Charitable programs such as the Scholarship Program.

6) HBGFC rents to outside fishing tournament companies and those revenues fund Conservation programs. Tournament rentals also pay a large proportion of the the high rent and building maintenance, because membership fees do not generate enough revenue on their own.

We also believe that the methodology DOBOR staff uses to “qualify” a non-profit for nominal rent is faulty and contradictory to both HRS 171-43.1 - and - the IRS code for 501(c)3 organizations.

We refer specifically to Slide 23: Slide #23 - “Staff believes that its charitable activities benefit a narrow group of individuals and not the general public.”

When, in fact, HRS 171-43.1 states an org must operate under “The lands shall be used by such eleemosynary organizations for the purposes for which their charter was issued and for which they were certified by the Internal Revenue Service.”

The IRS does not allow us to operate outside of our charter and certified organizational purpose so DOBOR staff’s arbitrary “qualification” is a bad Catch 22 and irrelevant to HRS 171.43-1 anyway.

In addition, even while operating under our IRS charter, HBGFC does in fact have a very broad community service impact - as outlined herein.

Finally, **Slide #4:** Isn’t DLNR the Department of Land and **Natural Resources**? Slide #4 omits **Natural Resources** in favor of culture. HBGFC is a natural resource oriented 501(c)3 so slide #4 would automatically eliminate HBGFC under staff criteria - even though fishing is as culturally important as canoe racing - arguably even more so actually.

Again, we thank the Board for the opportunity to set the record straight and look forward to working with you folks directly on this as we move forward.

Mahalo, Jody Bright, Board Member - Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club Inc.

Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club Testimony - 9/8/2023
Photographic Supporting Evidence







Dawn N. S Chang, Chairperson and Board Members

Board of Land and Natural Resources

P.O. Box 621

Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

August 23, 2023

Dear Chairperson Chang and all affiliated Board Members,

Aloha, my name is Sarah Milisen and I am the Hawai'i Island Chapter Leader for Ocean Defenders Alliance, a 501(c)(3). I am writing today to request your support for the Kona Sailing Club for a reduction in the annual lease payment as a fellow 501(c)(3) organization.

Ocean Defenders Alliance has been cleaning up our oceans through underwater and shore-based debris cleanups since 2016 here on the Big Island, mostly off the west side of Hawai'i Island. We regularly organize and host harbor cleanups around Kawaihae Harbor, Honokohau Harbor, Kailua Pier and several adopted underwater dive sites. We often respond to offshore net debris and derelict FADs which pose navigational hazards and endanger marine animals near the reefs and offshore.

The Kona Sailing Club has been an integral part of our Honokohau Harbor cleanups, not only as outstanding volunteer divers and shore support team members – helping us haul out huge discarded batteries and sunken tires, but they also host our after-event luncheons, at no cost to the hard-working volunteers.

We solely operate with the help of our volunteers only, and these cleanups can host upwards of 60+ volunteers in one outing. The Kona Sailing Club offers their hard work, heavy lifting, chairs and tables and even cook for us on these occasions, **at no cost to the community.** .

With this said, I would strongly request your organization consider reducing the lease payment charged to the Kona Sailing Club. The Kona Sailing Club, and their partnerships with other non-profit operations in the community make for a cleaner and safer ocean, harbor and community. Any reduction of expenses by the Kona Sailing Club could definitely benefit the public, community and the surrounding ocean. Mahalo for your time and careful consideration.

Sarah Milisen

Hawai'i Island Chapter Leader

Ocean Defenders Alliance

Sarah@oceandefenders.org

Supplemental

Below is a list of reasons that support why we believe our organization should be treated equally as other organizations that operate on state land with regards to 501c3 reduced rate rent. Below this list is a strategic plan for 2024. We will continue to operate per this strategic plan irregardless of the outcome of the reduced rate rent, albeit with some degree of difficulty. Our current fees for boat parking will not decrease for our members, rather, the money we save will help accelerate our strategic plans to expand our offerings for West Hawaii Communities.

- **Our club is not exclusive.** We encourage and rely on those interested in sailing outside of our membership to crew for boats in our events or participate in our land based activities. <https://konasailingclub.org/visiting-sailors/>
- **The benefits of being a paying "member" is essentially the same as being a public participant.** Having a membership is not a defining characteristic of our club. 501c3 organizations do have memberships such as the YMCA, that are used to support the organization's mission and administrative overhead. Essentially, all of our members become paying members, annually to support our club, and its events. Although we have non members crew for boats and participate, we encourage them to join as members for two reasons.
 - A commitment to our club. Our members benefit from the knowledge, experience and access to like minded individuals who share a common interest.
 - Support our mission to introduce sailing and promote healthy, educated and responsible boating/ocean activities in the community.
 - There is one intrinsic benefit to being a member of a sailing club that is a member of the US SAILING ORG and HYRA (Hawaii Yacht Racing Association, is that KSC members can (generally, not always) use their membership card abroad when visiting other clubs for discounts or use of their facilities.
- **We have two main membership types**
 - General Membership.
 - Membership with special parking privilege. - This is where KSC gets the bulk of its income to pay for the leased space. All boats are owned by individual members. We require each member of this type to participate in a certain number of events per year. This way we have "skippers" available that members and the general public can crew for our events.
- **We do not engage in other commercial activities.** Meaning, all of our events, everything we do is volunteer. We do not sublease. We do not charge for clubhouse usage. We have no employees. We source zero income except for that which pays for our lease, utilities and small minutiae for events plus a 3% (\$4000) surplus year over year to pay for maintenance.
- **We are not a "Yacht" club.** Please see below for some distinctions between us and "Yacht Clubs"
 - The median sale price for any of the vessels on our lot is ~\$6000. Members with "Yacht clubs" that have vessels occupying slips typically range from \$30,000 to many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

- Yacht clubs, at a minimum, have access to amenities such as water, electricity, and bathrooms. We do pay for water provided by DOBOR, but we have no other public utilities or onsite restrooms
- We do not have direct access to the ocean. All our members are required to launch their craft. No dock or slip space.
- Yacht clubs require you to initiate as a "plebe" and not as a full fledged member (which can cost thousands of dollars) | KSC does not. Everyone is welcome to join. Our nominal annual membership fee is \$100. \$10 for youth and students.
- Yacht Clubs permit exclusive, members only access, to their facilities which, depending on the club, includes swimming pools, tennis courts, restaurant, etc. | KSC does not. We do not provide for the same facilities. We are open to anyone, for all events and our "amenities" are very limited.
- Waikiki and Kaneohe and other standard yacht clubs require members to spend a certain dollar amount at their bar/restaurant. | KSC has no such venue and only requires members and the public alike to pay a small nominal charge for setting up regattas or donating (usually food - potluck) for social events.
- **KSC hosts other organizations, foundations, and individuals at ZERO cost.** We do not charge for the use of our facility. In some instances we request that those organizations donate time helping during a work day or if there are any maintenance projects we need assistance with.
 - KSC hosts Coast Guard Auxiliary monthly meetings and they utilize our facility and member's boats to train recruits.
 - KSC hosts fishing tournament events at no cost.
 - KSC hosts youth sailing activities for other sailing foundations and youth programs at zero cost.
 - Unfortunately we have hosted a few funerals, of course at zero cost, and we have been fortunate to be able to provide a gathering place for those families and friends.

2024 Strategic Plan

- Reinvest and support local charities such as BISF, ODA and US Coast Guard Auxiliary
- Build a small fleet of sailboats strictly for education purposes
- Work with USCG Auxiliary and their partnership with Sea Scouts to initialize a sailing program with KSC.
- Utilize current members boats for instruction, open to the public, for US Sailing certified keelboat instruction courses at a nominal fee (or free).
- Promote US Sailing certification instruction programs
- Offer Student Scholarships.

Facilities Pictures

KSC property



Kona Sailing Club (KSC) with ODA



Casey,

I am sure others have better suggestions than I for you to include in your correspondence to DLNR. One thing you might want to point out is that in relation to BISF and efforts to educate and involve youngsters in sailing and to enable the average joe to enjoy a pastime, there is the example of Hawaii county's subsidy of golf fees at local courses which results in lower fees for both children and adults. Although not explicitly stated, one result of reduced golf fees is to enable youngsters to take up a healthy hobby, get exercise, gain a skill, and by extension get them out of the house and away from their screens. Similarly, in the case of sailing the ability to provide a venue and support youth sailing results in youth participants being exposed to a healthy hobby, gain a skill and get them away from their screens. The skills involved in sailing should not be understated as there are elements of geography, weather, geometry, ocean safety, and tactics involved in both competitive and pleasure sailing.

You could also mention that similar to providing access to a healthy hobby for those Big Island residents who might not be able to afford the high golf fees here, the reduced rent for the Sailing Club enables residents to be able to afford their hobby. Sailing Club members are not wealthy, and many live in apartments or condos that preclude parking a boat at their residence. Commercial boat parking in Kona is expensive and the reduced rent afforded the Sailing Club goes a long way in enabling the club to provide benefits to the community.

Aloha, Mike

Aloha Members of the Board,

I am writing to provide testimony in support of The Kona Sailing Club's request for a reduced rate rent as a 501(c)(3) organization. I am confident that granting this reduced rate will align with the broader goals of promoting community engagement, environmental stewardship, and fostering inclusive recreational opportunities within the community of Hawaii. The Kona Sailing Club's commitment to these values is exemplified through its dedication to inclusivity and its extensive contributions to the local community.

The Kona Sailing Club is more than a sailing organization; it is a hub for fostering unity and promoting access to the natural beauty and resources that the state of Hawaii has to offer and by extension promoting DLNR's mission:

"Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors."

The club's mission centers around providing educational and recreational opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds, ages and abilities. This commitment to inclusivity is not only reflected in the club's membership composition but also in its wide range of outreach initiatives and collaborations such as The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Ocean Defense Alliance, and Big Island Sailing Foundation.

One of the key factors that set The Kona Sailing Club apart from Yacht clubs, is its dedication to making sailing accessible for everyone. Through programs such as youth sailing camps and community sailing events the club actively works to break down barriers that might otherwise prevent individuals from engaging in the sport. By providing a safe and welcoming environment the club empowered people from diverse walks of life to connect with the ocean and the art of sailing.

Moreover, the club's 501(c)(3) status underscores its commitment to benefiting the community at large. By operating as a nonprofit, The Kona Sailing Club reinvests any revenue generated into its mission-driven activities, ensuring that the benefits of its operations are felt by a wide range of individuals and groups. The reduced rate rent would greatly enhance the club's capacity to allocate resources towards furthering its educational and outreach initiatives, which are pivotal in maintaining its role as a community asset.

In conclusion, I urge the DLNR Board of directors to consider The Kona Sailing Club's substantial contribution to the community and its steadfast commitment to inclusivity when deliberating on the request for a reduced rate rent. Granting this request would not only align with the principles of supporting 501(c)(3) organizations but also amplify the positive impact that The Kona Sailing Club has on the diverse population of Hawaii. I believe that by investing in this organization, we are investing in a more united, educated, and inclusive community.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Casey Mayes
Commodore
Kona Sailing Club
808.557.6075

<https://konasailingclub.org>



Testimonials

1 message

Michael Gaines <mgaines4339@gmail.com>
To: Casey Mayes <casey.mayes@konasailingclub.org>

Wed, Aug 23, 2023 at 4:00 PM

I'm writing in support of Kona Sailing Club's request for reduced rent given the Club's status as a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization.

I have been an active member of the club for 11 years. I have sailed with and taught sailing and racing skills to adults and children from many different walks of life. I particularly enjoy working with the younger kids as I expect them to carry these skills and experiences with them for the rest of their lives.

Kona is a wonderful place to learn and practice the art of sailing. The waters off Kona are truly a unique natural resource. Kona Sailing Club offers local residents and visitors the opportunity to experience and enjoy this natural resource. In cooperation with Big Island Sailing Foundation, KSC recruits and offers scholarships to keike from the community who could go on to pursue the sport in high school, college, or even the Olympics.

Kona Sailing Club is not a traditional yacht club with a big social calendar and fancy facilities. We are a bare-bones sailing club with emphasis on being on the water and sharing the joys and challenges of sailing. We have managed to survive for over 30 years primarily by renting boat parking space to members. But rent increases have severely limited our ability to provide services. If the club were required to pay full market rent or compete for a lease on the open market we could not survive

By granting the requested reduced rent DLNR and The State of Hawaii could help preserve an organization that will work with the community and partners to enhance, protect, conserve, and manage the unique natural resource of the Kona Coast and the sport of sailing in Hawaii.

Sincerely,
Michael Gaines

John Collins
76-6349 Kaheiau st.
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740

To Members of the Board,

This is my testimony in support of The Kona Sailing Club's request for a reduced rate rent of \$480 per year as a 501(c)(3) organization.

The reduced rate will go a long way to further our goals of environmental Stewardship, education and recreational opportunities for our community.

The Kona Sailing Club has been the only continually active Sailing organization the west side of the Big Island since the early 80's. I've been a member since 1983.

Since then we've introduced countless people, both residence and tourists to the wonders of Hawaiian sailing and the conservation of our ocean resources.

Key programs are Youth Sailing camps and community sailing events and there's virtually always an opportunity for Anyone, resident, tourist, young, or old to sail with us on any of our sailing days at no charge.

Safety, education, and promoting conservation and ocean awareness are goals we reach for every day in collaboration with but not limited to The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Ocean Defense Alliance, and Big Island Sailing Foundation.

I believe we, The Kona Sailing Club, embody the DLNR's mission:

“Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors.”

As a non profit any revenue generated is reinvested in our mission-driven activities including scholarships in the past.

Sadly with cost increases we haven't been able to offer those for several years now.

The reduced rate will greatly enhance our ability to create opportunities like this.

I urge the DLNR Board of directors to consider The Kona Sailing Club's substantial contribution to the community as you deliberate on The Kona Sailing Club's reduced rent rate for our 501(c)(3) organization.

Mahalo,

John Collins

Testimony to DNLR

I would like to offer my testimony regarding DNLR's discussion of Non-profit 501C organizations, specifically that of the Kona Sailing Club. It has come to my attention that DNLR is contemplating future lease rates of such organizations. I urge the DNLR to adopt the lowest possible lease rate for all 501c3 corporations, including Kona Sailing Club. I have recently joined this club and am a member of the Board of Directors. I have been a resident of Kona for 20 years but the Club has been in existence for many decades.

Kona Sailing Club is a very inclusive organization. It is open to anyone whether they have a boat or not. In cooperation with the Big Island Sailing Foundation, the club has facilitated a program for youth sailing for decades. The Club provides sailing experience as crew to anyone with an interest in ocean sports. We organize and operate a series of regattas, one in the spring and another in the fall.

We have a modest clubhouse on land owned by the State of Hawaii. This clubhouse is used by several entities besides our own for community as well as meeting space for Coast Guard Auxiliary to train their members.

I believe that a low lease rate is justified by the benefits to the local community that derive from Kona Sailing Club maintaining this facility.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Al Wehren

Dawn N. S Chang, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
Commission on Water Resources Management
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

August 22, 2023

Chairperson Chang,

My name is Vernon D. Smith. I am the current Flotilla Commander for the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. I am writing today to request your support for the Kona Sailing Club for a reduction in the annual lease payment as a IRS 503 c(3) organization.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is the volunteer arm of the United States Coast Guard. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the primary organization for Recreational Boating Safety in the United States. In addition, the Coast Guard Auxiliary provides support to the Coast Guard by assisting with Boating Patrol Operations, Marine Communications, Emergency Management, Marine Pollution Education and a large variety of support operations when requested by the Coast Guard.

The Kona Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla has been in operation for many years supporting the Recreational Boating Community with Vessel Safety Examinations, Patrol Operations, Public Education through Safe Boating Classes and Public Affairs events. Throughout the many years of operations, the Kona Auxiliary the met at many locations throughout the Kona Community. At the present time, an arrangement has been created to utilize the facilities of the Kona Sailing Club to meet, train Auxiliary members utilizing Kona Sailing Club vessels for hands on marine training and Vessel Safety Check training. This cooperative arrangement has allowed Kona Auxiliary members to receive much better information and training than would be possible without the close proximity of a variety of vessels to see, touch and understand.

As an all volunteer organization, the Kona Auxiliary Flotilla does not receive any funding from the Coast Guard or any other organization. As such, funding for organization needs is tight and must be accounted for carefully. The idea of requiring Flotilla funds to be used for a location to meet and train members must carefully weighed against any other projects that could potentially have a more direct impact on the public for Boating Safety and Public Information.

The Kona United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla respectfully requests the consideration of your organization to strongly consider reducing the lease payment charged to the Kona Sailing Club. The Kona Sailing Club and the United States Coast Guard Flotilla in Kona have been having discussions for ways to

increasingly benefit the Recreational Boating Community in the Kona area and any reduction of expenses by the Kona Sailing Club could quite possibly provide additional benefit to the public.

Thank you and your Board for considering this matter.

Respectfully,

Vernon D. Smith, Flotilla Commander

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

Kona Sailing club is a very important establishment in West Hawaii. My entire family has been able to learn to sail, make friends, and learn about the water, boats, and conservation. We have many friends who have also used this resource and benefited from it. We hope that you will consider keeping a reduced rate for 501c3 so that it can continue to serve the community with more sailing, education, beach cleanups, and other things. We were very thankful to be part of this program at a rate that we could afford. We live a 3 hour round trip drive away from the harbor so budget was a huge factor for us.

Laura Roberts

The Kona sailing club has taught me and so many other kids important life skills. I know learning how to tie knots and learning the direction of the wind and how to control a sail boat doesn't seem like much. But knowing these things can help in an emergency . And learning how to sail is a great hobby to get kids off of video games and learn something fun. So please keep the rates how they are so we can continue these amazing classes.

Fierra Roberts, age 14

The Kona sailing club is really fun and i hope that the rates stay low.Micah, age 10

I first learned to sail when I was 16/17 with the Kona sailing club, and eventually got my sailing instructor license in Honolulu. I would not have been able to afford to do this had the rates been raised.

Asa Roberts age19

The KSC is and has been extremely important to our family and the Kona community. Sailing has not only brought our family together, but has also taught us about ocean safety, navigation, conservation and community. As a 501c3, this community based organization should continue to run and operate on a discounted basis to continue to serve the community of the Big Island.

DLNR testimony for Kona Sailing Club to be eligible for 501c3 rental benefits

To the members of the board of Hawaii DLNR:

Dear members, please accept this testimony as my plea for you to consider reduced rental rate for the Kona Sailing Club at Honokohau Harbor. My name is Lee Rise and I am a current active member of the sailing club and have been for a year and a half. I joined the sailing club to have an opportunity to sail my boat out of the harbor and to enjoy the waters of the Kona coast. However, I have since discovered that the club is much more than a social group and boat storage. It is an educational portal to introduce people, both kanaka makua and keiki, to the fragile Hawaii Island ocean ecosystem. When I came to Hawaii Island several years ago I took it upon myself to learn about this place; the ocean, the mountains, flora and fauna, people, and culture. While educational resources are available they aren't always easy to find nor plentiful and there is no substitute for an actual teacher. For example, when I joined Kona Sailing Club I was shown where the underwater buoys are to prevent anchor damage to the reef. Since then I have volunteered multiple times with the summer kids camps to introduce new sailors, Hawaiian and nonnative, to Hawaii's first form of transportation. They get to learn about how the first Polynesians arrived by sail and how it is still a clean fun way to enjoy the Pacific Ocean. It is well known that folks who explore and experience the outdoors will have respect for their environment and will have a desire to protect that environment. It is therefore our responsibility as citizens and government of Hawaii to facilitate and foster this respect. Harbor access is very limited on the island and many users come from over an hour away, including myself(Honomalino area). This makes Honokohau the largest ocean access hub on the entire west coast of Hawaii Island and provides a special opportunity to positively influence this sector of the public. Obviously resources are limited and it is your job to decide where some of those resources are distributed. It is my hope that you will understand the value that Kona Sailing Club brings to our community and see us as allies in the effort to preserve our natural resources. If you are kind enough to grant us this funding, I would like to see it used in at least two ways. First would be to establish a more formal instructional curriculum and to bring in more experts to increase educational opportunities for our members and the public. Second would be to expand our capacity for outreach to introduce more residents to sailing and therefore caring, malama ka aina. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lee Rise

P.S. Please forgive lack of okina and kahako, I could use some education on how to conjure them out of my keyboard.

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing on behalf of myself as the owner of a boat parked at the Kona Sailing Club, as well as for the club itself. Our Commodore Casey has laid out the reasons that we believe the club's contribution to the community as a whole is deserving of our current status. As owners we have participated in cleanup efforts around the harbor that benefit all.

I would like to add an additional personal story. A friend of a friend was recently diagnosed with cancer and a fundraiser was held. We were able to place a sailing day aboard the Nanea in the silent auction, where a good deal of money was raised. I would like to be able to continue to give to the community in this way, please contact me if interested. I believe that by granting the club's request I will be more able to afford to continue making it happen. Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Brian Perman
Nanea

Dear Members of the Board,

I am new to the Sailing Club and I am writing to support The Kona Sailing Club's request for a reduced rate rent of \$480 per year as a 501(c)(3) organization. This reduced rate will help with community like us that just joined.

What an opportunity The Sailing club has opened for my teen son. The Sailing Camp taught him skills for the future. This was educational and he met new friends. I believe the reduced rate would open more opportunities for more events or more sailing in general. I know as a single parent, I would have never afforded to take him Sailing. This is also benefiting the community

I urge the DLNR Board of directors to consider The Kona Sailing Club's substantial contribution to the community and its steadfast commitment to inclusivity when deliberating on the request for a reduced rate rent. Granting this request would not only align with the principles of supporting 501(c)(3) organizations but also amplify the positive impact that The Kona Sailing Club has on the diverse population of Hawaii. I believe that by investing in this organization, we are investing in a more united, educated, and inclusive community.

Thank you for considering,
Angela Mowinski
Andrew Mowinski (age 13)

John Collins
76-6349 Kaheiau st.
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740

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Safety, education, and promoting conservation and ocean awareness are goals we reach for every day in collaboration with but not limited to The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Ocean Defense Alliance, and Big Island Sailing Foundation.

I believe we, The Kona Sailing Club, embody the DLNR's mission:

“Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors.”

As a non profit any revenue generated is reinvested in our mission-driven activities including scholarships in the past.

Sadly with cost increases we haven't been able to offer those for several years now.

The reduced rate will greatly enhance our ability to create opportunities like this.

I urge the DLNR Board of directors to consider The Kona Sailing Club's substantial contribution to the community as you deliberate on The Kona Sailing Club's reduced rent rate for our 501(c)(3) organization.

Mahalo,

John Collins

Testimonials

1 message

Michael Gaines <mgaines4339@gmail.com>
To: Casey Mayes <casey.mayes@konasailingclub.org>

Wed, Aug 23, 2023 at 4:00 PM

I'm writing in support of Kona Sailing Club's request for reduced rent given the Club's status as a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization.

I have been an active member of the club for 11 years. I have sailed with and taught sailing and racing skills to adults and children from many different walks of life. I particularly enjoy working with the younger kids as I expect them to carry these skills and experiences with them for the rest of their lives.

Kona is a wonderful place to learn and practice the art of sailing. The waters off Kona are truly a unique natural resource. Kona Sailing Club offers local residents and visitors the opportunity to experience and enjoy this natural resource. In cooperation with Big Island Sailing Foundation, KSC recruits and offers scholarships to keike from the community who could go on to pursue the sport in high school, college, or even the Olympics.

Kona Sailing Club is not a traditional yacht club with a big social calendar and fancy facilities. We are a bare-bones sailing club with emphasis on being on the water and sharing the joys and challenges of sailing. We have managed to survive for over 30 years primarily by renting boat parking space to members. But rent increases have severely limited our ability to provide services. If the club were required to pay full market rent or compete for a lease on the open market we could not survive

By granting the requested reduced rent DLNR and The State of Hawaii could help preserve an organization that will work with the community and partners to enhance, protect, conserve, and manage the unique natural resource of the Kona Coast and the sport of sailing in Hawaii.

Sincerely,
Michael Gaines

Aloha Members of the Board,

I am writing to provide testimony in support of The Kona Sailing Club's request for a reduced rate rent as a 501(c)(3) organization. I am confident that granting this reduced rate will align with the broader goals of promoting community engagement, environmental stewardship, and fostering inclusive recreational opportunities within the community of Hawaii. The Kona Sailing Club's commitment to these values is exemplified through its dedication to inclusivity and its extensive contributions to the local community.

The Kona Sailing Club is more than a sailing organization; it is a hub for fostering unity and promoting access to the natural beauty and resources that the state of Hawaii has to offer and by extension promoting DLNR's mission:

"Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors."

The club's mission centers around providing educational and recreational opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds, ages and abilities. This commitment to inclusivity is not only reflected in the club's membership composition but also in its wide range of outreach initiatives and collaborations such as The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Ocean Defense Alliance, and Big Island Sailing Foundation.

One of the key factors that set The Kona Sailing Club apart from Yacht clubs, is its dedication to making sailing accessible for everyone. Through programs such as youth sailing camps and community sailing events the club actively works to break down barriers that might otherwise prevent individuals from engaging in the sport. By providing a safe and welcoming environment the club empowered people from diverse walks of life to connect with the ocean and the art of sailing.

Moreover, the club's 501(c)(3) status underscores its commitment to benefiting the community at large. By operating as a nonprofit, The Kona Sailing Club reinvests any revenue generated into its mission-driven activities, ensuring that the benefits of its operations are felt by a wide range of individuals and groups. The reduced rate rent would greatly enhance the club's capacity to allocate resources towards furthering its educational and outreach initiatives, which are pivotal in maintaining its role as a community asset.

In conclusion, I urge the DLNR Board of directors to consider The Kona Sailing Club's substantial contribution to the community and its steadfast commitment to inclusivity when deliberating on the request for a reduced rate rent. Granting this request would not only align with the principles of supporting 501(c)(3) organizations but also amplify the positive impact that The Kona Sailing Club has on the diverse population of Hawaii. I believe that by investing in this organization, we are investing in a more united, educated, and inclusive community.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Casey Mayes
Commodore
Kona Sailing Club
808.557.6075

<https://konasailingclub.org>



Supplemental

Below is a list of reasons that support why we believe our organization should be treated equally as other organizations that operate on state land with regards to 501c3 reduced rate rent. Below this list is a strategic plan for 2024. We will continue to operate per this strategic plan irregardless of the outcome of the reduced rate rent, albeit with some degree of difficulty. Our current fees for boat parking will not decrease for our members, rather, the money we save will help accelerate our strategic plans to expand our offerings for West Hawaii Communities.

- **Our club is not exclusive.** We encourage and rely on those interested in sailing outside of our membership to crew for boats in our events or participate in our land based activities. <https://konasailingclub.org/visiting-sailors/>
- **The benefits of being a paying "member" is essentially the same as being a public participant.** Having a membership is not a defining characteristic of our club. 501c3 organizations do have memberships such as the YMCA, that are used to support the organization's mission and administrative overhead. Essentially, all of our members become paying members, annually to support our club, and its events. Although we have non members crew for boats and participate, we encourage them to join as members for two reasons.
 - A commitment to our club. Our members benefit from the knowledge, experience and access to like minded individuals who share a common interest.
 - Support our mission to introduce sailing and promote healthy, educated and responsible boating/ocean activities in the community.
 - There is one intrinsic benefit to being a member of a sailing club that is a member of the US SAILING ORG and HYRA (Hawaii Yacht Racing Association, is that KSC members can (generally, not always) use their membership card abroad when visiting other clubs for discounts or use of their facilities.
- **We have two main membership types**
 - General Membership.
 - Membership with special parking privilege. - This is where KSC gets the bulk of its income to pay for the leased space. All boats are owned by individual members. We require each member of this type to participate in a certain number of events per year. This way we have "skippers" available that members and the general public can crew for our events.
- **We do not engage in other commercial activities.** Meaning, all of our events, everything we do is volunteer. We do not sublease. We do not charge for clubhouse usage. We have no employees. We source zero income except for that which pays for our lease, utilities and small minutiae for events plus a 3% (\$4000) surplus year over year to pay for maintenance.
- **We are not a "Yacht" club.** Please see below for some distinctions between us and "Yacht Clubs"
 - The median sale price for any of the vessels on our lot is ~\$6000. Members with "Yacht clubs" that have vessels occupying slips typically range from \$30,000 to many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

- Yacht clubs, at a minimum, have access to amenities such as water, electricity, and bathrooms. We do pay for water provided by DOBOR, but we have no other public utilities or onsite restrooms
- We do not have direct access to the ocean. All our members are required to launch their craft. No dock or slip space.
- Yacht clubs require you to initiate as a "plebe" and not as a full fledged member (which can cost thousands of dollars) | KSC does not. Everyone is welcome to join. Our nominal annual membership fee is \$100. \$10 for youth and students.
- Yacht Clubs permit exclusive, members only access, to their facilities which, depending on the club, includes swimming pools, tennis courts, restaurant, etc. | KSC does not. We do not provide for the same facilities. We are open to anyone, for all events and our "amenities" are very limited.
- Waikiki and Kaneohe and other standard yacht clubs require members to spend a certain dollar amount at their bar/restaurant. | KSC has no such venue and only requires members and the public alike to pay a small nominal charge for setting up regattas or donating (usually food - potluck) for social events.
- **KSC hosts other organizations, foundations, and individuals at ZERO cost.** We do not charge for the use of our facility. In some instances we request that those organizations donate time helping during a work day or if there are any maintenance projects we need assistance with.
 - KSC hosts Coast Guard Auxiliary monthly meetings and they utilize our facility and member's boats to train recruits.
 - KSC hosts fishing tournament events at no cost.
 - KSC hosts youth sailing activities for other sailing foundations and youth programs at zero cost.
 - Unfortunately we have hosted a few funerals, of course at zero cost, and we have been fortunate to be able to provide a gathering place for those families and friends.

2024 Strategic Plan

- Reinvest and support local charities such as BISF, ODA and US Coast Guard Auxiliary
- Build a small fleet of sailboats strictly for education purposes
- Work with USCG Auxiliary and their partnership with Sea Scouts to initialize a sailing program with KSC.
- Utilize current members boats for instruction, open to the public, for US Sailing certified keelboat instruction courses at a nominal fee (or free).
- Promote US Sailing certification instruction programs
- Offer Student Scholarships.

Facilities Pictures

KSC property



Kona Sailing Club (KSC) with ODA



Casey,

I am sure others have better suggestions than I for you to include in your correspondence to DLNR. One thing you might want to point out is that in relation to BISF and efforts to educate and involve youngsters in sailing and to enable the average joe to enjoy a pastime, there is the example of Hawaii county's subsidy of golf fees at local courses which results in lower fees for both children and adults. Although not explicitly stated, one result of reduced golf fees is to enable youngsters to take up a healthy hobby, get exercise, gain a skill, and by extension get them out of the house and away from their screens. Similarly, in the case of sailing the ability to provide a venue and support youth sailing results in youth participants being exposed to a healthy hobby, gain a skill and get them away from their screens. The skills involved in sailing should not be understated as there are elements of geography, weather, geometry, ocean safety, and tactics involved in both competitive and pleasure sailing.

You could also mention that similar to providing access to a healthy hobby for those Big Island residents who might not be able to afford the high golf fees here, the reduced rent for the Sailing Club enables residents to be able to afford their hobby. Sailing Club members are not wealthy, and many live in apartments or condos that preclude parking a boat at their residence. Commercial boat parking in Kona is expensive and the reduced rent afforded the Sailing Club goes a long way in enabling the club to provide benefits to the community.

Aloha, Mike

Dawn N. S Chang, Chairperson and Board Members

Board of Land and Natural Resources

P.O. Box 621

Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

August 23, 2023

Dear Chairperson Chang and all affiliated Board Members,

Aloha, my name is Sarah Milisen and I am the Hawai'i Island Chapter Leader for Ocean Defenders Alliance, a 501(c)(3). I am writing today to request your support for the Kona Sailing Club for a reduction in the annual lease payment as a fellow 501(c)(3) organization.

Ocean Defenders Alliance has been cleaning up our oceans through underwater and shore-based debris cleanups since 2016 here on the Big Island, mostly off the west side of Hawai'i Island. We regularly organize and host harbor cleanups around Kawaihae Harbor, Honokohau Harbor, Kailua Pier and several adopted underwater dive sites. We often respond to offshore net debris and derelict FADs which pose navigational hazards and endanger marine animals near the reefs and offshore.

The Kona Sailing Club has been an integral part of our Honokohau Harbor cleanups, not only as outstanding volunteer divers and shore support team members – helping us haul out huge discarded batteries and sunken tires, but they also host our after-event luncheons, at no cost to the hard-working volunteers.

We solely operate with the help of our volunteers only, and these cleanups can host upwards of 60+ volunteers in one outing. The Kona Sailing Club offers their hard work, heavy lifting, chairs and tables and even cook for us on these occasions, **at no cost to the community.** .

With this said, I would strongly request your organization consider reducing the lease payment charged to the Kona Sailing Club. The Kona Sailing Club, and their partnerships with other non-profit operations in the community make for a cleaner and safer ocean, harbor and community. Any reduction of expenses by the Kona Sailing Club could definitely benefit the public, community and the surrounding ocean. Mahalo for your time and careful consideration.

Sarah Milisen

Hawai'i Island Chapter Leader

Ocean Defenders Alliance

Sarah@oceandefenders.org

Dear Members of the Board,

I am new to the Sailing Club and I am writing to support The Kona Sailing Club's request for a reduced rate rent of \$480 per year as a 501(c)(3) organization. This reduced rate will help with community like us that just joined.

What an opportunity The Sailing club has opened for my teen son. The Sailing Camp taught him skills for the future. This was educational and he met new friends. I believe the reduced rate would open more opportunities for more events or more sailing in general. I know as a single parent, I would have never afforded to take him Sailing. This is also benefiting the community

I urge the DLNR Board of directors to consider The Kona Sailing Club's substantial contribution to the community and its steadfast commitment to inclusivity when deliberating on the request for a reduced rate rent. Granting this request would not only align with the principles of supporting 501(c)(3) organizations but also amplify the positive impact that The Kona Sailing Club has on the diverse population of Hawaii. I believe that by investing in this organization, we are investing in a more united, educated, and inclusive community.

Thank you for considering,
Angela Mowinski
Andrew Mowinski (age 13)

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing on behalf of myself as the owner of a boat parked at the Kona Sailing Club, as well as for the club itself. Our Commodore Casey has laid out the reasons that we believe the club's contribution to the community as a whole is deserving of our current status. As owners we have participated in cleanup efforts around the harbor that benefit all.

I would like to add an additional personal story. A friend of a friend was recently diagnosed with cancer and a fundraiser was held. We were able to place a sailing day aboard the Nanea in the silent auction, where a good deal of money was raised. I would like to be able to continue to give to the community in this way, please contact me if interested. I believe that by granting the club's request I will be more able to afford to continue making it happen. Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Brian Perman
Nanea

DLNR testimony for Kona Sailing Club to be eligible for 501c3 rental benefits

To the members of the board of Hawaii DLNR:

Dear members, please accept this testimony as my plea for you to consider reduced rental rate for the Kona Sailing Club at Honokohau Harbor. My name is Lee Rise and I am a current active member of the sailing club and have been for a year and a half. I joined the sailing club to have an opportunity to sail my boat out of the harbor and to enjoy the waters of the Kona coast. However, I have since discovered that the club is much more than a social group and boat storage. It is an educational portal to introduce people, both kanaka makua and keiki, to the fragile Hawaii Island ocean ecosystem. When I came to Hawaii Island several years ago I took it upon myself to learn about this place; the ocean, the mountains, flora and fauna, people, and culture. While educational resources are available they aren't always easy to find nor plentiful and there is no substitute for an actual teacher. For example, when I joined Kona Sailing Club I was shown where the underwater buoys are to prevent anchor damage to the reef. Since then I have volunteered multiple times with the summer kids camps to introduce new sailors, Hawaiian and nonnative, to Hawaii's first form of transportation. They get to learn about how the first Polynesians arrived by sail and how it is still a clean fun way to enjoy the Pacific Ocean. It is well known that folks who explore and experience the outdoors will have respect for their environment and will have a desire to protect that environment. It is therefore our responsibility as citizens and government of Hawaii to facilitate and foster this respect. Harbor access is very limited on the island and many users come from over an hour away, including myself(Honomalino area). This makes Honokohau the largest ocean access hub on the entire west coast of Hawaii Island and provides a special opportunity to positively influence this sector of the public. Obviously resources are limited and it is your job to decide where some of those resources are distributed. It is my hope that you will understand the value that Kona Sailing Club brings to our community and see us as allies in the effort to preserve our natural resources. If you are kind enough to grant us this funding, I would like to see it used in at least two ways. First would be to establish a more formal instructional curriculum and to bring in more experts to increase educational opportunities for our members and the public. Second would be to expand our capacity for outreach to introduce more residents to sailing and therefore caring, malama ka aina. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lee Rise

P.S. Please forgive lack of okina and kahako, I could use some education on how to conjure them out of my keyboard.

Kona Sailing club is a very important establishment in West Hawaii. My entire family has been able to learn to sail, make friends, and learn about the water, boats, and conservation. We have many friends who have also used this resource and benefited from it. We hope that you will consider keeping a reduced rate for 501c3 so that it can continue to serve the community with more sailing, education, beach cleanups, and other things. We were very thankful to be part of this program at a rate that we could afford. We live a 3 hour round trip drive away from the harbor so budget was a huge factor for us.

Laura Roberts

The Kona sailing club has taught me and so many other kids important life skills. I know learning how to tie knots and learning the direction of the wind and how to control a sail boat doesn't seem like much. But knowing these things can help in an emergency . And learning how to sail is a great hobby to get kids off of video games and learn something fun. So please keep the rates how they are so we can continue these amazing classes.

Fierra Roberts, age 14

The Kona sailing club is really fun and i hope that the rates stay low.Micah, age 10

I first learned to sail when I was 16/17 with the Kona sailing club, and eventually got my sailing instructor license in Honolulu. I would not have been able to afford to do this had the rates been raised.

Asa Roberts age19

The KSC is and has been extremely important to our family and the Kona community. Sailing has not only brought our family together, but has also taught us about ocean safety, navigation, conservation and community. As a 501c3, this community based organization should continue to run and operate on a discounted basis to continue to serve the community of the Big Island.

Dawn N. S Chang, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
Commission on Water Resources Management
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

August 22, 2023

Chairperson Chang,

My name is Vernon D. Smith. I am the current Flotilla Commander for the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. I am writing today to request your support for the Kona Sailing Club for a reduction in the annual lease payment as a IRS 503 c(3) organization.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is the volunteer arm of the United States Coast Guard. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the primary organization for Recreational Boating Safety in the United States. In addition, the Coast Guard Auxiliary provides support to the Coast Guard by assisting with Boating Patrol Operations, Marine Communications, Emergency Management, Marine Pollution Education and a large variety of support operations when requested by the Coast Guard.

The Kona Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla has been in operation for many years supporting the Recreational Boating Community with Vessel Safety Examinations, Patrol Operations, Public Education through Safe Boating Classes and Public Affairs events. Throughout the many years of operations, the Kona Auxiliary the met at many locations throughout the Kona Community. At the present time, an arrangement has been created to utilize the facilities of the Kona Sailing Club to meet, train Auxiliary members utilizing Kona Sailing Club vessels for hands on marine training and Vessel Safety Check training. This cooperative arrangement has allowed Kona Auxiliary members to receive much better information and training than would be possible without the close proximity of a variety of vessels to see, touch and understand.

As an all volunteer organization, the Kona Auxiliary Flotilla does not receive any funding from the Coast Guard or any other organization. As such, funding for organization needs is tight and must be accounted for carefully. The idea of requiring Flotilla funds to be used for a location to meet and train members must carefully weighed against any other projects that could potentially have a more direct impact on the public for Boating Safety and Public Information.

The Kona United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla respectfully requests the consideration of your organization to strongly consider reducing the lease payment charged to the Kona Sailing Club. The Kona Sailing Club and the United States Coast Guard Flotilla in Kona have been having discussions for ways to

increasingly benefit the Recreational Boating Community in the Kona area and any reduction of expenses by the Kona Sailing Club could quite possibly provide additional benefit to the public.

Thank you and your Board for considering this matter.

Respectfully,

Vernon D. Smith, Flotilla Commander

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

Testimony to DNLR

I would like to offer my testimony regarding DNLR's discussion of Non-profit 501C organizations, specifically that of the Kona Sailing Club. It has come to my attention that DNLR is contemplating future lease rates of such organizations. I urge the DNLR to adopt the lowest possible lease rate for all 501c3 corporations, including Kona Sailing Club. I have recently joined this club and am a member of the Board of Directors. I have been a resident of Kona for 20 years but the Club has been in existence for many decades.

Kona Sailing Club is a very inclusive organization. It is open to anyone whether they have a boat or not. In cooperation with the Big Island Sailing Foundation, the club has facilitated a program for youth sailing for decades. The Club provides sailing experience as crew to anyone with an interest in ocean sports. We organize and operate a series of regattas, one in the spring and another in the fall.

We have a modest clubhouse on land owned by the State of Hawaii. This clubhouse is used by several entities besides our own for community as well as meeting space for Coast Guard Auxiliary to train their members.

I believe that a low lease rate is justified by the benefits to the local community that derive from Kona Sailing Club maintaining this facility.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Al Wehren