

From: [Whistleblower Retaliation](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] "Nah" -Rosa Parks
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:19:36 PM

Aloha BLNR,

My name is Moanike‘ala Katherine Tua‘au Muna. I am writing to you from Moku o Keawe to implore you to consider your grandchildren’s grandchildren’s grandchildren and reject the lease renewal for the Army’s continued desecration at Pōhakuloa. The way the US military treats kanaka, iwi, and funerary artifacts is how they’ll treat your grandchildren’s grandchildren...with total disregard.

I am the spouse of a now-retired US military member. My husband served honorably for 25 years. In the last 4 years of his service to America, hate crimes were committed against our family by my husband’s entire command chain. His command estranged us from our son, moving him into Officer Housing on-base and refusing to tell us where our son was. Additionally military officers stalked our 9-year old daughter at school, at her afterschool program, and at her soccer practices. The military hastened the deaths of and caused horrific suffering to my husband’s parents, Bachan and Papa.

We are an occupied people, yourself included. Oppressing others by approving the lease renewal, will not insulate you and your descendants from oppression, it will only ensure it. Supporting the US military is supporting sexual violence and dispossession. My family is case in point.

(Pictures are of our family when the US Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security started committing hate crimes against us in 2019)



In kapu aloha,
Moani Muna and family

“Justice delayed is justice denied.”

<https://www.youtube.com/live/OLHzMUSoZx4?si=Z0laZlLAMTsPXzqD>

“Every country needs its whistleblowers. They are crucial to a healthy society. The employee who, in the public interest, has the independence of judgement and the personal courage to challenge malpractice or illegality is a kind of public hero.” -Fuad Alakbarov

From: [Patricia Hanson Hubner](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject Line: Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:23:32 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I oppose and ask you to REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

The abuse and desecration of the land should not continue. I encourage you to start the process to correct the wrong that was done.

Sincerely,

Patricia Hanson Hubner

18-2052 'ōhia Nani Dr, Mt View, HI 96771

From: [Sanoe Burgess](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:22:33 PM

Aloha nō BLNR,

Eia nō ku‘u wahi mana‘o. This is not a complicated issue. This is a very simple circumstance, such that **anyone of sound mind and soul would swiftly reject the U.S. military’s EIS.**

Pohakuloa was not made for bombing. The U.S. military has continuously desecrated this ‘āina. The military has never shown intent to make right these wrongdoings, and it would be foolish of us to expect them to. As they have done with Makua, Kaho‘olawe, and even the ‘eha caused at Red Hill, they will continue to take, consume and poison Hawai‘i beyond recognition. Beyond this, the U.S. military continues to behave as a bad actor by refusing to assess or clean up their contamination, share their data regarding safety procedures or spill data, or outright hiding or ignoring critical information.

Thus to further reduce the gross negligence and morally corrupt behavior **BLNR has a duty to reject the EIS.**

A hiki i ke aloha ‘āina hope loa,
Sanoe

--

Sanoe K Burgess, M.A.

University of Hawaii at Mānoa

Graduate Research Assistant, [Center for Communicating Scientific Information](#)

Lecturer, Communicology Program in School of Communication & Information

George Hall 320

sanoeb@hawaii.edu

From: [Kapewa Hopfe](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony: We Demand BLNR to Reject the U.S. Army's Pohakuloa FEIS
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:20:19 PM

Aloha Chair Case and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,
I am writing to urge you to reject the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) submitted by the U.S. Army in support of its proposal to continue occupying 22,750 acres of public trust lands at the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) on Hawai‘i Island.

This FEIS fails to meet the basic requirements of Hawai‘i's environmental review laws and does not provide the public or this Board with the information needed to make an informed, lawful decision. Rather than address valid concerns raised during the draft process, the Army's final document raises more red flags, avoids key questions, and withholds critical data.

Key issues that warrant immediate rejection include:

- Confirmed toxic contamination of state lands from lead, arsenic, petroleum compounds, and other munitions constituents—with no clear plan or commitment for cleanup.
- A failure to conduct comprehensive soil and groundwater testing, despite known risks of contamination spreading through highly permeable soils and shallow aquifers.
- Lack of transparency, as the Army refuses to disclose Standard Operating Procedures it claims limit contamination.
- Failure to assess human health risks, especially for nearby communities and cultural practitioners with potential exposure to contaminated air, soil, and water.
- No cumulative impact analysis of the full 132,000-acre PTA operation, which artificially narrows the scope of environmental review.
- Acknowledged ongoing fire risks, with over 1,000 fires caused by military activities since 1975, threatening fragile species like the Palila.
- Incomplete greenhouse gas data, while making unsupported claims about climate impacts.

This FEIS does not meet the legal or ethical standards for protecting Hawai‘i's lands, waters, ecosystems, or communities. It would be irresponsible for the Board to accept a document that sidesteps so many critical issues and puts future generations at risk.

I ask you to reject this FEIS and require the Army to conduct a full and lawful environmental review, with transparent data, community accountability, and a credible cleanup and mitigation plan.

Sincerely,
Kapewa Hopfe
Hōlualoa, Hawai‘i Island
kahopfe@gmail.com

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Subject: Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military
Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection
of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military
use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge,
ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless
degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not
responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our
homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi
kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite
legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural
rights but of the DLNR’s kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

From: [Briaden Abarca](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa testimony.
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:22:13 PM

Aloha, I am Briaden Abarca, a 13 year old student on O'ahu. I **DO NOT** want the Lease Renewed for Pohakuloa or any other US base on our Āina because as the new generation,

I don't want ANY army because this place will become a new Kaho'olawe. A deserted, inhospitable land that has no meaning, and has no people living there because there is bomb testing. I wasn't even born yet when that happened and I heard about it now. If I could know about Kaho'olawe bomb testing, our future generations could know about this.

You should absolutely be ashamed. I, a kid, am telling you to stop this. I shouldn't even have to do this testimony because you guys are grown people deciding this. You are murdering this generation and the next ones, I will be living in this mess. Please don't do

this.

In closing, once again, **do not** want the lease renewed for the US military at Pohakuloa or any other base for Hawaiians, for people, and for my generation.

From: [Lilinoe Ahina](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:18:35 PM

Aloha, I am a native hawaiian named Lilinoe and I go to a School on O'ahu.

I do NOT want the government to renew the lease for the U.S to continue to bomb at Pohakuloa, Hawaii. The reason being is because there is too much of our ancestors that is being bombed on or dug out. There is way too much of our kupuna suffering for the military and government's choices. They are breaking and destroying our land, Papahanaumoku. Us native Hawaiians went through so much because of the U.S military taking our land and using it to practice bombing. If you look at our island Koho'olawe there is a crater that the U.S military created and that is the reason no one can live on that island. There is no source of water for people and our land to drink and survive. That is the reason I do NOT want you guys to renew the lease to these Americans. I REPEAT DO NOT!!!!

Testimony Before the Board of Land and Natural Resources
Regarding the Approval of the Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Renewed
Lease of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Date: May 8, 2025

Submitted by: Brandon Ajari

Affiliation: Student and "Concerned Citizen"

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the renewed lease of Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA). This decision carries significant implications for Hawai'i's environment, cultural heritage, and military readiness, and I urge the Board to carefully consider the long-term impacts before approving the lease renewal.

Environmental Concerns

The Pōhakuloa Training Area is situated within a sub-alpine tropical dryland forest, one of the rarest ecosystems in the world. The Army's Final EIS acknowledges that military training has historically impacted native species, including the nēnē (Hawaiian goose), hoary bat, and other endemic flora and fauna. While the Army has proposed mitigation measures, the long-term effects of continued training on conservation lands remain uncertain.

Given the state's designation of the leased lands as a conservation district, military training may not be compatible with conservation efforts. The Board must ensure that any lease renewal includes enforceable environmental protections to prevent further degradation of Hawai'i's natural resources.

Cultural and Community Considerations

Pōhakuloa is not just a military training site—it is sacred land with deep cultural significance to Native Hawaiians. The EIS process has received substantial public input, with many expressing concerns about the impact of military activities on cultural sites and practices. The Board must ensure that Native Hawaiian voices are heard and that traditional and customary rights are protected in any lease agreement.

Accountability and Oversight

The Army's current lease was granted for \$1 per year in 1964, a rate that does not reflect the true value of the land. If the lease is renewed, the Board must require greater transparency, accountability, and fair compensation for the use of state lands. Additionally, independent environmental monitoring should be mandated to ensure compliance with conservation and cultural preservation commitments.

Conclusion

I urge the Board to carefully evaluate the Army's Final EIS and consider alternative approaches that balance military readiness with environmental and cultural stewardship. If the lease is renewed, it must include stronger protections, fair compensation, and meaningful community engagement to safeguard Hawai'i's lands for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Brandon

From: [Alika Akiona](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda Item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:54:30 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Alika Akiona and I respectfully urge you to do the right thing, and reject the clearly insufficient FEIS in Item D-1.

*The public trust doctrine, embodied in our state constitution, requires the BLNR to exercise due diligence and prudence in managing our natural and cultural resources, and in protecting the interests of the present and future beneficiaries of the trust. Without cultural surveys, biological opinions, or a good faith assessment of alternative beneficial uses of the long-abused 'āina at Pōhakuloa - all things missing from the FEIS - the BLNR simply does not have the information it needs to even begin upholding these public trust duties. I urge the BLNR to reject this sorely deficient FEIS, as an affront to its responsibilities under our constitution and the public trust. Accordingly, please **REJECT** the FEIS put forward in Agenda Item D-1.*

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Alika Akiona

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Arizin Akuna-Matsushima](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:19:34 PM

Aloha i am a 14 year old girl that goes to a school in Oahu,
I DO NOT want the lease renewed for Pohakuloa or any other US base on our aina
because i care about my culture and i am a hawaiian who is proud to live here and say im
hawaiian.You are destroying my home and the place i live you are going to kill our lives
hawaii is us,and this bombing is getting outta hand and it's not okay because we have
ancestors that you may be destroying,and the stuff you are using can hurt a lot of innocent
people.You guys was not there when we had to fight for our own land and our own
language you shouldn't bomb a place where people should live and were there might be
people we honor and care for bones might be there,This is BS and it's not fair for us.One of
my classmates had to live the place she lives because it's too expensive here and getting
taken over already we don't need anymore problems here because we have a lot of things
we have to deal with in a place we live in and call home.I DO NOT WANT THE LEASE
RENEWED!!!!!!

From: BARBARA ALTEMUS <baltemus@aol.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 8:35 PM

To: DLNR.CW.DLNRCWRM <dlnr.cwrn@hawaii.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item D-1

Aloha I strongly request that you reject the U.S. Army's final request. There has been so much destruction to the aina and all of life with the detonation of bombs resulting in the desecration of the land, water, air and of all of natural life. Depleted uranium and white phosphorous among other deadly chemicals have no place in these beautiful and sacred lands of Hawaii. Enough is Enough. Mahalo nut. Barbara Altemus

From: [Anne Au](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject Line: Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:46:15 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,
Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**

b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**

c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**

d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

a. *Can the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it?* In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says "cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action" and "future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown." **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: "Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land." **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it's too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

c. The Army said it will comply with the "Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act" (CERCLA), which requires remedial action concerning stored hazardous substances, "necessary to protect human health and the environment with respect to any such substance

remaining on the property has been taken before” transferring the land back. However, the Army will not be clear on what this will mean, changing its stance on whether it stores hazardous substances on state lands (see #3c) and refusing to disclose any remediation actions.

(3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.

a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211** The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

b. The EIS does not tell us how much contamination has accumulated, despite these procedures, and its impacts.

c. KAHEA asked about PTA’s hazardous waste spill risks. The Army responded by: (1) telling KAHEA to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the information, (2) deleting the section describing hazardous waste storage on PTA State lands. Has hazardous waste spilled on state lands? Where are these records?

(4) Why can’t the Army start cleaning up now?

a. The state Department of Health (“DOH”) commented “There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible.” **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as “not resolved”.

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there’s no evidence that it has, but also “[g]roundwater quality data are limited”; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

a. DHHL “feel[s] strongly” that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined, pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.

b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are “potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils” but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are “unlikely to impact public health.” **V1 at 3-107**

c. The FEIS acknowledges “airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels”. **V1 at 3-117** Yet there is no mitigation or

study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

- a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai'i's economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly "habituated" to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?
- b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the **FEIS Submittal at 23**

(8) Fire impacts are worse than disclosed.

- a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283**. Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.
- b. The Department of Interior pointed out the "entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021." **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

- a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions ("GHGs") for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?
- b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army's "generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change." **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

- a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**
- b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.
- c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. **Submittal at 23**
- d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army's FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai'i's land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not

relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.
Mahalo for considering my testimony.
Anne Au

From: [C.M. Kaliko Baker](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO APPROVING THE ARMY'S FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:49:29 PM

Aloha nō e nā Kahu Waiwai o ka DLNR:

I write to strongly urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources to **reject** the U.S. Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement for "Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area." As a member of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana for over 30 years now and a scholar of mo'olelo Hawai'i, Hawaiian history, a space that I am fortunate to teach in as an Associate Professor of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i at UH Mānoa at the undergraduate and graduate levels, I submit this testimony not Professor Baker, rather as a Kanaka Maoli who views the Army's failed attempt at an EIS as a skewed view of reality. For details of the issues, I advise the Board to strongly consider the well articulated testimony provided by the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana whose team of authors are scholars in the field land and natural resource issues.

I will pick up on one point here, though. The EIS fails to include commentary from the Commission on Water Resource Management and the Division of Aquatic Resources. Pōhakuloa sits on the top of Hawai'i Island ma uka of many residential areas. The water beneath Pōhakuloa nourishes those who live ma kai. With the Red Hill catastrophe fresh in our minds, this misstep is reason enough to reject their EIS. As I now sit on a board led by the Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, from which we listen to many tragic accounts of those who are suffering from the long and short term health issues directly caused by the Red Hill jet fuel spills in the aquifer about which they were wrongfully told was safe for use and consumption by the US military prior to the military's admission to the fuel spills, **YOU DO NOT WANT TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AS THOSE WHICH WERE MADE IN CONNECTION TO RED HILL. The water is the life of the land. YOU MUST NOT ALLOW ANY THREATS TO ANY WATER SOURCES.**

Please vote to reject the Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement as it failed to include commentary from those who mālama our wai, for example, the Commission on Water Resource Management and the Division of Aquatic Resources, which, therefore, means that it fails to meet the standards of EIS practices today.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
C.M. Kaliko Baker, PhD.

*Ike 'ia ke kanaka ma kāna 'ōlelo. No laila, e ike 'ia kākou he lāhui kū'oko'a ma o ka 'ōlelo
maoli o ka 'āina, ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i.*

'An individual is known by his/her language. Therefore, let us be identified as a distinct people by the aboriginal language of the land, Hawaiian.'

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From: [Taylor Barongan](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in opposition of the U.S. Army's use of Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:52:11 PM

Aloha,

My name is Taylor Barongan, and I am a recent biology graduate from UH Hilo. I hope you will accept this testimony despite its tardiness.

I oppose the U.S. Army's use of Pohakuloa for the following reasons:

1. Since Hawai'i was occupied illegally, there was never any consent given to use it as a base in the Pacific.
2. The military has thus far used Hawaiian land for desecration and imperialism. The military has harmed ecosystems and has damaged land and water with no plans of cleaning up the damage.
3. It is not strictly necessary for Pohakuloa to be a training site.

The BLNR should reject the army's final EIS for the following reasons:

1. The army has admitted to its widespread contamination of the land, and as mentioned above, does not plan to clean it up. This contamination of depleted uranium (DU) has spread to the greater ecosystems and into the water. DU has been linked to elevated risks of cancer. Why should the military have control over something they have continuously harmed? Evidence shows (Briner, 2006) that even after many years, DU dust can still be incredibly harmful.
2. Pohakuloa is home to various endangered species and further harming the ecosystem would not only erase a tie culture but to place. These species are rapidly losing space in their natural habitat and it is evident that the military is a culprit in this. As someone who has grown up on this island and done research on native and invasive species, I do not wish to see any further damage to these ecosystems.

I strongly urge BLNR to reject the army's final EIS. Thank you for your time in considering this matter.

From: [Brianna B](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pōhakuloa Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:05:13 PM

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Subject: Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this 'āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your

deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Brianna Batista
Kapolei, Hawaii
bb2060920@gmail.com

From: [Bruce Beltran](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:19:49 PM

I attend Kamehameha Schools Maui, and I've learned that our kuleana is to protect our 'āina and our lāhui. Haleakalā is not just land—it's sacred. And Pōhakuloa is not just "leased" land—it's stolen 'āina. I urge you to reject Item D-1 and deny the Final EIS. Stand with Hawai'i. Stand with our people.

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From: [Seeley Björkstén](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1)
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:55:29 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**

b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**

c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**

d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it

already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

a. *Can the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it?* In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says “cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action” and “future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown.” **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: “Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land.” **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it's too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

c. The Army said it will comply with the “Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act” (CERCLA), which requires remedial action concerning stored hazardous substances, “necessary to protect human health and the environment with respect to any such substance remaining on the property has been taken before” transferring the land back. However, the Army will not be clear on what this will mean, changing its stance on whether it stores hazardous substances on state lands (see #3c) and refusing to disclose any remediation actions.

(3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.

a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211** The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

b. The EIS does not tell us how much contamination has accumulated, despite these procedures, and its impacts.

c. KAHEA asked about PTA's hazardous waste spill risks. The Army responded by: (1) telling KAHEA to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the information, (2) deleting the section describing hazardous waste storage on PTA State lands. Has hazardous waste spilled on state lands? Where are these records?

(4) Why can't the Army start cleaning up now?

a. The state Department of Health ("DOH") commented "There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible." **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as "not resolved".

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there's no evidence that it has, but also "[g]roundwater quality data are limited"; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

a. DHHL "feel[s] strongly" that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined, pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.

b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are

“potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils” but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are “unlikely to impact public health.” **V1 at 3-107**

c. The FEIS acknowledges “airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels”. **V1 at 3-117** Yet there is no mitigation or study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai‘i’s economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly “habituated” to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?

b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the FEIS **Submittal at 23**

(8) Fire impacts are worse than disclosed.

a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283**. Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.

b. The Department of Interior pointed out the “entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021.” **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”) for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?

b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army’s “generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change.” **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**

b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.

c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. **Submittal at 23**

d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army’s FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai’i’s land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Seeley Bjorksten

From: [Ezra B. \(via Google Docs\)](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa Lease Renewal Opposition Testimony 2025
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 7:50:36 AM

Ezra B. attached a document

Ezra B. (ezra.bumanglag1@gmail.com) has attached the following document: [Learn more](#)

sending testimony



Pohakuloa Lease Renewal Opposition Testimony 2025

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Snapshot of the item below:

Aloha Land Board Members:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the U.S. Army's proposed retention of leased lands at Pōhakuloa Training Area, and to urge the land board to reject the Army's EIS.

Pōhakuloa is not just a piece of land—it is a wahi pana, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable Native Hawaiian cultural sites and some of Hawai'i's most endangered species. The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land, and the FEIS fails to meaningfully address these concerns.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the burning of nearly 20,000 acres, including designated critical habitat for native flora and fauna. This is unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation of both the land and water.

Military training activities of this scale are simply not compatible with conservation, cultural integrity, or aloha 'āina. Enough is enough.

The FEIS is insufficient and should be rejected on several grounds:

Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis

Lack of a sufficient plan to mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources

Concerns about depleted uranium on the site have gone unaddressed

Military usage is incompatible with the conservation district designation

The approval of the EIS ultimately conflicts with the BLNR's constitutional duty mālama 'āina

I urge the members of the land board to respect the land, the culture, and the people of Hawai'i by rejecting the Army's FEIS for Pōhakuloa. It's time to return these lands and begin a real process of healing and restoration.

Sincerely,
Ezra Kamilio noeau Bumanglag
Oahu, Waipahu, HI 96797

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA
94043, USA

You have received this email because

ezra.bumanglag1@gmail.com shared a document with you from
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From: [Collin David](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:12:26 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this 'āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

Collin Cabatbat
Hilo, Hawaii

May 5, 2025

Chairperson Dawn N. S. Chang
DLNR Main Office Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl St. Honolulu
HI 96813

Subject: Support for Approval of the Final EIS for Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board,

I am writing in strong support for the acceptance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the U.S. Army's continued use of state-owned lands at Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) on Hawai'i Island. I respectfully urge the Board to review and approve the Final EIS, recognizing the critical role PTA plays in advancing national security, supporting our local communities, and protecting Hawai'i's unique cultural and environmental resources.

Pōhakuloa is one of the few places in the Pacific where realistic, high-altitude training can be conducted. It is essential not only for active duty forces but also for the Hawai'i Army National Guard, whose ability to respond to natural disasters and deploy in support of global missions depends on access to realistic training environments like PTA. The terrain and elevation of PTA mirror operational conditions found in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa—regions where our National Guard and active-duty troops are routinely deployed.

PTA is also central to our broader regional partnerships. Joint training exercises with allies such as Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and others depend on facilities like PTA to maintain interoperability and deter strategic competitors from expanding their influence in the Pacific.

At the same time, the Army has demonstrated a strong commitment to cultural and environmental stewardship. Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plans guide the preservation of ancient Hawaiian sites, and conservation partnerships—such as recent REPI Challenge project—are protecting rare native species and ecosystems for future generations.

Economically, the continued use of PTA supports local jobs, contracts, and small businesses, providing both direct and indirect benefits to Hawai'i Island and the state as a whole. Retaining access to these training lands strengthens not only our defense capabilities, but also Hawai'i's economic resilience.

I respectfully urge the Board to approve the Final EIS and recognize that a balanced approach—one that supports military readiness, safeguards cultural and environmental resources, and enhances local economic opportunity—is both possible and necessary.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Pam Cabrera

From: [El-Rae C](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:47:09 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

As a Makiki resident, I was concerned about the Navy fuel contamination at Red Hill affecting the health of my tap water. Why are we allowing military activity on the water aquifer of Hawaii Island? This is dangerous and needs to stop!

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

- a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**
- b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**
- c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**
- d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

- a. *Can* the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it? In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says "cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action" and "future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown." **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: “Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land.” **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it’s too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

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a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211** The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

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a. The state Department of Health (“DOH”) commented “There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible.” **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as “not resolved”.

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there’s no evidence that it has, but also “[g]roundwater quality data are limited”; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

- a. DHHL “feel[s] strongly” that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined, pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.
- b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are “potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils” but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are “unlikely to impact public health.” **V1 at 3-107**
- c. The FEIS acknowledges “airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels”. **V1 at 3-117** Yet there is no mitigation or study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

- a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai‘i’s economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly “habituated” to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?
- b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the FEIS **Submittal at 23**

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- a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283.** Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.
- b. The Department of Interior pointed out the “entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021.” **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

- a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”) for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?
- b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army’s “generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change.” **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it

does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

- a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**
- b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.
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- d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army's FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai'i's land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.
Ellen-Rae Cachola

From: [Heather Cacoulidis](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony to Defend Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:20:33 PM

Aloha,

I am writing to express my concern with renewing the lease of Pohakuloa to the US Military.

As a constituent in Waimea, I frequently hear planes and helicopters flying overhead. As a matter of fact, I can hear them right now. Not only is it loud and disruptive, but it also serves as a constant reminder of the military's presence.

As I grow older and learn more, my disappointment has grown exponentially with the US and its endeavors here in Hawaii. Each time Hawaii has yielded to the US Military was an opportunity for the US to respond in kind, in order to build a positive relationship with Native Hawaiians and the people living here. They've had ample opportunity to demonstrate that the US had the integrity to be trusted with our lives, our land, and our futures. To show that they care for Hawaii as a people, and not just as a jewel in the crown they call "military supremacy". Every single opportunity has been squandered. It is clear that they don't care to respect us or our land and culture, nor the survival of our ecosystem, nor our long term survival here. They do not do things with our best interests in mind. Because of this, I feel there is no reason to allow this sale without holding them accountable every step of the way. A proper, comprehensive survey is the very LEAST they can do so we can prepare to pay for the consequences they will inevitably leave behind. It is insulting to offer up our land for a dollar while they leave behind untold millions of dollars worth of problems in the future, many of which we can't even comprehend now. And judging by past experience, the US is not exactly keen on taking responsibility and rectifying problems in a timely fashion (ie: Red Hill? Repeatedly?!) We don't get another ecosystem, or 'āina, or home. We cannot afford to, nor should we want to, blindly trust the untrustworthy with such important and irreplaceable resources.

Realistically, we know the US will find a way to force this sale anyway. If the outcome will be the same regardless, I would rather be able to say we tried, than to have never have tried at all.

Mahalo,

Heather Cacoulidis



Queen's Court
800 Bethel Street, Suite 501
Honolulu HI 96813

Phone 808.587.7770
Fax 808.587.7769
www.avalonhi.com

Date: May 8, 2025

To: Chair, Dawn Chang & Member of the Board
Board of Land and Natural Resources

SUBJECT: Support for Pohakuloa Training Area (May 9, 2025 BLNR meeting)

Aloha Chair Chang and the Board of Land and Natural Resources,
blnr

My name is Christine Camp, and I represent Avalon Group Hawaii. We write to you in **STRONG SUPPORT** to extend the lease for the POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA.

Avalon employees fifty residents of Hawaii who support their families and their communities. Avalon has been able to raise over \$1.5 billion dollars of investments to build in our communities such as employment centers, places of education and places to live. In doing our work, we spend the funds raised here in Hawaii. We create significant economic activity and provide jobs for the people who live in Hawaii. However, if the Military were not present, and if their economic impact were significantly reduced, we could not continue to raise such amounts because our economy will contract and will be at risk of an economic downward spiral. Next to tourism, the Military is the second largest economic driver in Hawaii. They not only provide jobs, but they also support our law enforcement and fire-fighting capabilities in remote areas of Hawaii, specifically near the areas that they train. They also provide opportunities for high paying jobs that help diversify our economy outside of tourism and construction. Most R&D jobs in Hawaii are Military supported but end up becoming commercialized for non-military use. These jobs and industries in Hawaii would disappear should the Military leave.

There are possibilities of the Military leaving Hawaii if we create too many obstacles that would make it difficult for them to achieve their mission. We need to allow the Military to train and maintain their focus on readiness to defend our country.

It is our understanding that the Military is making efforts to return some of the training land areas back to the State because they have been actively listening to Hawaii's concerns.

It is for these reasons, we at team Avalon humbly request your support to allow the extension of lease to allow the Military to continue training at the Pohakuloa Training area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Camp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christine Camp
President & CEO

From: [Sydney Carlin](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:27:11 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha ‘āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Sydney Carlin

From: [Coochie Cayan](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: [Coochie Cayan](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony to BLNR to request Army comply with EIS and all questions
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:58:11 PM

Aloha BLNR:

Please do not approve Army EIS without all questions of concern answered including any and all cultural questions. The EIS must be a thorough study with all options including no approval or continuance of using Pohakuloa.

Mahalo,

Phyllis Cayan, Concerned Voter & Citizen

94-1429 Polani Street #V

Waipahu, HI 96797

From: [Tom Coffman](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FEIS draft for Pohakuloa 5/9/29 - In Opposition
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:29:08 PM

Because of the gravity and complexity of this measure, I favor deferring action and instead developing a public education program on this and related measures, providing history and an overview of Federal control of land through the archipelago. Tom Coffman

From: [Ashley Correa](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in regard to Pohakuloa FEIS
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:18:31 PM

Aloha,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am sending this testimony in regards to the Pohakuloa final environmental impact statement

. Accepting the FEIS as-is would set a harmful precedent: that incomplete, noncompliant documents are good enough for state approval. That undermines the entire environmental review system under Chapter 343. Please reject Agenda Item D-1.

Mahalo for your consideration



Ashley Correa, Realtor(S) - 80689

m: 808.298.8354

ohanarealestatehawaii.com



From: [Mya Damaso](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:05:24 PM

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this 'āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts

of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Mya Kuu iini Damaso
Mililani, O'ahu
Kanaka Maoli
808-570-5230

From: lianadong@umail.ucsb.edu
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BLNR Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:32:16 PM

Aloha Land Board Members:

My name is Liana, and I am a student on Chumash lands in California. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the U.S. Army's proposed retention of leased lands at **Pōhakuloa Training Area**, and to **urge the land board to reject the Army's EIS**.

Pōhakuloa is not just a piece of land—it is a **wahi pana**, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable **Native Hawaiian cultural sites** and some of Hawai'i's most **endangered species**. The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land, and the FEIS fails to meaningfully address these concerns.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the **burning of nearly 20,000 acres**, including designated **critical habitat** for native flora and fauna. This is unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about **environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation** of both the land and water.

Military training activities of this scale are simply not compatible with conservation, cultural integrity, or **aloha 'āina**. Enough is enough.

The FEIS is insufficient and should be rejected on several grounds:

- Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis
- Lack of a sufficient plan to mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources
- Concerns about depleted uranium on the site have gone unaddressed
- Military usage is incompatible with the conservation district designation
- The approval of the EIS ultimately conflicts with the BLNR's constitutional duty mālama 'āina

I urge the members of the land board to respect the land, the culture, and the people of Hawai'i by **rejecting the Army's FEIS** for Pōhakuloa. It's time to return these lands and begin a real process of healing and restoration.

Sincerely,
Liana Dong

From: [Rocky Duropan](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] the renewal of the Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:15:37 PM

Aloha i am Rocky i am a 14 year old student on oahu. I DON'T WANT THE LEASE RENEWED OF ANY OTHER US BASE ON OUR 'AINA BECAUSE. Over the years it has changed the past and will change me and my friends and family in the future. One of the main reasons why I want the bombing and the firing of military bullets to stop is because. There's a lot of Old Hawaiian culture in the soil and to just bomb and shoot bullets into the land is disrespectful to all Hawaiians. I will say again I DO NOT WANT THE LEASE TO BE RENEWED.

-rocky duropan
@Pohakuboi13

From: [Charmaine Ecraela](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PŌHAKULOA — TESTIMONY FOR REJECTION OF US ARMY'S FINAL EIS
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:13:24 PM

To whom this may concern,

My name is Charmaine Ecraela and I am a resident of the Honouliuli ahupua'a on the island of O'ahu. I am writing this message to express my concerns and to urge BLNR to REJECT the United States Army's final EIS.

Pōhakuloa is Hawaiian land that has been suffering from desecration due to the use of the land as a military training site by the United States Army (see also: the bombings on Kaho'olawe).

The US Army confirmed that there was widespread contamination in and around the Pōhakuloa training area. Despite this, the US Army will not share safety procedures or spill data and are refusing to assess and/or clean up their mess. Additionally, they had critical information regarding this removed from public records and DO NOT have sufficient evidence to prove that contamination has NOT spread to water and/or ecosystems. Therefore, the US Army's acts can be viewed as an evasion of Hawai'i law because they are ignoring their obvious negative impact on the environment in Pōhakuloa.

In conclusion, I am pleading for BLNR to REJECT THE UNITED STATES ARMY'S FINAL EIS. This site along with all other Hawaiian land should always be respected and protected by EVERYONE, no matter where an individual may come from or type of authority one might hold.

Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono! Mai poina!

Mahalo for your time,

Charmaine M. Ecraela

From: [Kara Federico](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:03:01 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

- a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**
- b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**
- c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**
- d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and

future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

a. *Can* the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it? In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says "cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action" and "future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown." **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: "Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land." **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it's too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

c. The Army said it will comply with the "Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act" (CERCLA), which requires remedial action concerning stored hazardous substances, "necessary to protect human health and the environment with respect to any such substance remaining on the property has been taken before" transferring the land back. However, the Army will not be clear on what this will mean, changing its stance on whether it stores hazardous substances on state lands (see #3c) and refusing to disclose any remediation actions.

(3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.

a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211**
The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

b. The EIS does not tell us how much contamination has accumulated, despite these procedures, and its impacts.

c. KAHEA asked about PTA's hazardous waste spill risks. The Army responded by: (1) telling KAHEA to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the information, (2) deleting the section describing hazardous waste storage on PTA State lands. Has hazardous waste spilled on state lands? Where are these records?

(4) Why can't the Army start cleaning up now?

a. The state Department of Health ("DOH") commented "There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible." **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as "not resolved".

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there's no evidence that it has, but also "[g]roundwater quality data are limited"; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

a. DHHL "feel[s] strongly" that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined, pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.

b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are “potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils” but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are “unlikely to impact public health.” **V1 at 3-107**

c. The FEIS acknowledges “airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels”. **V1 at 3-117** Yet there is no mitigation or study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai‘i’s economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly “habituated” to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?

b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the FEIS **Submittal at 23**

(8) Fire impacts are worse than disclosed.

a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283**. Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.

b. The Department of Interior pointed out the “entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021.” **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

- a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”) for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?
- b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army’s “generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change.” **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

- a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**
- b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.
- c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. **Submittal at 23**
- d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army’s FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai’i’s land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some

unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Kara Federico

From: [Leina Fisher](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BLNR Reject Pohakuloa eis report
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:49:28 PM

Enough bombing of lands. Let it heal! Go somewhere else already. Pohakuloa has taken enough abuse. We are still asking. We won't ask nicely anymore. There will be civil war in Hawaii if you keep ignoring the people. See you in person May 9 at 9am. Enough is enough. Please listen to the people, we are getting restless. China and Russia will not be the biggest threat, your own people will be.

Aloha nui,

Leina

Sent from my iPhone



May 8, 2025

State of Hawaii
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl Street, 1st Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813
Attn: Board of Land and Natural Resources

Re: May 9th, 2025 Meeting; Agenda Item D-1; FEIS for the Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area, Island of Hawai'i, Tax Map Keys (TMKs) (3): 4-4-015:008; 44-016:005; and 7-1-004:007.

Aloha Land Board Members:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA), I am writing to express our strong opposition to the U.S. Army's proposed retention of leased lands at **Pōhakuloa Training Area**, and to **urge the land board to reject the Army's EIS.**

Pōhakuloa is not just a piece of land—it is a **wahi pana**, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable **Native Hawaiian cultural sites** and some of Hawai'i's most **endangered species**. The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land, and the FEIS fails to meaningfully address these concerns.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the **burning of nearly 20,000 acres**, including designated **critical habitat** for native flora and fauna. This is unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about **environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation** of both the land and water.

Military training activities of this scale are simply not compatible with conservation, cultural integrity, or **aloha 'āina**. Enough is enough.

The FEIS is insufficient and should be rejected on several grounds:

- Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis
- Lack of a sufficient plan to mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources
- Concerns about depleted uranium on the site have gone unaddressed
- Military usage is incompatible with the conservation district designation
- The approval of the EIS ultimately conflicts with the BLNR's constitutional duty mālama 'āina



Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis:

The EIS is inadequate in addressing the environmental and cultural impacts to the area.¹ Pōhakuloa is a wahi pana, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable Native Hawaiian cultural sites and some of Hawai'i's most **endangered species**.² The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the **burning of nearly 20,000 acres**, including designated **critical habitat** for native flora and fauna. This is unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about **environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation** of both the land and water.

Pōhakuloa is home to several endangered native species: the 'io (hawk), nēnē (goose), 'u'au (petrel), palila (a honeycreeper) and the 'ōpe'ape'a (Hawaiian hoary bat). In addition, 15 bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act are found at Pōhakuloa. There are two dozen endemic plant species at Pōhakuloa that are considered endangered, threatened or "species of concern."³

Directly beneath Pōhakuloa, at an elevation of about 4,500 feet, is a massive aquifer, potentially the largest in the pae 'āina and a critical freshwater resource for the island.

Significant cultural artifacts, including funerary items, have been found in the area, however the Army EIS failed to disclose their presence or provide plans for mitigating impacts to these and other cultural resources in the area.⁴

Furthermore, the **Army EIS does not provide a sufficient plan for mitigating the environmental and cultural impacts.** Given the military's horrendous track record of cleaning up military debris and caring for the site, it is unrealistic to expect the military to comply with the requirements of a conservation district.

The State has a Constitutional Obligation to Mālama 'Āina:

As affirmed by the Hawai'i Supreme Court (*Kahaulelio v. DLNR*, 2019), "the State has 'the highest duty to preserve and maintain the trust lands' — a duty rooted in the constitutional obligation to

¹ <https://kawaiola.news/cover/pohakuloa-a-land-besieged/>

² https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/08/hawaii-agencies-criticize-a-big-island-military-training-site-amid-push-for-lease-renewal/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

³ <https://kawaiola.news/aina/the-army-and-pohakuloa/>

⁴ <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/05/08/army-answers-why-discovery-significant-burial-objects-not-included-pohakuloa-eis/>



mālama ‘āina, to care for the land.” The Court emphasized that the State’s trustee obligations exist even without proven lease violations, noting the duty is proactive and preventative.

In *Kahaulelio v. DLNR*, 2019, the Hawai‘i Supreme Court found that the State of Hawai‘i had breached its constitutional trust duties by failing to: reasonably monitor and inspect trust lands at Pōhakuloa leased to the U.S. military; ensure compliance with cleanup and safety provisions in the lease; take timely action after learning of possible contamination or violations; and document its efforts and provide transparency to the public.

Concerns Over Depleted Uranium Contamination:

During the 1960s, DU, a radioactive heavy metal, was used in munitions fired at PTA – meaning that residue from those weapons remain in the soil of the impact zone. The presence of depleted uranium in the soil at Pōhakuloa is consistently churned up and aerosolized during live fire exercises and blown across the island. Exposure to depleted uranium is linked to cancer and many other negative health impacts.

Military Use Conflicts with Conservation Land Designation:

It is hard to conceive of any ongoing military use of the site that would be compatible with the site’s designation as a conservation district. The proposed military uses of this site are simply incompatible with the conservation designation. Ongoing live-fire and bombing in the area threaten the native flora, fauna and cultural resources of the area, including some of Hawai‘i’s most endangered species. Impacts the aquifer located below the area remain unaddressed. The EIS does not provide specific or adequate mitigation measures to prevent impacts to the critical habitat or culturally significant sites.

I urge the members of the land board to respect the land, the culture, and the people of Hawai‘i by **rejecting the Army’s FEIS** for Pōhakuloa. It’s time to return these lands and begin a real process of healing and restoration.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written below the text 'Best Regards,'.

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director

From: [Juslynn-Jean Freitas](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:23:23 PM

Aloha I am Juslynn-Jean Freitas, a 13 year old student that goes to Ka Waihona O Na'auao on O'ahu. I DO NOT want the lease renewed for Pohakalua or any other U.S base on our 'Aina because this is my land and this gives no rights to other to do this you my kupuna and my 'Aina doesn't get to be treated this way and where were you when all of this happened because my kupuna was fighting for this land and there was so much people that came here to fucking love this island and you guys just think you can do whatever the fuck you want no way this will happen because these people that email you fucking guys actually give a shit about this land or island but I guess your dumbass doesn't but you should knowing what these people are fucking fighting for this land is for us fucking kids you make this fucking land be mad and we are going to change that toady.

From: [Alexander Garcia-Tobar](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:30:21 PM

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned resident and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side

of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Alexander García-Tobar
Waimea, Hawai'i (Big Island)

Xcuse the typos, sent from my iPhone.

From: [Cassandra Gibbs-Low](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony to Oppose the Army's EIS for Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:31:04 PM

Aloha mai kākou

My name is Cassandra Gibbs-Low. I am writing to urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources to reject the U.S. Army's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Pōhakuloa.

As a Kānaka Maoli living overseas, I carry deep concern for what is happening to our ancestral lands. Though I have been physically separated from Hawai'i, this disconnection is not by choice—it is the result of systemic issues such as the high cost of living, political marginalisation, and the heavy military presence that have made it nearly impossible for many of us to return home. These barriers sever our ability to care for and connect with our 'āina and our communities. The expansion of military activity only deepens these wounds and pushes our people further away from our homeland.

Pōhakuloa is not just land—it is sacred. It holds the histories, spirits, and wisdom of our kūpuna. To desecrate such a place through ongoing military use is a continuation of the occupation and violence that began with the illegal overthrow of our Kingdom—a fact recognised by the United States itself in the Apology Resolution (Public Law 103-150).

Our Hawai'i State Constitution and Hawai'i Revised Statutes uphold the rights of Native Hawaiians to protect our cultural and natural resources. On the international stage, instruments like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) affirm our rights to self-determination and free, prior, and informed consent regarding what happens to our lands.

I do not believe the U.S. military has acted as a responsible steward of these lands. Centuries of misuse, environmental damage, and cultural erasure show otherwise. Instead of continuing this harmful legacy, I support the demilitarisation of Pōhakuloa and the return of stewardship to Kānaka Maoli—those with ancestral, spiritual, and cultural ties to the land.

Our sacred sites are not strategic assets. They are living spaces that deserve protection, care, and reverence. We owe it to future generations to ensure these places remain sources of life, learning, and identity.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony, and for respecting the voices and rights of our people.

Cassandra Gibbs-Low

From: [Teeghan Gorham](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reject Army's EIS
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:01:41 PM

Aloha Land Board Members:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the U.S. Army's proposed retention of leased lands at **Pōhakuloa Training Area**, and to **urge the land board to reject the Army's EIS**.

Pōhakuloa is not just a piece of land—it is a **wahi pana**, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable **Native Hawaiian cultural sites** and some of Hawai'i's most **endangered species**. The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land, and the FEIS fails to meaningfully address these concerns.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the **burning of nearly 20,000 acres**, including designated **critical habitat** for native flora and fauna. This is unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about **environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation** of both the land and water.

Military training activities of this scale are simply not compatible with conservation, cultural integrity, or **aloha 'āina**. Enough is enough.

The FEIS is insufficient and should be rejected on several grounds:

- Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis
- Lack of a sufficient plan to mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources
- Concerns about depleted uranium on the site have gone unaddressed
- Military usage is incompatible with the conservation district designation
- The approval of the EIS ultimately conflicts with the BLNR's constitutional duty mālama 'āina

I urge the members of the land board to respect the land, the culture, and the people of Hawai'i by **rejecting the Army's FEIS** for Pōhakuloa. It's time to return these lands and begin a real process of healing and restoration.

Sincerely,
Teeghan Gorham, Oahu

TO: BLNR Board Members
FROM: Susan Gorman-Chang
SUBJECT: Testimony to REJECT the Pohakuloa EIS
DATE: May 8, 2025

Aloha BLNR Board Members,

I urge you to REJECT the Army's EIS for Pohakuloa. There are defects in this EIS which prevent it from being accepted by the BLNR.

The EIS does not disclose the significant incident whereby Native Hawaiian funerary artifacts were found and removed from a lava tube at Pohakuloa. Furthermore, the Army has not adequately and completely surveyed all of the land of Pohakuloa for other cultural artifacts.

The Pohakuloa land is also a Conservation District, and the use by the Army for training maneuvers and live fire is *not* compatible with such a District. The EIS glosses over this very important fact by assuming that the BLNR would carve out a "subzone" within the Conservation District which is a fantasy on the part of the Army and in direct conflict of the very definition of a Conservation District.

The EIS has also downplayed the risk of wildfires, which have already burned 19,328 acres between 2012 and August 2024 and were ignited by military activities. The Army's record of fires caused by their activities combined with the hotter temperatures, dryer vegetation and droughts due to climate change are cumulative impacts that are not adequately addressed in the EIS.

From: [Brittnie Gouveia](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:42:04 PM

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Subject: Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this 'āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side

of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'ōia'i'o,

Brittnie Gouveia
Pukalani, Maui
Kanaka Maoli
808-344-9468

From: [Kaiki Gunderson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:18:51 PM

Aloha,

I am writing to request BLNR to deny the US Military final EIS.

Mahalo,
Kaiki Gunderson-Cook
PO Box 343
Kamuela, HI 96743
808-936-6446

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From: [Michele Hanapiauna](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#); miki96825@yahoo.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Non Renewal of Land Lease for Military Bombing of Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:03:48 PM

Good Morning,

I am writing this email in regards to the upcoming meeting concerning the renewal of Contract for the U.S. Military to use Hawaii (Pōhakuloa) as a practice site for warfare.

The aftermath effects of U.S. Military misuse and abuse of Hawaii land and it's residents place of home to "practice" has been ongoing for decades. Today we as the residents and people of Hawaii feel the after effects of the misuse and abuse. The safety of the people of Hawaii are at risk. The safety of the environment is at risk. The safety of the birds and animals are at risk.

The issue should be at this time to clean and restore Pōhakuloa. Let the land heal. Restore what the U.S. Military "borrowed" and make it better than when you Started "bombing practice".

As a Kanaka 'Oiwī our culture believes it is our responsibility to take care of where you live and breath.

There are other alternatives to "practice" warfare. Simulated deployments, AI. The land that the military is proposing to Renew the "lease" should be denied and reparations should be made to clean and heal the land.

Thank You,
Michele Hanapi-Auna

From: [Christina Hartman](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Pōhakuloa Reject Item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:07:00 PM

As a community member, I urge the BLNR to stand firm. This FEIS is insufficient.
Reject item D-1

Mahalo for your time and consideration.
Christina

From: [Anuheia Higa](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:39:20 PM

To: Chair Dawn Chang Department of Land and Natural Resources & Honorable Committee Members

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha ‘āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'ōia'i'o,
Anuheā Higa
Kapa'a, Kauai
Kanaka Maoli and Child of U.S. Army Soldier

From: [Ronda Hoxsie](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:45:29 PM

Subject Line: Calling on BLNR to

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

Destroying Hawai'i has to STOP!! This is ridiculous to keep bombing, shooting and destroying the land of Hawai'i!! The Hawaiian island and Hawaiian people have been taken advantage of for far too long! STOP the bombing! Stop the shooting and leaving live ammunition around!

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**

b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**

c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows

contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**

d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

a. *Can* the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it? In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says "cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action" and "future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown." **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: "Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land." **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it's too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

c. The Army said it will comply with the "Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act" (CERCLA), which requires remedial action concerning stored hazardous substances, "necessary to protect human health and the environment with respect to any such substance remaining on the property has been taken before" transferring the land back. However, the Army will not be clear on what this will mean, changing its stance on whether it stores hazardous substances on state lands (see #3c) and refusing to disclose any remediation actions.

(3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.

a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse

will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211** The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

b. The EIS does not tell us how much contamination has accumulated, despite these procedures, and its impacts.

c. KAHEA asked about PTA's hazardous waste spill risks. The Army responded by: (1) telling KAHEA to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the information, (2) deleting the section describing hazardous waste storage on PTA State lands. Has hazardous waste spilled on state lands? Where are these records?

(4) Why can't the Army start cleaning up now?

a. The state Department of Health ("DOH") commented "There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible." **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as "not resolved".

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there's no evidence that it has, but also "[g]roundwater quality data are limited"; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

a. DHHL "feel[s] strongly" that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined,

pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.

b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are “potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils” but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are “unlikely to impact public health.” **V1 at 3-107**

c. The FEIS acknowledges “airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels”. **V1 at 3-117** Yet there is no mitigation or study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai‘i’s economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly “habituated” to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?

b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the FEIS **Submittal at 23**

(8) Fire impacts are worse than disclosed.

a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283**. Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.

b. The Department of Interior pointed out the “entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021.” **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”) for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?

b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army’s “generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change.” **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**

b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.

c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. **Submittal at 23**

d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army’s FEIS obstinately refuses

to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai'i's land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Ronda Hoxsie
76-707 Hualalai Road
Kailua-Kona HI 96740

From: [Nicole Jung](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing Agenda Item Regarding Final EIS for Pōhakuloa Training Area – May 9, 2025
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:38:40 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Nicole Mohala Jung, and I am writing in strong opposition to the acceptance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Pōhakuloa Training Area and the proposed renewal of the U.S. Army's lease.

Pōhakuloa is a conservation district, a wahi pana, and home to one of the last remaining sub-alpine tropical dryland ecosystems on Earth. It is also a sacred cultural landscape, holding spiritual and historical significance for Kānaka 'Ōiwi. For over 60 years, the military has desecrated this 'āina—bombing it, contaminating it with depleted uranium, sparking wildfires, and violating the terms of the original \$1 lease granted in 1964.

The Final EIS is grossly dishonest. It fails to fully acknowledge decades of environmental destruction, cultural harm, and community opposition. It assumes future compliance without reckoning with the military's historical neglect and repeated disregard for both state law and the county resolutions passed in 2008 demanding a halt to live fire and cleanup of existing contamination.

The courts have already ruled that the State has failed to care for this land. Approving this EIS and renewing the lease without proper accountability would not only violate your trust responsibilities, it would enable further desecration of a place that should never have been used for war training in the first place.

I urge the BLNR to reject the Final EIS and deny the lease renewal. Pōhakuloa is not a bombing range. It is sacred, and it is time for it to be healed, not further destroyed.

Please stand for the 'āina. Reject the Final EIS.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Nicole Jung
Oakland, CA

From: [Sade Kahue](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] A"ole bombing ma Pohakuloa!
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:29:32 PM

Aloha Land Board Members:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the U.S. Army's proposed retention of leased lands at Pōhakuloa Training Area, and to urge the land board to reject the Army's EIS.

Pōhakuloa is not just a piece of land—it is a wahi pana, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable Native Hawaiian cultural sites and some of Hawai'i's most endangered species. The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land, and the FEIS fails to meaningfully address these concerns.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the burning of nearly 20,000 acres, including designated critical habitat for native flora and fauna. This is unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation of both the land and water.

Military training activities of this scale are simply not compatible with conservation, cultural integrity, or aloha 'āina. Enough is enough.

The EIS is insufficient and should be rejected on several grounds:

Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis

Lack of a sufficient plan to mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources

Concerns about depleted uranium on the site have gone unaddressed

Military usage is incompatible with the conservation district designation

The approval of the EIS ultimately conflicts with the BLNR's constitutional duty mālama 'āina

I urge the members of the land board to respect the land, the culture, and the people of Hawai'i by rejecting the Army's FEIS for Pōhakuloa. It's time to return these lands and begin a real process of healing and restoration.

Sade Kahue
Mokupuni o Maui

From: [John Paul Kaluhiokalani](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:21:17 PM

Don't Renew the lease

Aloha mai nei kakou 'O Mr. Kaluhiokalani kou inoa. My name is [John Paul Kaluhiokalani](#) I am 14 years old. I have had enough of these recurring incidents. I **do not** support the renewal of the lease on Pohakuloa. Unfortunately the US government has destroyed god knows how many ancient burial sites. Our ancestors are the land and it hurts that you destroyed it. Please I am someone who your choice will affect. If you do this you could pollute our water and kill us with polluted air. Please don't do it.

I **Do not** support the renewal. Please I beg of you don't Renew it.

From: [Kulia Kapuaala](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:54:10 PM

Testimony 8

As a haumāna at Kamehameha Schools Maui, I've grown up with a deep respect for our culture and our 'āina. What the U.S. military has done to our lands is not pono. They've bombed our islands, left them toxic, and displaced our people. I oppose the renewal of the lease at Pōhakuloa. Deny the EIS and protect Haleakalā.

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From: [Jonavann Kaululaau](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:50:21 PM

Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha ‘āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'ōia'i'o,
Jonavann Kaululaau

Leivallyn Kaupu

P.O. Box 26

Hōnaunau, HI. 96726

lkaupu@gmail.com

(808) 315-6451

May 8, 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources

State of Hawai'i

1151 Punchbowl Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Strong OPPOSITION to Agenda Item D-1 – Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Army Land Retention at Pōhakuloa

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Board,

Welina mai kākou,

I write to you with deep aloha and grave concern for the future of our 'āina, our culture, and our people. I respectfully urge you to **reject the U.S. Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)** for the proposed land retention at Pōhakuloa.

The Army's FEIS fails in its most basic responsibility—to provide a full and honest response to the people's concerns. Throughout the draft EIS process, communities across Hawai'i raised serious, well-documented concerns about cultural, environmental, and legal impacts. Yet the Army's final responses were shallow, dismissive, and entirely inadequate. The gravity of these issues deserves thoughtful and thorough engagement, not bureaucratic deflection.

Worse still, the FEIS reflects a blatant disregard for Hawai'i law. As DLNR staff have already pointed out, the Army has failed to complete the cultural and environmental impact assessments required by state law for federal lands. This refusal not only violates the law but also undermines the authority of the State of Hawai'i to protect its resources and people. The Army is not above the law.

This is not just a legal failure—it is a failure of kuleana. The BLNR has a constitutional and moral duty to protect Hawai'i's cultural and natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations. Without proper biological and cultural surveys, the Board simply cannot meet its public trust obligations. The FEIS leaves critical questions unanswered—regarding endangered species, the location and care of iwi kūpuna, and the safeguarding of sacred sites.

As a Kanaka 'Ōiwi, I cannot remain silent while the unique relationship between our people and the 'āina at Pōhakuloa is continually ignored. For more than six decades, this sacred land has suffered bombardment, contamination, and desecration. The 1993 Apology Resolution recognized the illegal and harmful actions taken against our people and lands, but the Army's FEIS disregards this history and the very real, ongoing harm it continues to inflict on our health, spirituality, and identity.

Leivallyn Kaupu

P.O. Box 26

Hōnaunau, HI. 96726

lkaupu@gmail.com

(808) 315-6451

Accepting this deficient FEIS would also set a dangerous and far-reaching precedent. It would send the message that cultural and environmental review processes can be bypassed, and that community voices and state laws are optional. That is not the Hawai'i we should be building for our keiki.

This harm is not inevitable—it is avoidable. The Army *chose* not to complete necessary surveys. That choice puts irreplaceable species, cultural artifacts, and ancestral remains at risk. These are not just ecological or historical losses—they are the loss of identity, lineage, and belonging.

Lastly, the Army's refusal to consult with 'Aha Moku, despite direct guidance from DLNR staff, is unacceptable. It reflects a repeated pattern of bad faith and a dismissal of lawful consultation requirements and Indigenous governance systems.

For all these reasons, I urge you to reject the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Uphold your mission. Uphold the law. And uphold the rights, voices, and dignity of the Hawaiian people.

Mahalo nui for your time, your service, and your unwavering kuleana.

With respect,

Leivallyn Kaupu

Descendent of Miloli'i, Kapalilua

Leivallyn Kaupu

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From: [Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] TESTIMONY IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO APPROVING THE ARMY'S FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:24:24 PM

Aloha e ka BLNR,

I ask that you please reject the U.S. Army's EIS for "Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area." The Army's blatant disregard for the compatibility of their training with the conservation district that they use for training is absolutely unacceptable, they must be held to the same standards as every other land holder in Hawai'i. They have also not conducted any kind of significant survey of potentially threatened endangered species that they may adversely affect with their training. Hawai'i is already the extinction capital of the world, in large part due to the U.S. military's flagrant violations of our state protections.

It is also part of the terms of their lease that they should have had the land cleared and decontaminated by now, but I noticed that they conveniently deferred to do so. When and where will the state draw the line if not now? Are we waiting for them to seriously injure or possibly murder a civilian? They are doing enough damage as is. Their responses on the cultural impacts and environmental assessments seem superficial at best, but then again the military didn't even care that they poisoned their own troops and their family's when the water at Red Hill was pumped full of jet fuel.

Speaking of aquifers, they failed to account for the cumulative impacts of their "training" in Pōhakuloa, downplaying the environmental risks and completely disregarding longstanding community opposition.

The military will never change unless the state holds them accountable. It is self-evident that they could care less about Hawai'i and the way the state has failed to stand up to them makes it seem like the state doesn't care about the land and people they are tasked with governing either.

Please, be better. You must vote to reject the Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Mahalo

Kaipu Keala

--

kaipulaumakaniolono

From: [Izeck Self Gomes Kealakai](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:17:54 PM

Aloha,

My name is Izeck. I am a 13 year old native Hawaiian student on the island of Oahu on the Wai‘anae side. **I DO NOT WANT** the lease renewal for Pohakuloa or any U.S. Base on our ‘Āina Because as a cultural native hawaiian i care for my land and i care for the future of Hawaii as the next generation Hawaiians i wouldn't want anything like harmful chemicals or nuclear waste roaming the air that i breathe. In closing,**I DO NOT WANT** the lease renewal for Pohakuloa or any U.S. Base on **MY ‘ĀINA**

@izeckkk._

From: [Kaila Kealoha](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:03:41 PM

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Subject: Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR’s kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai‘i’s natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further

destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Kaila Pulehalekukui Kealoha
Pahoa, Hawai'i
Kanaka Maoli
Kailakealoha91@gmail.com
808-769-0404

From: [Kendall Keith](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pōhakuloa Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:28:52 PM

Aloha Chairperson and Honorable Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, my name is ***Hōkuli'i Kānanea Nu'uanu***, I am 14 years old and a student at Ka Waihona O Ka Na'auao on the island of O'ahu. I am writing to strongly oppose the continued use of Pōhakuloa on Hawai'i Island for bombing, live-fire training, and other military activities, and to any further bombing and desecration at Pōhakuloa. I **DO NOT** want the lease renewed for Pōhakuloa or any other US base on our 'āina. I'm advocating for Pōhakuloa on behalf of my entire school. PTA plays a crucial role in our environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation. Pōhakuloa is our kupuna grounds.

It should NOT be used for any military training of ANY kind. Pōhakuloa's rich cultural heritage deserves protection. Pōhakuloa is not just land. It is sacred. It holds the bones of our kūpuna, the chants of our ancestors, and the life of a fragile and unique ecosystem found nowhere else on Earth. To allow bombing and military use on these sacred lands is not only environmentally irresponsible, it is culturally and spiritually devastating. For decades, the military has used Pōhakuloa as a training ground, leaving lots of toxic waste, and DEADLY bombs that haven't yet exploded. **This abuse directly contradicts the State's constitutional duty under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural beauty and all natural resources.** Moreover, the 65-year lease between the State and the U.S. Army is coming to an end. This is your opportunity to stand for justice and 'āina.

We urge you to REJECT the Final EIS on Pōhakuloa that is extremely deficient in a number of areas. I am writing this to express my aloha for Pōhakuloa "Training Area". This whole thing is a NO brainer. I am completely disappointed. **Again, I DO NOT want the lease renewed!**

Thank you for reading this email.

From: [Angela Kim](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:28:10 PM

Aloha Chair Case and Members of the Board,

I strongly oppose the U.S. Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement for Pōhakuloa.

For 60 years, the Army has caused environmental and cultural harm — wildfires, depleted uranium, and the destruction of irreplaceable 'āina — and paid just \$1 for the land. This EIS does not address these harms or offer a real plan for cleanup.

If the Army cannot restore the land, they should not be allowed to stay on it. Please reject this EIS.

Mahalo,
Angela Kim
Resident of Hawai'i

From: [Mari Kim](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:07:59 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned resident and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

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The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

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The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

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In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha ‘āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Mari Kim
Honolulu, Hawaii



Ka Wai Ola

NEWS FOR THE LĀHUI

kawaiola.news

Kepakemapa (September) 2024 | Vol. 41, No. 09

PŌHAKULOĀ A LAND BESIEGED

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For 75 years, mostly hidden from sight, Pōhakuloa, a high plateau in the center of Moku o Keawe, has been used for military live-fire training. This has damaged the ʻāina (including the habitats of endangered species), contaminated the soil and imperiled the water table. In this photo, dust partially obscuring troop movement provides a visual metaphor of the problem. - Photo: Bobby Camara



PRESENTS A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

KĀKO‘O ‘OIHANA ‘ŌIWI

Supporting Native Hawaiian-owned Businesses

FREE ad space!

(actual size)

SIZE OF AD

width: 3.12 inches

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Space Reservations must be placed

by Wednesday, October 9, 2024 by 4pm

Final camera ready ads must be submitted

by Wednesday, October 16, 2024 by 4pm

*Businesses will need to verify Native Hawaiian ancestry through the Hawaiian Registry Program (HRP). To inquire, visit www.oha.org/registry

Spaces are available at a first come, first served basis

Sign up today!

To learn more and apply go to:

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For questions about this promotion please email kaleenap@oha.org

Eō Moku o Keawe!
Celebrating Culture, Community, and Self-Determination at CNHA’s Annual Conference

Aloha mai kākou,

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) will host its annual conference Sept. 17-19, 2024, at the Hilton Waikoloa Village on Hawai‘i Island. This three-day event, “Eō Moku o Keawe!” promises to be an enriching gathering focused on cultural perpetuation, housing, fashion, tourism, education, and self-determination.

CNHA’s annual conference is a hallmark event that brings together leaders, educators, cultural practitioners, and community members to engage in meaningful discussions and workshops. It serves as a vital platform for sharing knowledge, building relationships, and collectively addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the Native Hawaiian community.

CNHA is dedicated to advancing the interests of Native Hawaiians and this year’s conference is set to build on the momentum of past gatherings.

Less than a year ago, in November 2023, the CNHA conference took place on Maui, where CNHA CEO Kūhiō Lewis provided me the honor of delivering the keynote speech. As the newly appointed Pouhana of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), I had the privilege of sharing my personal journey, introducing my ‘ohana, and outlining the strategic direction for OHA under our 15-year plan, Mana i Maui Ola.

The convention provided a unique platform to present OHA’s vision, which is grounded in collaboration with the Board of Trustees and designed to ensure the long-term wellbeing and empowerment of the lāhui.

One of the most profound moments from that keynote was when Kūhiō and CNHA Cultural Ambassador Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu prayed a blessing over me, OHA and our Hawaiian people. Their heartfelt blessing not only reaffirmed the lāhui’s strength but also underscored the significance of unity in our shared mission for self-determination and cultural resilience.

As we look ahead to the 2024 conference, OHA will be offering two sessions. The first session, scheduled for Tuesday, September 18, from 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., will be a panel discussion focusing on OHA’s request to transfer Mauna‘ala from the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to OHA.

This discussion will address the critical timing and necessity of the request, OHA’s intentions regarding co-stewardship with the ali‘i trusts, and the next steps in this important endeavor. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage directly with the panelists during a Q&A session, fostering an open dialogue about the future stewardship of Mauna‘ala.

From 2 p.m. to 3:45 p.m., Hailama Farden, OHA’s senior director of Hawaiian cultural affairs, will lead a workshop titled “He Mana Kō Ka Inoa: Hawaiian Naming Practices.” This session will delve into the profound significance of traditional Hawaiian naming practices, emphasizing the power and mana that names carry within our culture. As a leader in the Hawaiian language revitalization movement, Haila- ma’s insights will offer invaluable knowledge to all who attend.

If you haven’t yet registered, visit www.hawaiiancouncil.org/ for more information. I look forward to seeing you there as we come together to celebrate and advance the vision of a thriving lāhui. Eō Moku o Keawe! ■

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Stacy Kealahalani Ferreira

Ka Pouhana | Chief Executive Officer



Stacy Kealahalani Ferreira

Ka Pouhana
Chief Executive Officer
Kēhaulani Pu‘u
Ka Pou Nui
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Lili‘uokalani’s Legacy Endures

Hawaiian History Month 2024 Celebrations

Submitted by the Hawai‘i Pono‘i Coalition

September 2024 marks a vibrant celebration of Hawaiian History Month, dedicated to honoring Hawai‘i’s last reigning monarch, Queen Lili‘uokalani, and the rich cultural heritage of the Hawaiian people.

Organized by the Hawai‘i Pono‘i Coalition and numerous community partners, this year’s celebration offers a variety of events that will be available both in-person and virtually, inviting the global community to come together in remembrance, reflection, and celebration.

The celebration begins on September 1 with the Eō E Lili‘u Concert at Kawaiaha‘o Church. The concert invites attendees to singalong as we honor Queen Lili‘uokalani’s legacy with a variety of mele either dedicated to her or composed and written by her.

On September 2, the queen’s birthday, a full day of family-friendly activities are planned to commemorate her life and contributions. The day begins with the Hau‘oli Lā Hānau e Lili‘uokalani Memory Walk from St.



Ho‘okupu are offered at the statue of Queen Lili‘uokalani during last year’s Hawaiian History Month celebration. - *Courtesy Photo*

Andrews to ‘Iolani Palace. The public is invited to enjoy free tours of the palace, Eō E Lili‘u Tributes, a live performance of The Queen’s Women, and a Documentary Short Films Showcase that will delve into various aspects of the queen’s impact on Hawaiian culture and history.

On September 4 and 6, the focus shifts to Teaching 1898: America’s Imperial Legacy in Oceania at the King Kamehameha V Judiciary History Center. This event aims to strengthen the understanding of the imperial experience of 1898 and its impact on the lands and people affected. The discussions will resonate with diverse communities highlighting the shared and parallel legacies of imperialism and how this knowledge can address present and future challenges.

Health and history intersect on September 11 and 13 with Ho‘ōla - History of Hawaiian Health. This event will include a panel discussion on climate change and health, as well as a Holoholo Honolulu Trolley Tour that shares historical health stories from the area. This program offers a unique perspective on the intersection of health, history, and the environment, with a focus on the Hawaiian community.

The last two weeks of the month will feature *Puana*, an original hana keaka (Hawaiian theatre) production. On September 19-20, there will be panel discussions with the director, playwright, composers, and actors of

SEE LILI‘UOKALANI’S LEGACY ON PAGE 5



Kamehameha Schools’ policy on admissions is to give preference to children of Hawaiian ancestry to the extent permitted by law.

E ULU KĀKOU!

At Kamehameha Schools, we foster a learning environment that empowers haumāna to become the confident, resilient and responsible ‘ōiwi who will champion our lāhui and the world.

K-12 APPLICATION WINDOW
August 15 - September 30, 2024

Learn more about our educational programs at ksbe.edu/legacy



Vox Populi, Vox Dei; The Voice of Her People

To have ignored or disregarded so general a request I must have been deaf to the voice of the people, which tradition tells us is the voice of God.

—Lili'uokalani

By Dr. Ronald Williams, Jr.

In the spring of 1931, the 16th edition of the University of Hawai'i's yearbook, *Ka Palapala*, was published. In addition to hosting the ubiquitous student photos and sports team pages, the volume sought to capture "not only the salient features of the past year, but also the outstanding events of many years past."

Sections highlighted "outstanding" episodes in Hawaiian history. The 1893 minority-led coup that overthrew the native monarchy is found within a unit titled, "The Transition," where explanatory text declares: "This period reveals the Islands on the verge of dynamic changes. Queen Lili'uokalani was on the throne and had ruled despotically, bringing about changes without consulting the will of her people. Revolution soon followed and her throne was seized from her."

The charge that Hawai'i's sovereign selfishly pursued an expansion of power through a new constitution "without consulting the will of her people" is a demonstrably provable lie rejected by the primary-source record.

The institutional repetition of this false narrative was meant to distance the public from an uncomfortable truth. The islands of Hawai'i were an internationally recognized nation, led by Kānaka 'Ōiwi, when, in 1898, they were illegally seized by the United States for use as a strategic port to support that country's ongoing war in the Philippines.

The hypocrisy of a country with an asserted devotion to government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," seizing an independent nation against the stated wishes of a great majority of its citizens, demanded an attempt at justification.

From the first days of her reign, Queen Lili'uokalani encountered an engaged and passionate populace that repeatedly demanded the removal of the widely despised Bayonet Constitution of 1887 – a document that disenfranchised many while shifting power to a White minority.

Hui Kālāi'āina Hawai'i – a native-led political party founded in 1888 with the central purpose of seeing a new constitution adopted – organized a nation-wide petition drive. Her majesty later wrote, in recalling the event, "Petitions poured in from every part of the Islands for a new constitution. To have ignored or disregarded so general a request I must have been deaf to the voice of the people, which tradition tells us is the voice of God."

These petitions, today preserved in the public archives, state in part: "Ke nonoi aku nei me ka iini nui, e hookoia e Kou Kuleana he Moiwahine no ke Aupuni Hawaii, ka hoohana ana aku e hiki ai e loaa koke mai he Kumukānawai hou no ko kakou Aina a me ko kakou Lahui."



Her Royal Highness Queen Lili'uokalani. - Photo: Hawai'i State Archives

(We petition you with an immense desire, to use the authority granted you as Queen of the Hawaiian Kingdom, to execute the endeavor of obtaining soon a new Constitution for our country and our people).

Employing another venue to voice their wishes, voters drafted, signed, and delivered numerous Palapala Ho'opi'i (petitions) to the Hawaiian Kingdom Legislature.

On the opening day of the 1892 session, Rep. Iosepa Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u submitted a petition from voters of "Hilo Hema" (South Hilo), demanding a "Kumukānawai Hou" (new constitution). Subsequently, 58 similar petitions, containing a total of 2,898 signatures, were submitted by 11 different legislators representing districts across the Hawaiian nation.

The voice of the people was, once more, loud and clear.

On 29 December 1892, a writer to the *Daily Bulletin*, in a piece titled by the editors, "The Popular Desire," explained, "It has been shown clearly and satisfactorily that the present Constitution is obnoxious to the majority of the voting population. Petition after petition has come into the House praying for a revision or replacement of the present document. Speech after speech, writing after writing, meeting after meeting, all tended toward the

same object."

Editors at *Ka Leo o ka Lahui* reminded their readers, "Vox Populi! Vox Dei!! O ka Leo o ka lahui; ka leo ia o ke Akua."

On 14 January 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani was presented a new constitution by officers of Hui Kālāi'āina in front of thousands who had gathered on the lawn at 'Iolani Palace. She delivered the document to Her cabinet for their approval.

Three days later She was overthrown in a previously planned coup. Lili'uokalani could have maintained the status quo, deflecting the wishes of her people and maintaining Her crown. But that's not the woman she was. That's not the leader she was.

Amidst the swirl of politics, the dangers of sworn enemies, and a unsettled time, Her Majesty Queen Lili'uokalani did one of the most difficult things that a sovereign is asked to do. She turned to the voices of her people – and listened.

He Inoa No Lili'uokalani. ■

LILI'UOKALANI'S LEGACY

Continued from page 4



A hula is offered beneath the window of the room where Queen Lili'uokalani was imprisoned at 'Iolani Palace. - Courtesy Photo

Puana, offering insights into the creative process behind this unique production that explores the deep connections Kānaka Maoli have with our kūpuna (ancestors) through song. The play weaves together stories from family artifacts and poetic compositions, guiding contemporary musicians in their artistic journeys. The world premiere of *Puana* is September 27-28.

Hawaiian History Month is a time to reflect on the enduring legacy of Queen Lili'uokalani, a leader whose commitment to peace, justice, and the wellbeing of her people continues to inspire us today. Join us as we honor Queen Lili'uokalani, celebrate our culture, and look toward a future of resilience and hope. ■

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Faces of the Diaspora Series

Coaching Beneath the Bright Lights of the NFL

By Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton

Football has always fascinated Keli'i Kekuewa, who used to watch his father coach on Hawai'i Island. "My dad's my hero," Kekuewa said. So, "I knew I was gonna play football."

At 31 years old, he's now a coach himself, following in his father's footsteps. But Kekuewa is also blazing his own path forward by establishing his family name in the National Football League (NFL).

He recently kicked off his first season as the assistant offensive line coach for the Carolina Panthers in Charlotte, N.C. Prior to that, he trained the Seattle Seahawks as both an offensive assistant and an assistant offensive line coach for four years.

Kekuewa has traveled around the U.S. to pursue his dream of stadium turf and pigskin. He attributes much of his success to his 'Ōiwi lineage; his 'ohana originated from Hōnaunau.

"I learned early on how important it was to be Hawaiian," Kekuewa said.

Born in Honolulu, Kekuewa spent his early years living on-campus at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama where his mother worked as a high school dorm advisor, and his father was a food services manager.

His grandfather, Kahu David Kaupu, served as a pastor at both Kamehameha and Kaumakapili Church, so his faith in Ke Akua shaped Kekuewa from a young age. Every Sunday, he attended church.

When his mother accepted a position at the new Kamehameha Schools Hawai'i campus, 9-year-old Kekuewa and his family moved to Kea'au on Hawai'i Island. With three sisters, he held his own as the only son.

He was accepted to attend Kamehameha Schools and his education there connected him with his Hawaiian culture and also sparked an interest in land management. Athletics was his other passion. In addition to football, he tried wrestling, baseball, basketball, soccer and judo. In 2006, Kekuewa made the junior varsity football team as a freshman.

Early on, his father told him that he'd be an offensive lineman. By the end of his first season, Kekuewa started to practice with varsity players – something he was very proud of.

Kekuewa dreamed of securing a scholarship to play in college and worked hard to make that happen. Throughout high school, he attended football camps on the continent, visiting Oregon, Washington State and Utah.

"That's what kind of helped me grow in confidence to move up to the mainland and play and go to school," he said. "I wanted the experience of playing big-time football."

During his senior year, Kekuewa was offered the opportunity to walk on to Oregon State University's football



Keli'i Kekuewa recently kicked off his first season as the assistant offensive line coach for the Carolina Panthers in Charlotte, N.C. - *Courtesy Photos*



Keli'i and Namelelani Kekuewa.

He graduated in 2011, and was then recruited to Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Kekuewa studied for a bachelor's degree in environmental policy and analysis, with two potential dream employers: the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources or Kamehameha Schools.

Through football, Kekuewa became fast friends with another player named Nick Hager. Together, they spent a spring break working on Hager's family farm in Ohio. After that experience, Kekuewa felt more deeply linked to his maternal grandmother's North Dakota roots.

"I called my parents up, and I was like, 'This is the

place I want to be,'" he said.

His time in college as a center on the offensive line made Kekuewa want to join the NFL. After graduating in May 2014, he trained through the winter, but, ultimately, didn't get the call.

After returning home to Hawai'i, Kekuewa looked into land management jobs before deciding to pursue a master's degree. His former college head coach – then a new hire at Wake Forest University in North Carolina – urged Kekuewa to help him train the football team as a graduate assistant.

Although he wasn't sold on coaching at first, he slowly warmed up to it over three seasons. "I loved that I could still be part of the game," Kekuewa said. "I was helping people live their dreams."

During that time, he also maintained a long-distance romantic relationship with fellow Kamehameha Schools Hawai'i graduate, Namelelani Akiona.

In December 2016, Kekuewa graduated with his master's degree, then landed a gig coaching at the University of Minnesota in 2017. When he and Namelelani got engaged, she moved to Minnesota too.

In July 2018, he and Namelelani were married on Hawai'i Island. That year, he also accepted a job at Arkansas' Henderson State University where he ran his own position room. There, living in the small town of Arkadelphia, was the first place where he and his wife felt "othered" as Native Hawaiians.

Kekuewa's next career opportunity was coaching defensive line at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. He also started to train tight ends. A fellow coach recommended him for a job with the Seahawks.

In 2020, Kekuewa began working for the Seattle team. Although the COVID-19 pandemic hindered their plans, he and his wife eventually moved to Washington state and fell in love with it – largely because of the Hawaiian diaspora. Namelelani joined a hālau hula, and Kekuewa also danced occasionally.

"Seattle was way bigger for my wife and I than just football," Kekuewa said. "It was a way for us to connect to home."

But, in early 2024, with Coach Pete Carroll no longer leading the team, his staff was let go – including Kekuewa. He then joined the coaching staff for the Panthers, moving last February to the other side of the continent.

Although he and Namelelani miss Seattle, Kekuewa takes comfort in his consistent connection to Hawai'i: his wife. "She keeps me deeply rooted in my kuleana to our lāhui," he said.

Eventually, Kekuewa knows he'll happily return to Hawai'i Island. But, for now, he feels pulled to his profession, every day staying focused on representing aloha.

"My biggest driving force in my coaching philosophy and everything – and as little as it sounds – is always giving aloha," Kekuewa said. ■

Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame Announces 2024 Inductees

By Ed Kalama

Four individuals and the world's top selling female Hawaiian musical group have been named to the 2024 class for induction into the prestigious Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame (HMHF).

The inductees will be honored at the Oct. 27, 2024, "Lei of Stars" ceremony at the 'Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach which will feature a Sunday brunch.

"The Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame annually honors persons who have contributed to promoting, preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian music and hula," said HMHF President Toni Lee.

Kumu Hula George Ainsley Kananiokeakua Holokai, who passed away in 2006, enjoyed an illustrious career as a dancer, drummer, musician and was a regular judge at hula competitions. He was a skilled chanter for the



George Holokai



Noelani Mahoe

Aloha Week Court and a beloved hula and 'ukulele instructor for the City and County of Honolulu. He is a recipient

← Photos: Courtesy of Hula Preservation Society

of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts.

Edwina Noelani Kanoho Mahoe is a musician, singer, recording artist, author, historian, kumu hula, music teacher and show producer. In the early 1960s she formed the Leo Nahenahe Singers along with Ethelynne and Mona Teves and Lynette Kaopuiki. She holds a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts.

Ledward Ka'apana is a Grammy-nominated musician well known as a slack key guitar master. He also plays steel guitar, 'ukulele, autoharp and bass guitar. In his teens, Ka'apana formed the legendary musical group Hui 'Ohana along with his brother Nedward Ka'apana and falsetto great Dennis Pavao. Hui 'Ohana released 14 commercially successful albums. Ka'apana also led the group I Kona and performed with the Pahinui Brothers, Genoa Keawe and Barney Issacs.

Kimo Alama Keaulana has more than 50 years of experience teaching all forms of hula. He has presented workshops, presentations and lectures for the Bishop Museum, the Kamakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, the Kawaihuelani Hawaiian Language Center, Lili'uokalani Trust and many other civic organizations and societies. As a musical historian, his "Kimo Alama Keaulana Collection," housed in the Bishop Museum Archives, is one of the museum's most widely used collec-



Ledward Ka'apana



Kimo Keaulana



Nā Leo Pilimehana

tion and contains nearly 1,000 Hawaiian language songs with their translations, annotations and cross references.

As the world's top-selling female Hawaiian music group, Nā Leo Pilimehana – Lehua Kalima Alvarez, Nalani Jenkins and Angela Escontrias – celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2024. The group has released more than 20 No. 1 hits, produced more than 20 CDs with a worldwide distribution, and they continue to write, record and perform. Nā Leo has more than 20 Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards winning honors over four decades – the 80s, 90s, 2000s, and 2010s. ■

The annual Lei of Stars awards ceremony is a fundraiser for the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame. Individual tickets are \$200 and corporate tables of 10 are \$5,000 to \$10,000. For more information contact Toni Lee at parade.lady001@gmail.com.



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The Pride of Paddling Under Ka Hae Hawai'i

By Ku'uwehi Hiraishi

Indigenous athletes can rarely represent their homeland on the international stage because their 'āina remains occupied by colonizers. But every year, during the world championships of outrigger canoe racing, Native Hawaiians proudly paddle under ka hae Hawai'i.

"He kūpono ka hana 'ana ma lalo o ka hae Hawai'i no ka mea ma ka nānā i nā hō'ailona e kū ana ma nā hale pe'a he hō'ike no kēlā me kēia hui." (Pīkī Hayward of Kona's Kai 'EhITU Canoe Club says competing under ka hae Hawai'i is appropriate because every other group is represented by their flag)

Hayward was one of more than 2,800 paddlers from 27 countries gathered at Hilo One ("sands of Hilo") in August for the 2024 International Va'a Federation (IVF) World Sprints Championships – often called the Olympics of outrigger canoe paddling. Hilo native Alana Cabatu of Puna Canoe Club was there as well. She competed in the Open and 40s Women.

"To be able to represent Hilo One, our stomping grounds, our wahi pana at the highest level at world sprints, there's no greater honor," said Cabatu.

She was one of 336 paddlers from across the pae 'āina representing Team Hawai'i, which had the largest representation at the event.

"It means everything that Indigenous people can see themselves on a piece of paper, on TV representing their country," says Cabatu, "It really starts to shift the narrative of this place. We don't represent a state, we represent a country."

Puna Canoe Club steerswoman Julein Haunani Keamo says she was very happy to race under ka hae Hawai'i.

"A laila komo ka 'ao'ao kuleana. Oiai ma lalo o Amelika 'oko'a ke 'ano o ke kuana'ike, 'a'ole like ka no'ono'o no ke kuleana." (Keamo says this privilege comes with kuleana and there isn't the same sense of kuleana in competing for America)

Darlene Iokepa Kakalia, a lifetime member of Hilo's Kamehameha Canoe Club and its predecessor, the Prince David Kawana-nākoa Canoe Club, says representing Hawai'i is empowering for the lāhui.

"This is the one event that I know of that allows Hawai'i to be its own country, and that has made a big impression on a lot of Native Hawaiians here. It makes us even prouder – and prouder because it's here in Hilo," said Iokepa.

"The Hilo community knows how to rally," said Sue Lee Loy, Hawai'i County Councilmember for Keaukaha, Pana'ewa, and Waiākea Uka.

"I mean talk about different adversities that come up, the different communities had to come together, the food trucks and vendors down at Bayfront, the security, the canoe paddlers – everybody in Hilo got together and made it happen," Lee Loy added.

"This is an amazing opportunity for us to share the culture that we have here in Hawai'i with the world, and to see our canoe clubs from across the state and especially our island representing us so well," Hawai'i County Mayor Mitch Roth said.

This isn't the first time Hilo Hanakahi hosted world sprints. In 2004, former Kamehameha Canoe Club head coach, the late John Kekua, convinced the International Va'a Federation to bring the race to Hilo Bay. Hayward remembers the race and



Paddlers jubilantly wave the hae Hawai'i at the August 2024 IVF World Sprints Opening Ceremony in Hilo. - Photos: Courtesy IVF



Photo op during the awards ceremony for the double-hulled canoe Master 50 Men's race. In first place was Hawai'i's Kai 'EhITU Outrigger Team (center). Second place went to Tahiti's Raiatea Paddling Connection (left), and in third place was Aotearoa's Tarawera Outrigger Canoe Club (right).

says he's seen the sport's popularity grow ever since.

"Kuhi wau mamuli o kēlā wā o ka ma'i ahulau. Ua ho'omaka e nui nā kānaka ma ka hoe wa'a 'ana ke ko'okahi. Ma ka ho'i hou i ka hui like 'ana loa'a mai ka wa'a e hui like ai. A laila ua nui maila nā kanaka e hoe ana i kēia manawa." (Hayward says he assumes its because of the pandemic that lots of people began paddling one-man outrigger canoes. Once social distancing ended and the six-man canoes returned, the number of paddlers grew)

Paddling is one of the most popular sports in Hawai'i with a UH study finding one-in-five residents having paddled. The sport is even higher in popularity among Native Hawaiians, where 42% have participated in the activity. There's also a healing nature to being out on the ocean, being part of a team, and connecting to history and culture.

Keamo says there are a lot of Hawai'i paddlers who have no exposure to 'ike Hawai'i outside of the sport.

"A'ohe pō'aiapili e ho'oulu ai i ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, ke kuana'ike Hawai'i, me ka lawena Hawai'i. No laila ke komo ka po'e ma kēia pō'aiapili Hawai'i, hiki ke ho'oulu i kēlā 'ao'ao." (Keamo says there's no other opportunity to develop an understanding of Hawaiian language, perspective, and behaviors. But when people enter this uniquely Hawaiian space, they can strengthen their 'ike Hawai'i). ■

Short Term Rentals, Long Term Issues for Hawai'i County

By Amee Hi'ilawe Neves

Like other communities across the pae 'āina, Hawai'i Island is struggling with the issue of illegal short-term rentals, also called transient accommodation rentals (TARs), that cater to tourists rather than locals.

According to an analysis by the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice, one in 24 homes on Hawai'i Island are short term rentals – 52% of which are owned by non-Hawai'i residents.

To address this problem, Hawai'i County Council Chair Heather Kimball and Councilwoman Ashley Kierkiewicz introduced a three-bill package (Bills 121, 122 and 123) to register all TARs in the county.

"We are in a housing crisis in the county. Across the state, local residents are having a harder time finding places to live," said Kimball. "We need that middle income housing, and this bill package was really designed to address two of what I think are three prongs that we have to address when it comes to housing."

The first prong is ensuring more housing is built in the islands. The second prong is that housing doesn't slip into other uses, like TARs. The third prong is helping locals keep their homes.

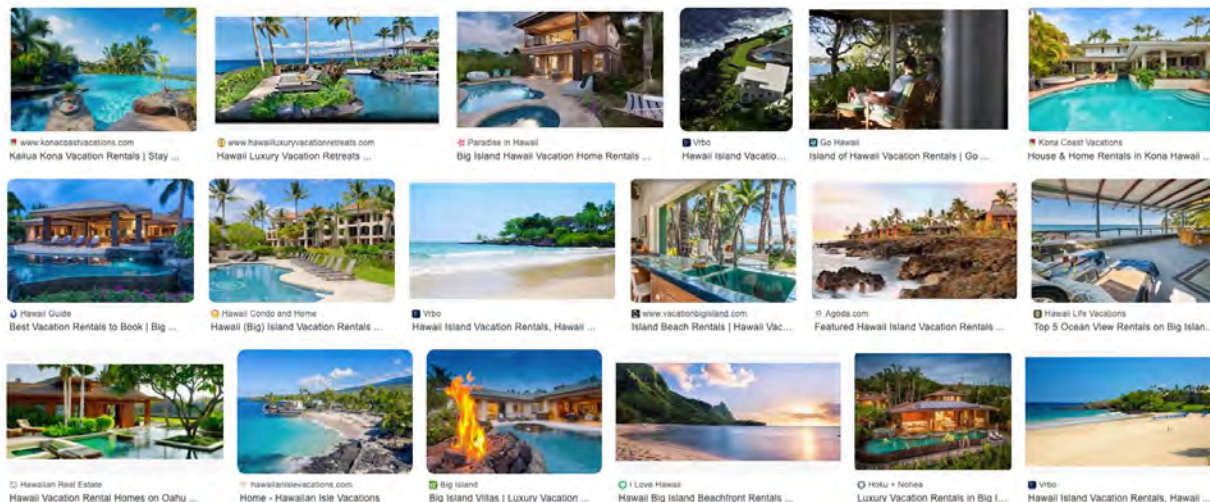
Bill 121's objective is to register all TARs in the county and ensure they're operating safely and adhering to the same standards. This includes new regulations for owner-hosted, operator-hosted and non-hosted TARs.

Bill 122 would repeal provisions for bed and breakfast establishments and include them under Bill 121. Bill 123 seeks to amend the county's 'ohana dwelling code, changing the name to "accessory dwelling unit." This removes restrictions for these buildings providing they serve as long-term housing.

"What we really want to ensure is that we're preserving the character of the residential neighborhoods and particularly making sure that agricultural land is actually being used for agriculture," said Kimball.

The emphasis of the bill package is to preserve Hawai'i County communities. In 2022, the planning department received over 27 TAR complaints in Hilo and 38 TAR complaints in Kona.

"I think that having a transient accommodation rental next door can be a fine experience [but] in many cases, it ends up being a nightmare for our residents when they're unhosted," said Kimball. "Bill 121 [makes] the



A google search turns up dozens of luxury short-term rental properties on Hawai'i Island. Fifty-two percent of short-term rentals on the island are owned by non-Hawai'i residents. - Courtesy Photo

good neighbor stamp standards more concrete."

Some changes TARs owners can expect include increased fees, fines and penalties for violations.

"The fees are going up for registration in the format that the bill is currently in. The other thing that is new is the penalties are heavier if you're in violation of any of the standards. If folks just continue to fail to address the issue, the director can start charging them two times their nightly rate. So, there is a bigger stick in the legislation, for violations of the code," Kimball said.

The bill package will still allow owners to continue operating their TARs as long as they do it legally.

"There's going to be more paperwork. The fees are there, but I think they are very reasonable and if you're operating legally now, there is a pathway for you to continue operating," said Kimball.

Despite this, the bills received over 100 testimonies in opposition at a July hearing.

"No disrespect to anybody that submits testimony. I do think that this is a vocal minority. I only started this because my community was asking for strong regulations around illegal short-term vacation rentals," Kimball said.

Dan Corson and Berndt Stugger are the founders of Hāmākua Chocolate Farm located in Pāpa'ikou. They testified expressing concerns for their Airbnb farm.

"The way, currently, that this bill is written is it doesn't completely address that specific issue. It also hurts peo-

ple by taking away their additional possibility for income without benefiting long-term rental markets and that's what we are not okay with," said Stugger.

"Airbnb actually allows the farmer to continue farming because the cost of the land is expensive," said Corson. "It's a way of being able to share your farm and your passion and your lifestyle with people and to be able to keep the farm going."

Corson and Stugger believe the current bill package is too general and should focus on non-resident owners rather than TARs as a whole.

"We want Hawai'i to be Hawai'i and I think that we need to be able to strike a balance. If we do it in a thoughtful way, I think that there is a way that we can transition. The way they've done it, just seems to be too big of a step all at once," Corson said.

The package requires more work before it can be passed, but Kimball looks forward to hearing community voices to improve upon it.

"These are deep structural issues that are challenging to address. But if we are ever going to ensure that the next generation can stay here, that we have a strong middle class, and that Hawai'i is not being sold out to outside investors, we must get into these issues, we have to do this hard work and sometimes it's going to be unpopular. But I do believe that this is for sure the right thing to do," Kimball said. ■

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Punalu'u Black Sand Beach in Danger of Development

By Lisa Huynh Eller

For three generations, many in the rural community of Ka'ū, on the southern point of Hawai'i Island, have been fighting against the development of their culturally and environmentally sensitive coastline. They face a future in which that coastline is either protected for generations to come or developed and changed – some say, lost – forever.

Black Sand Beach, LLC, a company owned by developer Eva Liu, is proposing to build a 225-unit residential and commercial project on 434 acres at the former Sea Mountain site at Punalu'u. Liu's company purchased the parcels, which includes most of the land ma kai of Punalu'u Black Sand Beach, in 2020.

"Punalu'u has been neglected for years, leading to its deterioration – something that anyone who loves Ka'u, respects its culture, and is dedicated to environmental protection would not want to see," Liu wrote in an email. "That is why our plan has received widespread support from the community. For those who oppose it, we maintain open communication, giving them the opportunity to understand our plans and the current state of Punalu'u."

Liu is seeking Hawai'i County's approval for a special management area use permit to move forward. But at the Windward Planning Commission's (Commission) hearings earlier this year, the public testified overwhelmingly against the project.

The reasons for their opposition were cultural, environmental, economic and legal in nature.

"If you know the mo'olelo of the people of Ka'ū, you know how we connect to our environment. When people look at development to this extent, it's damaging to our natural ecosystem that we evolved with," said Nohea



Punalu'u Black Sand Beach is an important habitat for endangered sea turtles. Already, the daily busloads of tourists visiting the beach pose a threat to these animals.



The iconic and pristine Punalu'u Black Sand Beach will be changed forever if a proposed 225-unit residential and commercial project is approved. Ka'ū residents, led by 'Iewe Hānau o ka 'Āina, have partnered with the Center for Biological Diversity to file a legal intervention opposing the project. - Photos: 'Iewe Hānau o ka 'Āina.

Ka'awa, president of 'Iewe Hānau o ka 'Āina, a group of citizens and lineal descendants of Punalu'u and Ka'ū opposing the development.

"We never see ourselves as separate from our environment. The honu living at Punalu'u are our 'ohana. The honu to us is kinolau of demigods that stem from the same genealogies of who we are."

In March, the Center for Biological Diversity and 'Iewe Hānau o ka 'Āina filed a legal intervention opposing the project. The groups were later joined by the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation.

In May, the Commission voted to grant standing to the center and Tewe in a contested hearing case, a quasi-judicial process in which evidence and testimony is presented by involved parties. Once the hearing concludes, the Commission will vote on whether to give its approval for the permit.

The Commission denied standing to a third party, the Association of Apartment Owners of Colony 1 at Sea Mountain, which represents 76 individual properties encircled by the developer's holdings.

Though the association has taken a neutral stance on the permit, they are concerned about the dilapidated state of the public water, fire suppression and wastewater systems. In a letter to the Commission, the association noted that the proposed project site does not have a current environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment. Group 70 International, a consulting firm based in Honolulu, produced a draft EIS in 2006.

Maxx Phillips, Hawai'i program director and staff attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, said Punalu'u is already overrun by tourists.

Every day, tour buses drop off crowds of visitors. Some of them illegally take sand or get too close to endangered



The known presence of iwi kūpuna at the proposed resort site has not deterred the developer.

and threatened sea turtles. The unmanaged impacts of tourism crowd out locals, increase traffic, and compound infrastructure problems. The situation would become much worse if development is allowed, said Phillips.

“No matter what a developer says, no matter if they use our words, our place names, even our people, the reality is this resort development will change Punalu‘u for the worse. We just cannot afford that anymore,” said Phillips. “Our natural resources, our cultural resources, are too precious. We don’t want to look in the faces of our mo‘opuna and say, ‘we wish we did more.’”

Elsa Kalani Kauleleiaiwi Dedman, a Native Hawaiian with kuleana land that is surrounded by the proposed development, has many concerns about the project. Chief among them is the ability of current and future generations of Native Hawaiians to practice their culture on their land.

PUNALU’U BLACK SAND BEACH

Continued from page 10



Kia’i opposing the development want the wahi pana of Punalu’u to be protected in perpetuity through a conservation easement or other legal mechanism. - Courtesy Photo

“Personally, I was denied my traditional spiritual practice to worship at Lanipau Heiau, which is located adjacent to the Sea Mountain Golf Course,” she said. “The developer’s land use planner told me in February that I could not go there because it was off limits. This heiau is a known heiau of Kekealani, my ancestor.”

Dedman said the proposed resort continues the desecration that began in the 1970s, when C. Brewer & Co. built Sea Mountain. Despite the known presence of iwi kūpuna in the former and proposed resort location, Liu and Black Sand, LLC want to use the same site.

“This is horrendous because our Kānaka Maoli believe the bones of our kūpuna are imbued with mana, life force. Their proper care and respect are a critical component to our wellbeing. This proposed development is going to continue the genocide of the Indigenous Kānaka Maoli.”

Some government officials have voiced their concerns over the project’s policy-related shortcomings.

Hawai’i County Planner Ron Whitmore submitted testimony that the project is inconsistent with three policies in the Ka’ū Community Development Plan. More specifically, he said the project does not include affordable housing, did not establish a new shoreline setback, and did not complete the necessary assessments related to impacts on resources.

Those who oppose any development in Punalu’u are fighting for a future in which the area is preserved in perpetuity, perhaps through a conservation easement or other legal mechanism.

‘Iewe Hānau o ka ‘Āina held its first meeting for residents, native and non-native, to come together to share their hopes for their home. Ka’awa said they want, among other things, for lands to be returned to their rightful owners, for water and other natural resources to be protected, and for keiki to have jobs that help restore the area.

“People need to know that we don’t always have to accept what is thrown our way. We have solutions,” she said. “We hope to minimize the impacts caused by overuse of our natural resources, and to perpetuate traditional and customary practices. We want to keep educating and empowering our keiki.

“We were gifted Ka’ū by our ancestors, and we want to gift Ka’ū to our descendants.” ■

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Maunakea Access Road Victory Shines Light on Ongoing Misuse of Trust Lands

By Kalawai'a Nunies

On July 17, 2019, peaceful protests opposing the development of the TMT on Maunakea reached a critical and sorrowful moment when 33 kūpuna and one caregiver were arrested on the Maunakea Access Road (MKAR) which leads to the summit of the mauna.

Adding to the deep kaumaha of that day was the fact that the road is built on Hawaiian Homelands – lands that are held by the state in trust for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA).

In 2018, one year prior to the arrests, the Department of Transportation (DOT) declared the road and the lands underlying it as belonging to the DOT, not the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) or the Home Lands trust.

HHCA/DHHL beneficiaries Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele, Edward Halealoha Ayau, and Keli'i "Skippy" Ioane, represented by Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (NHLC), challenged the DOT's taking of Hawaiian land without compensation, consultation with beneficiaries, or due process as required under the HHCA in *Kanahele, et. al. v. State, et. al.* ("Kanahele").

After years of litigation the question was settled by the Hawai'i Supreme Court in a unanimous, definitive opinion written by Justice Sabrina McKenna that was issued on May 20, 2024. The court held that the DOT was wrong in taking the lands, and that DHHL breached its trust duties by allowing the DOT to do so without following due process or requiring compensation.

The Supreme Court opinion noted that, "...land designated as Hawaiian home lands must remain under the control of the DHHL unless the land is sold or exchanged consistent with the HHCA...There is nothing in the record indicating a land exchange or sale was completed... The State blatantly disregarded unambiguous requirements of the HHCA, and in doing so, breached its constitutional and fiduciary obligation to faithfully carry out the HHCA.

"...It is troubling that the DOT unilaterally designated the MKAR as a state highway via an internal memo. Instead of following the procedures for a land exchange or sale as described in HHCA sections 204(a)(3) and 205 and 43 C.F.R. part 47, the State – particularly the HHC members and DHHL – blatantly breached their fiduciary duties by allowing the illegal taking and then failing to remedy the designation that violated the HHCA."

The case continues to determine the appropriate remedies to address these breaches of trust.

Beyond concerns addressed in Kanahele regarding the state's mismanagement of the land beneath the



Maunakea kia'i plant a hae Hawai'i near the access road. - Courtesy Photo



Kia'i block the Maunakea Access Road to prevent the development of the Thirty Meter Telescope in July 2019. - Photo: Ruben Carrillo, 4 Miles

Maunakea access road, it also aims the spotlight on the fact that, across the pae 'āina, there are many instances of public use of Hawaiian Home Lands without compensation by other state agencies.

Many roads, schools, and parks across the state sit on Hawaiian Home Lands. These public uses do not advance the purpose of the HHCA to get Native Hawaiians onto the 'āina.

In the Kanahele opinion, McKenna specifically mentions another example of uncompensated public uses of Hawaiian Home Lands: "As an example of an unlawful taking, 65 acres of Hawaiian Home Lands were used by the State Department of Education for Nānākuli High School. The record does not appear to explain whether or how this matter was resolved."

Uncompensated use of DHHL trust lands for purposes other than homes for beneficiaries is a serious injustice impacting Hawaiian families.

"When state agencies use Hawaiian Home Lands without the trust being compensated, beneficiaries suffer. A very small percentage of land in Hawai'i was taken into trust for the Hawaiian Home Lands program. Those lands are for Hawaiian families to get back to the 'āina," said NHLC Executive Director Makalika Naholowa'a.

"That's what Prince Kūhiō fought for in the 1920s when the HHCA was passed by the U.S. Congress, and that's the purpose all agencies in the state should respect today. More people are on the homestead waitlist than there should be, and many have died waiting because these lands are not being put to their intended use for Native Hawaiians."

A task force was created by the United States Secretary of the Interior and Gov. John Waihe'e in the 1980s to investigate public misuse of trust lands. The task force concluded that, in many ways, the state had not met its fiduciary obligations under the HHCA which are established in the Act, agreed to by compact with the federal government, and committed to in the state constitution.

The task force reported, "[t]he State has not identified with precision the Hawaiian Home Lands that constitute the assets of the trust; it has not at all times accounted accurately for revenues associated with trust lands; it has not maintained auditable financial records and statements; and, it has entered into conveyances and encumbrances of Hawaiian Home lands that have not been authorized by law."

Subsequent legislation, including Act 395 of 1988 and Act 14 of 1995, was intended to address these issues, providing for funds and land exchanges to compensate the trust for past and existing land uses at those times. However, it's unclear what land exchanges have occurred and the scale of uncompensated public use of Hawaiian Home Lands that continue.

Though Kanahele is a victory for the lands beneath the Maunakea Access Road, unfortunately, the case also highlights the ongoing historical failure of both the federal and state governments to deliver on their trust duties to Native Hawaiian beneficiaries. ■

Mālama 'Āina Deepens Our Pilina with Wao Kele o Puna

By Kalena Blakemore, OHA Legacy Land Agent

Welina mai from the verdant lowland rainforest of Wao Kele o Puna Forest Reserve (WKOP), located on Moku o Keawe, Puna, in the ahupua'a of Ka'ohē and Waiakahiula.

This 25,856-acre watershed and rare seed and plant kīpuka on the slopes of Kīlauea's lower East Rift Zone represents 90% of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA) Legacy Land holdings. A myriad of management operations are required for this 'āina, from protecting rare endangered species, hosting community engagement days, and improving our access into this majestic reserve.

Since our last article in the September 2023 issue of *Ka Wai Ola*, OHA's Legacy Land Program (LLP) has utilized its U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service grant award of \$231,000 to execute the construction and ongoing maintenance of a 17-acre ungulate-proof fence unit to shelter a threatened and endangered plant species, ha'iwale nānāwale (*Cyrtandra nanawaleensis*).

With our fence unit in place, reconnaissance and plant collection soon followed through a collaboration with Hawai'i Island Coordinator for the Plant Extinction Prevention Program (PEPP) and Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) Natural Resource Specialist Joshua VanDeMark. PEPP's expertise and permits allow their staff to survey and carefully collect the fragile leaves of ha'iwale and other rare plants to propagate.

Once our ha'iwale samples were collected, they were transferred to the only place on island authorized to handle such rare and endangered plant species for propagation: the Volcano Rare Plant Facility (VRPF) with experienced research support staffer Jaime Enoka.

Affiliated with UH Mānoa, the VRPF is a propagation center for several rare and difficult-to-grow plant species. Once Enoka has successfully established an abundant founder population of ha'iwale, they can be outplanted back into the reserve and shared with other forest management units within Puna.

DOFAW and our contractor, Forest Solutions Inc., also deployed acoustic sound meters at this treasured site with the hope of collecting data on Hawai'i's native honey creepers, 'ōpē'a'pē'a (Hawaiian hoary bat), and the a'o (Newell shearwater), previously found breeding in this vicinity.

However, these recordings only identified 'apapane (*Himatione sanguinea*) and 'amakihi (*Chlorodrepanis virens*) in minimal presence with an abundance of non-native birds. We will be redeploying acoustic sound meters again but at different locations and varied recording times to enhance our data collection.

Future projects include the development of a weed management plan around our threatened and endangered plant population which, unfortunately, share their home with invasive plants intertwined throughout our fragile founder population of ha'iwale.

With an entry point formally established, we can now access the area for enhanced management operations.



This ungulate-proof fence at OHA's Wao Kele o Puna Forest Reserve shelters 17 acres of land within the reserve to allow a rare native plant species called ha'iwale nānāwale to reestablish itself in the area. - Photo: Kirk Derasin, Forest Solutions Inc.



Close-ups of the extremely rare ha'iwale nānāwale. To help it along, the Volcano Rare Plant Facility is propagating a founder population of the plant. - Photos: Kalena Blakemore

This summer, our forest interns set up vegetation monitoring points within the unit to measure restoration success and invasive species removal. In addition, they have also collected several pounds of 'uki'uki (*Dianella sandwicense*) and 'ōhelo (*Vaccinium calycinum*) seeds from within the unit for future propagating and outplanting back to the reserve.

Access is one of our greatest challenges to managing this rainforest due to its size and location.

Situated in the center of Puna, WKOP is the heart of the district and either surrounded by subdivisions of private residential communities or remote rainforests and lava flows. The reserve is vast with limited pedestrian and vehicle access – often requiring helicopter transport as a last resort to remote areas for reconnaissance surveys.

During recent surveys, we came upon a crater that revealed mai'a (banana), tī, and olonā (*Touchardia latifolia*). This was an exciting observation for all of us who descended deep into the forest crater and soaked by the rain, to be surrounded by these mea kanu (cultivated plants) so far away from contemporary residential homes.

These plants tell a story of our 'Ōiwi traversing the 'āina from ma uka to ma kai and leaving remnants in temporary habitation sites with cultural plants we still use today for tools, food, and medicine. Reconnaissance surveys provide and enrich our understanding of this 'āina that we can later share in forest and cultural restoration efforts within our community.

LLP and Forest Solutions Inc., welcome and host local school groups, hula hālau and university students to facilitate Hawaiian place-based learning in the forest and on the lava lands for kilo and forest stewardship activities.

Often, a visit to WKOP is a first-time experience for our keiki to see the 'āina that provides their drinking water source and harbors our native forest plants and birds. A hosted huaka'i in the reserve also includes reciprocity of mālama 'āina to deepen our pilina with papa honua.

The conservation zone, protective subzone category of land use for WKOP adds to the challenges for access and for the programs we endeavor to develop.

LLP, with support from state and federal agencies is currently seeking opportunities to expand WKOP access through adjoining land parcels. By securing improved and reliable access into the reserve, we can enhance our management operations and opportunities for increasing food, agroforestry and educational programs in Puna. ■

The Army and Pōhakuloa

By Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

Sixty years ago, the state Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) leased 23,000 acres of pristine, conservation-zoned public trust land at Pōhakuloa on Hawai'i Island to the U.S. Army. That acreage is included in the inventory of land that comprises the Army's nearly 133,000-acre Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

In 2029, that lease will expire, and while the Army is looking to extend it, many 'Ōiwi, conservationists and other kia'i 'āina are advocating against renewing the lease.

Their reasons are varied and compelling. The fact that the entirety of the training area is located on land zoned for conservation is a good place to start. There is probably no activity more diametrically opposed to the purpose and function of conservation land than military live-fire training and maneuvers.

Pōhakuloa is home to several endangered native species: the 'io (hawk), nēnē (goose), 'u'au (petrel), palila (a honeycreeper) and the 'ōpe'ape'a (Hawaiian hoary bat). In addition, 15 bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act are found at Pōhakuloa. There are two dozen endemic plant species at Pōhakuloa that are considered endangered, threatened or "species of concern."

Directly beneath Pōhakuloa, at an elevation of about 4,500 feet, is a massive aquifer, likely the largest in the pae 'āina and a critical freshwater resource for the island. With the jet fuel leak at Red Hill that imperiled O'ahu's main aquifer still fresh in our collective memory, the image of bombs exploding over the water table at Pōhakuloa is terrifying.

Culturally, Pōhakuloa is considered a place set apart, a space meant for elemental spirits rather than human beings. A landscape riddled with caves and lava tubes, it is also the resting place for countless iwi kūpuna. It is considered a place of tremendous spiritual and elemental power. The very piko (center) of the island sits on PTA's eastern border.

Decades of military training activities involving a range of weapons and munitions, has scarred the earth and left Pōhakuloa cluttered with both spent and unexploded ordnance. PTA's artillery impact zone is considered too dangerous to clean and so the byproducts of the military's war games are simply left there, devolving into a toxic, hazardous junkyard.

Of particular concern is the presence of depleted uranium (DU) at Pōhakuloa. During the 1960s, DU, a radioactive heavy metal, was used in munitions fired at PTA – meaning that residue from those weapons remain in the soil of the impact zone and can be aerosolized in the dust clouds that are stirred up during current live-fire exercises. The severe health effects on both human beings and animals exposed to aerosolized DU cannot be overstated.

And then there are the fires. According to the Army's 2024 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), their



The August 2022 wildfire at Pōhakuloa burned 17,700 acres of land. Over the past 50 years, nearly 900 wildfires have been started at PTA.

- Photo: Councilman Tim Richards

activities at PTA caused 892 fires at Pōhakuloa between 1975-2024. The "Leilani Fire" in August 2022 started at Pōhakuloa and burned about 17,700 acres – 12,400 acres of which were outside of the boundaries of PTA and habitats for endangered species.

In the aftermath of the Lahaina wildfire last year, and with global temperatures rising as a consequence of climate change, common sense dictates that dropping bombs and firing munitions in a dry, windy area is a recipe for disaster.

The use of Pōhakuloa for military training began during World War II, when the U.S. Marines leased about 91,000 acres of land from Parker Ranch near Waikōloa. Called the Waikoloa Maneuver Area, the military used it throughout the war for live-fire exercises.

As they did with the island of Kaho'olawe, the U.S. military viewed Pōhakuloa's remoteness – located out-of-site in the center of Hawai'i Island – as ideal for military training. For about a decade, the Marine Corps controlled the training area until the mid 1950s when the U.S. Army took over.

The actual location of the training area has evolved over time. As coastal areas were developed for resorts, military training moved further inland.

In January 1956, via executive order 1719, Territorial Gov. Samuel W. King, transferred 758 acres of land in Pōhakuloa to the U.S. Army. However, most of the land now included in the PTA was acquired in August 1964 via Presidential Executive Order 11167.

With the stroke of a pen, then President Lyndon B. Johnson commandeered 84,057 acres at Pōhakuloa for the U.S. military justifying it as necessary to protect U.S. interests in the increasingly strategic Indo-Pacific region. The state received no monetary compensation for this land.

Also in 1964, for the ridiculous sum of just \$1, the Hawai'i State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) leased another 23,000 acres of public conservation land at Pōhakuloa to the U.S. Army for a period of 65 years.

In addition to the land that the U.S. Army has purchased outright, PTA now includes nearly 133,000 acres

with an artillery impact zone of 51,000 acres. Most of the land consolidated under the training area is ceded land – the former crown and government lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom that were stolen at the time of the overthrow.

Today, PTA is the largest Department of Defense installation in Hawai'i. It is used by all branches of the military, including the National Guard as well as for training Hawai'i County fire and emergency personnel. It is also used by "friendly" foreign military personnel during the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) military exercises held in Hawai'i every two years.

The military insists that Pōhakuloa is important for national security. The U.S. Army website states that: "PTA's firing ranges allow units to conduct small-arms and crew-served weapons familiarization training and qualifications, as well as artillery and mortar live fire. Through the years PTA's ranges and training areas have helped Army, Marine, Air Force and Navy units maintain their combat readiness and prepare for war."

"Today, PTA stands as the premier military training area in the Pacific region...because it offers realistic training opportunities not found elsewhere. With several new construction projects underway, PTA stands ready to support military training well into the future."

The Army also claims that "PTA is a vanguard of environmental and cultural protection" and that its staff includes "more than 50 professionals dedicated to preserving and protecting endangered and threatened plants and safeguarding cultural resources at PTA."

That sounds good, but after the bombing of Kaho'olawe ended in 1990, the U.S. Navy spent \$344 million and 10 years clearing unexploded ordnance from surface of the island, but still only cleaned 75% of its mess. And PTA's artillery impact zone is almost twice the size of the island of Kaho'olawe.

Unfortunately, the U.S. military does not have an impressive track record for environmental protection or cultural preservation.

The 23,000 acres of land that the Army leases from the state is not in the artillery impact zone, but it is needed to "connect" U.S. government-owned lands at PTA. In anticipation of renewing its lease, the Army has already prepared two draft Environmental Impact Statements – although it seems that no comprehensive archaeological survey has ever been completed at Pōhakuloa – at least nothing that has been shared with the public.

Regardless, the Army intends to stay at Pōhakuloa.

Should DLNR elect not to renew the Army's lease at Pōhakuloa five years from now, the cultural, environmental and health concerns relative to the military's activities there will not be resolved.

Although PTA's footprint will be smaller, which is important, the Army will still retain more than 100,000 acres of land there, and so they will continue using the sacred lands of Pōhakuloa for target practice. ■

In addition to the Army's lease for Pōhakuloa, three other Army leases on O'ahu also expire in 2029 (Kahuku Training Area, Mākua Military Reservation, and Poamoho).

PŌHAKULOLO: A LAND BESIEGED

BY PUANANI FERNANDEZ-AKAMINE

The wao akua (godly realm) of Pōhakuloa is a high plateau in the center of Moku o Keawe.

Created over millenia by ancient lava flows from Maunakea to its north, Maunaloa to its south and Hualālai to its west, at its lowest point Pōhakuloa sits at an elevation of 6,200 feet. It is a vast area encompassing more than 200 square miles of land.

Evidence of its volcanic origin is revealed in the wind-swept, desert landscape, especially in its westerly reaches, although there is the occasional kīpuka (oasis) hidden throughout. Pōhakuloa is home to many rare, native species of plants and animals, and it includes a portion of the last remaining sub-alpine tropical dryland ecosystem in the world. It is a conservation zone.

For centuries, Pōhakuloa was a place set aside; a realm of deities and elemental spirits. Although it might see corporeal travelers from time to time, there were no permanent settlements. Still, it is not devoid of human fingerprints. Sometime around the turn of the 16th century, celebrated ali'i nui Umi-a-Liloa built a kuahu (altar) and watchtower in Pōhakuloa at the place known as Pu'u Ke'ek'e'e.

There is an otherworldly aspect to Pōhakuloa. It is no wonder that many iwi kūpuna were laid to rest there.

It is therefore hurtful and an affront to many Kānaka 'Ōiwi that this sacred space has been defiled by 75 years of military training exercises.

» THE NEED TO RESTORE PONO «

E. Kalani Flores is a professor at Hawai'i Community College, a cultural practitioner, and long-time kia'i who has walked the lands of Pōhakuloa. He served for about 10 years on the U.S. Army's Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) cultural advisory committee – until his activism earned him a premature dismissal from the group.

Years ago, during a site visit to Pōhakuloa with the cultural advisory committee, Flores became aware of a place called Pu'u Koli that straddles the eastern boundary between PTA and state lands. Flores immediately knew that Pu'u Koli was special. Atop the pu'u (hill) there was an ahu (shrine) and the opening of a lava tube that he likened to a woman's womb.

"When you look at a map, this pu'u is actually the center of the island," he said. "There are certain points that are what we call piko (centers). Pu'u Koli is the energetic piko of the island."

Flores explained that this particular piko is a intersection of energy lines within the earth and that certain ancestors would walk these lines to keep them intact and maintain balance between the spiritual and physical



Although 133,000 acres of land at Pōhakuloa is controlled by the military, the land there is zoned for conservation and home to nearly two dozen endemic threatened or endangered plant species. - Courtesy Photo



The ahu (shrine) at Pu'u Koli with Maunakea rising in the background. Pu'u Koli is the energetic piko of Moku o Keawe. - Photo: E. Kalani Flores

realms.

He believes that there are areas throughout the pae 'āina, and at certain cultural sites, where energy lines intersect. An example is Kūkaniloko on O'ahu, the site of the famous birthing stones. It is also considered an energetic piko.

Flores uses acupuncture as an analogy to explain the concept. "Acupuncture works on the premise that the body has energy lines running through it. If an energy line is not flowing properly [causing pain or illness], the acupuncturist tries to restore it by focusing on certain energy points. We have energy lines that run through us. And so does the earth."

Flores says that we can leave an imprint on the land whenever we interact with it. He refers to this as "human energetic energies" and says that those imprints can be positive, negative or neutral. Which is why restoring lōkahi (harmony) and pono (balance) to Pōhakuloa is so important. Military activity in that area has resulted in

tremendous destruction and disturbance causing the natural elements to be out of balance.

"The military is creating and inflicting an energy of killing and war and everything associated with it at Pōhakuloa," he said. "That is the energetic imprint that they're leaving right in the center of our island."

» DEPLETED URANIUM IN THE SOIL «

Long-time Hawai'i-based social justice and peace activist Jim Albertini has been an outspoken critic of the military's misuse of Pōhakuloa for decades. According to Albertini, millions of live rounds are fired annually at PTA and he notes that, "B-52 and B-2 bombers fly non-stop missions to and from Louisiana, Missouri and Guam to drop bombs on Pōhakuloa."

But beyond the damage that conventional weapons inflict upon the 'āina, and the violence they represent, Albertini is particularly concerned about the presence of depleted uranium (DU) at Pōhakuloa.

In 2007, it was discovered that spotting rounds containing DU, a radioactive heavy metal, had been fired at Pōhakuloa in the 1960s for Davy Crockett nuclear weapon system training. According to the U.S. Army, the Davy Crockett is "a battalion-level nuclear-capable recoilless weapon" deployed between 1961-1971.

DU is what remains after uranium-235 is extracted from uranium that has been mined to make nuclear weapons and reactors. In addition to its use in spotting rounds, DU was later used to make other munitions, including armor-piercing missiles. It is highly explosive.

At a Hawai'i County Council meeting in 2008, U.S. Army Garrison Hawai'i Commander Col. Howard Killian confirmed that DU spotting rounds had been fired at Pōhakuloa.

"Col. Killian testified that, based on the number of people certified at PTA to fire the Davy Crockett nuclear weapon system, the number of DU spotting rounds fired at PTA during the 1960s was about 2,000," said Albertini.

"He also said that DU weapons have been 'banned in training since 1996,' suggesting that other DU weapons have also been used at Pōhakuloa - so it is likely that there is much more DU there than what was used in the spotting rounds in the 1960s."

When DU rounds explode, some of the uranium settles onto the ground and the rest becomes aerosolized, meaning it can be inhaled and carried on the winds. And the half-life of DU (meaning the time it takes for the DU to decrease to half of its initial value) is a staggering 4.5 billion years.

This means that when current live-fire exercises at Pōhakuloa disturb the soil, there is still radioactive DU in



PŌHAKULOA

Continued from page 15



The artillery impact zone at PTA is 51,000 acres and, after 75 years of live-fire training, is considered too dangerous to clean. Pictured above are spent weapon casings outside of the impact zone. - Courtesy Photo

the resulting dust clouds that can be aerosolized and blown across the island.

Albertini explained that the DU radiation at PTA is made up primarily of alpha particles. Inhaled, they travel through the lymph system causing cancers and other diseases. It can also affect a person's DNA and cause genetic damage that will be passed down to future generations.

To address the hazards of DU at PTA, Puna Councilwoman Emily Nae'ole introduced Resolution 639-08 which the Hawai'i County Council passed in July 2008. It outlined

an eight-point plan. Item number one: "Order a complete halt to B-2 bombing missions and to all live firing exercises and other activities at the Pōhakuloa Training Area that create dust until there is an assessment and clean up of the depleted uranium already present."

But the county's resolution was not acted upon by the U.S. military and live-fire exercises at Pōhakuloa continued unabated.

» OUR 'ĀINA IS NOT FOR WAR GAMES «

The violence that the military represents and the human cost of war weighs heavily on Maxine Kahaulelio. She lost her brothers, Robert S. Andrade and Kenneth S. Andrade, in the Vietnam War. Though nearly 60 years have passed, her eyes fill with tears and her voice is heavy with emotion when she talks about them.

"In the Vietnam War so many of our local boys died. A lot of families were broken up because the military killed their husbands, their fathers, their brothers," Kahaulelio reflected. "That is why I chose to fight."

And fight she has. In 1977, Kahaulelio was arrested on Kaho'olawe – part of the "elima landing" of kia'i protesting the bombing. And she has been actively fighting the bombing of Pōhakuloa for decades.

Hawai'i is one of the most militarized states in the United States. Overall, the U.S. military controls almost 223,000 acres (about 5%) of land in the pae 'āina – and fully 21% of the land on the island of O'ahu. Kahaulelio says our congressional representatives are to blame.

"Our congressional representatives are supposed to be helping us and making good decisions for our 'āina. They



(Left) Australian soldiers fire an 84mm rocket launcher at PTA during RIMPAC 2014. (Right) A U.S. Marine fires a .50-caliber machine gun during a live-fire combat training mission over PTA during RIMPAC 2012. - Photos: Wikimedia Commons

could stop all this but they don't. Why? The money."

Kahaulelio isn't wrong.

In a May 23, 2024, press release, Congressman Ed Case announced that the 2025 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations bill approved by the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations includes over \$1.55 billion in military construction projects for Hawai'i – the most for any state.

"So much money to the military," grieved Kahaulelio. "We got hungry kids and schools falling apart, but the military gets millions? To what? Make more bombs to kill and keep killing?"

"The military is even using our Hawaiian home lands – Mākua, Bellows, Pōhakuloa – while our people wait 40 years on the waiting list. How much more are they going to take from us?"

In 2014, Kahaulelio and her childhood friend and fellow Pōhakuloa kia'i Clarence "Ku" Kauakahi Ching, a retired attorney and lineal descendant of Umi-a-Liloa, filed a lawsuit against DLNR for its failure to monitor or mālama the Pōhakuloa lands that they leased to the U.S. Army back in 1964.

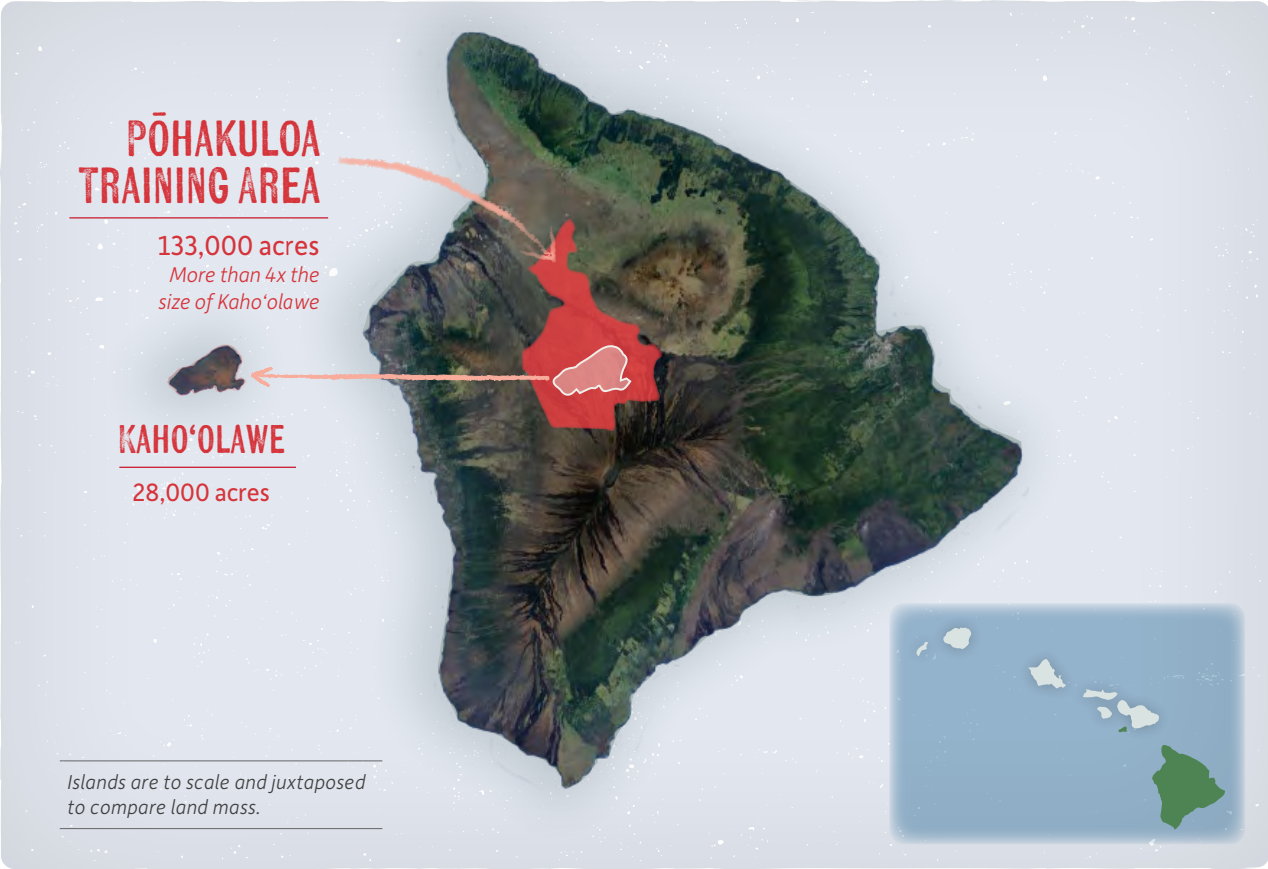
According to the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation which represented Kahaulelio and Ching, DLNR's 65-year lease agreement allows the Army to use nearly 23,000 acres at Pōhakuloa but stipulates that they are required to "make every reasonable effort to remove or deactivate all live or blank ammunition upon completion of a training exercise or prior to entry by the said public, whichever is sooner."

The lease also requires DLNR to monitor the Army's compliance with the lease agreement. However, DLNR could not provide records demonstrating that the Army was complying with the conditions for its use of state-owned land at Pōhakuloa.

After four years, in April 2018, First Circuit Court Judge Gary Chang ruled in favor of Kahaulelio and Ching noting the state's failure to "mālama 'āina."

Chang found that DLNR had breached its trust duties to conduct inspections to ensure that the lands were not harmed by the Army. He ordered the state to develop a management plan for PTA that includes site inspections and detailed reports.

Chang also concluded that, "The Defendants would further breach their trust duties if they were to execute an extension, renewal...or enter into a new lease of the PTA, without first determining (in writing) that the terms of the existing lease have been satisfactorily fulfilled, particularly with respect to any lease provision that has an impact



upon the condition of the Pōhakuloa leased lands.”

DLNR appealed the decision to the Hawai‘i Supreme Court. In August 2019, the Supreme Court upheld Chang’s overall ruling, but weakened it by making some of Chang’s requirements “recommendations.”

“If you read our court papers the decision is really wishy washy,” Kahaulelio said. “Go in there and clean up. But it’s not mandatory. That’s why we’re having a hard time. This is 2024. Has the military stopped bombing? No. Are they listening to the Supreme Court? No.”

To date, there is no indication that DLNR has complied with the court’s ruling; no management plan for Pōhakuloa has been developed or shared. And when DLNR was contacted regarding the status of the court-ordered PTA management plan, their representative did not respond.

» HO’ŌLA HOU ‘O PŌHAKULOA «

It is difficult not to compare the struggle to end military training at Pōhakuloa to efforts in the 1970s and 80s to stop the bombing of Kaho‘olawe.

Decades of military training at both places has caused irrevocable harm to the ‘āina.

In an unbelievably reckless experiment designed to simulate an atomic blast and determine how a such a blast would affect U.S. warships, in 1965 the Navy detonated a series of three bombs, each comprised of 500 tons of conventional TNT, on Kaho‘olawe’s southeastern shore.



The lele (altar) bearing ho’okupu (offerings) placed at Pu’u Ke’eke’e during last year’s Makahiki celebration at Pōhakuloa. - Photo: Luana Busby-Neff

The now infamous “Operation Sailor Hat” left a massive crater and cracked the caprock of Kaho‘olawe’s aquifer, allowing sea water to seep in and freshwater to seep out, permanently damaging it and diminishing the island’s ability to support life.

Cultural practitioners Craig Neff and Luana Palapala Busby-Neff have been involved with the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana since the 1980s, and active in ongoing efforts to restore the island to health. They are deeply concerned about the potential damage to the massive aquifer located directly beneath Pōhakuloa at an elevation of 4,500 feet.

“Water is life for us,” Neff explained. “And the aquifer at Pōhakuloa is one of the most pristine aquifers in Hawai‘i.

It’s the deepest, it’s the widest, and it’s part of the historical, cultural, and spiritual significance of this land base that has been occupied and desecrated and bombed.”

“Our oli and pule are the data that explain the landscape and the environment,” Busby-Neff noted. “Through our mele, mo’olelo and mo’okū’auhau (genealogy) the waiwai (wealth) of the ‘āina is revealed and our kuleana to love and care for these spaces is established so that they are able to flourish and thrive.”

As part of their kuleana to mālama and re-green Kaho‘olawe, Neff and Busby-Neff have celebrated Makahiki on the island for years. Makahiki is the season of Lono, the god associated with rainfall, agriculture, fertility, music and peace.

Neff is a mo’olono, a cultural practitioner trained to conduct ceremonies to honor Lono. About seven years ago, he and a small hui of practitioners known as Nā Kia’i o Pōhakuloa approached the Army commander at PTA asking for permission to conduct Makahiki ceremonies at Pōhakuloa in an effort to help heal the land there.

He notes that while political advocacy and peaceful protest are important, the most important way to address what is happening at Pōhakuloa is through pule (prayer). “We wanted to start with pule and call in Lono and honor him so that he would come back,” Neff explained.

The commander agreed to their request and, for the past seven years, Nā Kia’i o Pōhakuloa has conducted opening and closing Makahiki ceremonies at Pu’u Ke’eke’e, the place where Umi-a-Liloa built his kuahu and watchtower – a site he selected because of its strategic vantage point. It is also near to Pu’u Kepele where the moku (land divisions) of Kona, Hāmākua and Kohala meet.

They have no binding agreement with PTA. Each year, they formally request specific dates for their Makahiki ceremonies. And every few years, as PTA commanders rotate in and out, they have to establish new relationships with each one to ensure that they will be allowed access to Pu’u Ke’eke’e.

“Maybe the third year that we celebrated Makahiki at Pōhakuloa we asked the commander if we could leave our lele (altar) and ho’okupu (offerings) in place for the entire season,” Neff recalled.

“He agreed but his staff wasn’t too happy about it. Although the commander put out the word to leave it be, when we came back, someone had desecrated it – torn down the lele and thrown our ho’okupu into the bushes. You know, it not only shows their lack of knowledge and education, but their disrespect for the Hawaiian culture.”

» A KULEANA TO MĀLAMA ‘ĀINA «

In every way, the struggle to protect Pōhakuloa is a clash between worldviews and values that are as far apart as the east is from the west. And as it was in the 70s and 80s, confronting the most powerful military force on the planet is daunting.

“The United States military is a business, a machine that generates billions of dollars so they want to keep that machine alive,” said Busby-Neff. “But our consciousness is changing. Our understanding of our kuleana to the places and spaces that we live in is changing. It’s a whole new generation.”



Maxine Kahaulelio (pictured center in the denim jacket) with other kia’i. She has fought on the frontlines to protect Pōhakuloa for decades. - Photo: Megan Moseley

“People today are more educated about the environment and aloha ‘āina,” added Neff. “Times have changed. The world has changed. There’s a different mindset within people. We cannot just desecrate and destroy ‘āina for national defense.”

“What is happening now at Pōhakuloa is like a reflection of what happened at Kaho‘olawe,” Flores observed. “A few people said, ‘hey this shouldn’t be happening.’ And then more people became aware and were like ‘hey what are we doing?’ And eventually there was a shift in consciousness.”

But awareness is only the first step. Action must follow and those who have taken on the kuleana of advocating for the ‘āina at Pōhakuloa insist that military live-fire training must be stopped.

“As Kānaka, if we’re not trying to protect our lands and our resources and our cultural sites and our practices from what has been happening - why not?” asked Flores.

“Whatever happens ma uka comes ma kai,” Albertini noted. “Despite assurances from the fox and the mongoose that everything is fine in the hen house, we are all downwind and downhill of Pōhakuloa. A conservation district is not for firing bombs, rockets, mortars, etc. How much more basic can you get?”

“If the state renews the lease with the Army they’re just as guilty as the military for the destruction of the ‘āina,” Neff remarked. “They are entrusted to preserve and mālama the ‘āina, not destroy it.”

“They have to return that land. It was beautiful. Created by Ke Akua,” lamented Kahaulelio. “But it’s all damaged. The radiation is high. Bullets all over the place. It’s a wreck. How much more land do they want?”

“It’s important to get the word out, get people activated, and get our lāhui together to address this as a collective,” Busby-Neff said. “It’s not even a protestation. It’s more of an affirmation of the spaces that we hold and honor – and informing the entities that inhabit those spaces that we understand that what is happening there is unacceptable. That we understand the specialness of that place and that the bombing must stop.”

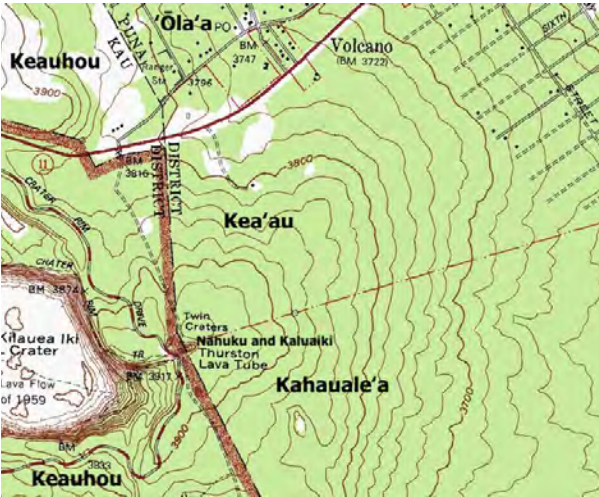
“I will fight this until I don’t have breath in my body,” vowed Kahaulelio. “Because they’ve got to be stopped. Enough already. And people have got to rise. They’ve got to kū‘ē. They’ve got to stand up and fight.” ■

Regarding Kualoloa and ‘Ailā’au

By Bobby Camara
with Dr. Pualani Kanaka’ole Kanahele and Dr. Donald Swanson

Interweaving Native Hawaiian cultural knowledge and understandings with those of various scientific disciplines can be challenging. Viewpoints may seemingly contradict each other, timelines may not coincide, and the lack of common vocabulary may lead to frustrations. Researchers don’t work in tandem, so learnings about culture and science proceeds in fits and starts. An example of interest to those in the fields of Hawaiian culture and geology is deciphering the mele oli (chants) of Pelehonuamea mā (“Pele of the reddish earth” and others), and their relationships to specific volcanic events and lava flows as documented in the geologic record. It is said that the works of Native Hawaiian gods, goddesses, deities, etc., were attributed to specific phenomena. Those attributions recall those of Christian saints as well as many others of various religions worldwide. In Hawai’i Nei, many now use the term “elemental” to more broadly refer to those energies in the natural world. According to Dr. Pualani Kanaka’ole Kanahele:

Nomenclatures were created and composed by our ancestors who researched their environment to understand the natural energies that provided for the continuum of life. The elemental whose kuleana is creation of land in the middle of the ocean sits at a higher status of existence in relationship to regenerative creatures who need that land to exist. “Pele” is the lava that exits the earth, nothing else. “Honua” is earth or land, and “Mea” are substances for creating land. So Pelehonuamea is “lava that creates land.” There is no emotion attached to Pele; Pele is the [molten] energy that creates land. Our understanding that the only kuleana of Pele is to create land comes from careful informed study of ancient mele oli, rather than from reading mo’olelo or ka’ao (stories). A problem arises when we attempt to place mele oli chronologically in a cultural narrative. Events described in chants are not “time-stamped,” but careful study of them, together with knowledge of place names and clues from scientific evidence of natural phenomema, sometimes allows us to construct correlations between seemingly disparate sources of knowledge. The chant *Kualoloa* (see sidebar) was published in 1915 by Nathaniel Bright Emerson in *Pele and Hi’iaka, A Myth From Hawaii*. It is interpreted by Kanahele and others as describing an eruption that began in Kea’au ma uka. This mele oli describes events having taken place in a broad geographic area, and references familiar place names. Pele (molten lava) destroyed the forests of Pana’ewa be-



Screenshot of a U.S. Geological Survey topographical map. The ahupua’a labels in bold were added by the author. - Courtesy Photo

tween Hilo and Puna, as well as those ma uka in ‘Ōla’a. The majority of the pele moved northeast through Puna, and entered the ocean between Hā’ena and today’s Hawaiian Beaches subdivision. A smaller flow went south, entered the sea and formed ka lae ‘Āpua. The coastal boundary between the moku of Puna and Ka’ū lies very near the western edge of Kualoloa, west of ‘Āpua. The “Volcano” USGS topographic map is of ma uka-most Kea’au. Kaluaiki, the crater in which lies the entrance to Nāhuku, is one of the boundary points of Kea’au and is also a point between the moku (districts) of Puna and Ka’ū. Kaluaiki is also one of four lua poho (pit craters) in that vicinity, including Kīlauea Iki, all of which are younger than the flow. Volcanologists surmise that they may have formed with Kaluapele (the caldera) in about 1500 CE, plus/minus 30 years or so. It is believed that the Kualoloa eruption commenced in about 1410 CE and ended in about 1470 CE, and it’s likely that these events are interrelated in ways that are not yet fully understood. During that eruption, much of Puna was devastated, according to mo’olelo, because Pele was exacting revenge on Hi’iaka, elemental force of revegetation and growth after lava flows. Hi’iaka had seduced Lohiauipo, and stolen his affections from Pele. Pele buried her sister’s beloved forests, and later, Hi’iaka attempted to extinguish the fires of Pele by digging into Halema’uma’u so she could reach the watertable, or the ocean, and flood the force for creation that is Pele. It’s tempting to believe that Kualoloa is the basis for the boundaries (more or less) of the moku that today we know as Puna. That is, starting at Kaluaiki, then ma kai along Kea’au, northeast to Pāpa’i at the shore about three miles north of Hā’ena, then southeast, to Kumukahi, then along the coast southwest to just west of lae ‘Āpua,

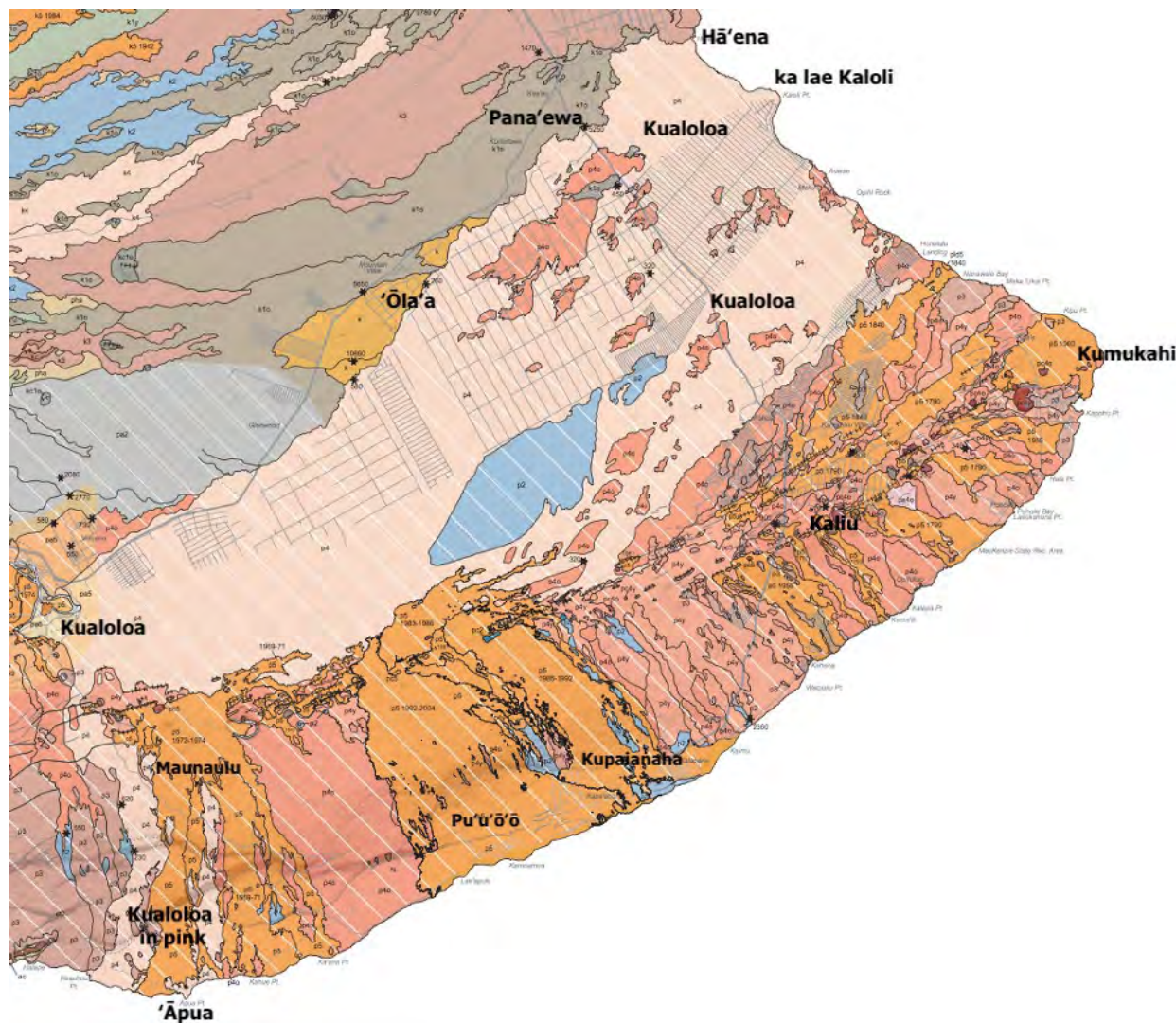
Kualoloa

-as chanted by Hi’iaka

Kua loloa Keaau i ka nahele hala
Kua huluhulu Pana-ewa i ka laau
Inoino ka maha, ka ohi’a o La’a e
Ku kepahepa ka maha o ka laau
U-a po’ohina i ka wela a ke Akua
U-a-uahi Puna o ka oloka’a pohaku ia
I ka huna pa’a ia e ka Wahine
Nanahu ahi ka ka papa o Oluea
Momoku ahi Puna, hala i Apua
Ulu-a ka nahele me ka laau
Ka ke kahiko ia o Papa-lau-ahi
Ele-i kahiko, e Ku-lili-kaua
Ka ia, hea hala o Ka-li’u
E na ka La, ka malama
Onakaka ka piko o Hilo i ke one
I hu-la ia aku la e, huluhia i kai
Ua wawahia, ua nahaha
Ua he-helelei ka papa i Pua-le’i e!

*Long is the reach of Keaau’s palms
Bristly-backed Pana-ewa’s woodlands
Spoiled are the restful groves of La’a
Ragged and patchy the tree-clumps
Gray their heads from the ravage of fire
A blanket of smoke covers Puna
All paved with the dump from Her stone yard
The Goddess’ fire bites Olu-ua
One cinder-heap clean to Apua
Food for Her oven are wildwood and brush
The finish that to Lau-ahi’s glory
Her robe now is changed to jetty black
At the onset of Ku-lili-kaua
Ka-liu’s palms plucked root and branch
The Sun and the Moon are blotted out
Hilo is shaken to its foundation
Its lands upheaved, despoiled to the sea
Shattered, fissured, powdered, reduced
Its plain is ashes and dust!*

From Nathaniel Emerson’s “Pele and Hi’iaka:
A Myth From Hawai’i” published in 1915.



Screenshot of the "Geological Map of the Island of Hawai'i" by Wolfe and Morris, 1996. The labels in bold were added by the author. The area indicated in pink represent the Kualoloa flow field. - Courtesy Photo

KUALOLOA AND 'AILĀ'AU

Continued from page 18

then back ma uka to the point of beginning.

A screenshot of the Wolfe and Morris 1996 "Geologic Map of the Island of Hawai'i" illustrates (in striped pink) both Kualoloa flow branches, whose origins are at or near the lua poho Kīlauea Iki, and Kaluaiki. The broader northern swath contains a number of kīpuka, and a lava delta was built, creating ka lae Kaloli, the prominent bumpout at the shore. Kaloli is the approximate terminus of a 40-mile-long system of lava tubes that enabled the far and wide distribution of pele during the prolonged eruption.

The much smaller south branch of the Kualoloa flows is now partially buried by the early 1970s Maunaulu flows.

During the 1970s, Robin Terry Holcomb conducted field work and research at Kīlauea, inspired by his curiosities as a staff member at the Hawaiian Volcano Obser-

vatory, and then as a Ph.D. candidate in geology at Stanford University. His dissertation was published in 1981 as "Kīlauea Volcano, Hawaii: Chronology and Morphology Of The Surficial Lava Flows."

In those times, access to Hawaiian language newspapers of the 1800s was extremely limited and few books concerning Native Hawaiian traditions had been published. To his great credit, Holcomb did research and included descriptions of Kīlauea during the 1800s, albeit from mostly malihini perspectives.

One such source was William D. Westervelt's *Hawaiian Legends of Volcanoes*, published in 1916, which did rely on works by Malo, Kamakau, and Fornander. Holcomb, though, apparently desired clarity, and said in his dissertation:

Fourth, this account by Westervelt is inconsistent with traditions given elsewhere. Other sources, for example, describe Pele's arrival in very different ways and make no mention at all of Ai-laau. Until the ancestry of Westervelt's account can be established and

evaluated, it can be given very little credence. This is true also of many other provocative traditions.

Despite the uncertainties in Westervelt's account [of the arrival of Pele], I have used it in assigning names to prominent features of Kīlauea's summit. (emphasis added). Thus I have called the late prehistoric vent in Kīlauea Iki "Hale o Ai-Laau" (house of Ai-laau) and have termed the sustained prehistoric vent near Uwekahuna Bluff "Lua Pele" (Pele's pit), these names being consistent with the westward shift in activity that paleomagnetic evidence indicates occurred sometime around A.D. 1600. The timing of this inferred shift, however, is later than some traditions permit, and previous use of "Lua Pele" for other summit features may lead to confusion in the future. Despite these points against such names, I used them as provisional names here because I felt that some names were needed for clarity of presentation, and these were the best currently available. (emphasis added)

Hawaiian language sources during the last 40 years have rapidly become more available. Despite that, the "Ailā'au" flow name Holcomb conferred, although it was meant to be provisional, has persisted.

According to Kanahale and others, 'Ailā'au means "consume trees." That consumption can be via rot, toppling during windstorms, lightning strikes, floods, etc. All those actions have associated elementals, but 'Ailā'au is not one, because that name cannot be found in nomenclature lists, and is not found in mele oli.

Dr. Don Swanson, emeritus at Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, has, in the last few decades pursued a passion. Deeply curious about the linkages between culture and science, he has worked out chronologies melding the timing of volcanic eruptions with cultural and scientific understandings. According to him:

A flow field is an accumulation of lava flows erupted from the same vent or cluster of vents with little time between individual flows. A recent example is the flow field created by eruptions between 1983 and 2018 at Pu'u'ō'ō. In the Holcomb case [referencing the 'Ailā'au flow field], numerous single flows erupted over a 50- to 60-year period in the 15th century.

I have interpreted that flow field as the one that Pele produced in anger when Hī'iaka was late in returning from Kaua'i with Lohi'au, destroying the Puna Forest. Since that flow field began to form in about 1410-20, on the basis of C-14 ages, then I would suggest that Pele had arrived at Kīlauea by that time, say mid-late 1300s or early 1400s.

Because we have fresh understandings of the timing of eruptions, of which elemental was responsible according to nomenclature, as well as more detailed knowledge of geographies and traditional place names, we encourage that what Holcomb referred to as the 'Ailā'au flow field be labeled the Kualoloa flow field in future publications.



Hau'oli Lā Hānau e
Lili'uokalani

Hawaiian History Month

Hawai'i Pono'i Coalition proudly presents Hawaiian History Month in celebration of Queen Lili'uokalani's 186th birthday on Sept. 2, 2024. Attend in-person and virtual events throughout the month. For more info or to register for an event visit www.hawaiiponoi.info

**Eō E Lili'u Concert -
"Ka Wahine Noho Pono"**

Sept. 1, 1:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

Kawaiaha'o Church singalong in honor of Queen Lili'uokalani's legacy. The theme "Ka Wahine Noho Pono" celebrates the wāhine in Lili'u's life through her compositions.

'Iolani Palace Tours

Sept. 2, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

Free for kama'āina with a valid Hawai'i ID or proof of residency.

**Memory Walk in Honor
of Queen Lili'uokalani**

Sept. 2, Noon
Honolulu, O'ahu

Walk in the queen's footsteps. Meet at St. Andrews Cathedral, then to Washington Place, Lili'uokalani's statue, and finish at 'Iolani Palace beneath her window.

**Ka Lei Maile Ali'i - The
Queen's Women**

Sept. 2, 2:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

A re-enactment of the 1897 Kū'e Petition in the Kana'ina Building on the 'Iolani Palace grounds.

**Hawai'i History Day
Documentary Showcase**

Sept. 2, 2:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

Outstanding documentaries created by middle and high school video artists will be screened in the Video Theatre in the 'Iolani Palace Barracks.



WAIMEA VALLEY
HINAPAKA LLC



WAIMEAVALLEY.NET

- Free kama'āina admission September 2 for Queen Lili'uokalani's birthday
- Kalo & Awa Festival returns September 14
- Monthly hula hālau every Saturday in September at the Upper Meadow

**Queen Lili'uokalani's 185th
Birthday**

Sept. 2, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Waimea, O'ahu

Free admission for Kama'āina. www.waimeavalley.net

**Teaching 1898: America's
Imperial Legacy in Oceania**

Sept. 4 & 6, 6:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

Panel discussion to strengthen the understanding of the imperial experience of 1898 and its impact on the lands and people affected. Free event, registration required.

**Kū I Ka Mana: 'Au'a
Curator Panel Discussion**

Sept. 5, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Mānoa, O'ahu

Kapulani Landgraf's 'Au'a exhibit curators discuss the challenges of the exhibit's installation in 2019 and 2024. This is the final program before the closing of the exhibit.

**Royal Hawaiian Band
Performances**

Sept. 6, 13, 20 & 27,
Noon - 1:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

Free concerts on the 'Iolani Palace Grounds most Fridays. www.rhb-music.com

Kama'āina Sunday

Sept. 8, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

Enjoy audio tours of 'Iolani Palace, food, entertainment, and shop local vendors. www.iolanipalace.org

Ho'ōla: Climate Change

Sept. 11, 6:00 p.m. | Virtual Event

A virtual panel discussion on Climate Change and Health hosted by Papa Ola Lōkahi and the Department of Native Hawaiian Health. Free event, registration required.

**Ho'ōla: Holoholo Honolulu
- A Tour of Historic Health
Sites**

Sept. 13, 6:00 p.m.
Honolulu, O'ahu

A trolley tour of Honolulu with Native Hawaiian researchers sharing stories of historic health sites. Registration required and a small fee will be charged.

Pu'uohonua Mākeke

Sept. 14, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Products, services, and businesses from pu'uohonua across Hawai'i. Pu'uohonua o Waimānalo, 41-1300 Wai-kupanaha St., in the pavilion. FB/IG @puuhonuamakeke

**17th Annual Kalo & Awa
Festival**

Sept. 14, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Waimea, O'ahu

Featuring vendors, speakers, demonstrations, keiki booth and more! www.waimeavalley.net

Moonwalk

Sept. 15, 8:00 p.m.
Waimea, O'ahu

Tickets are limited and only available online or at the ticket booth the evening of the event. www.waimeavalley.net

**Brown Bag Biography -
Puana**

Sept. 19, Noon | Mānoa, O'ahu
Panel discussion on the production process of *Puana*. Hear from members of the creative team. Free event at UHM Kuykendall Rm 410.

**NAGPRA Regulations
Webinar Series**

Sept. 20, 7:00 a.m. HST | Online
National NAGPRA program hosts a webinar series on new regulations every month. Register once and attend any session. Past sessions are recorded and available online at www.nps.gov/orgs/1335/events.htm or FB @nationalnagpra

**Puana - A Panel Discussion
with the Cast and Creative
Team**

Sept. 20, 7:00 p.m. | Mānoa, O'ahu

Panel discussion on the production process for *Puana*, featuring members of the cast and creative team – director, actors, lighting and costume designers. Free event at Kennedy Theatre.

**48th Annual Honolulu
Intertribal Powwow 2024**

Sept. 21 & 22,
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Kapālama, O'ahu

Museum admission for kama'āina \$5. www.bishopmuseum.org

Kaua'i Mokihana Festival

Sept. 22 - 28 | Lihū'e, Kaua'i
A celebration of Hawaiian culture: lectures, music and hula. Details at: www.maliefoundation.org

**Hawai'i Island Genealogy
Workshop**

Sept. 24, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Hilo, Hawai'i Island
OHA staff provide genealogy technical assistance and guidance to apply for the Kuleana Tax Exemption. OHA's new Hilo office location at the Puainako Town Center. Call 808-295-0236 to reserve a seat. www.oha.org/hale-noelo-research-technology-center

**Moloka'i Canoe Festival
2024 Kulāia Celebration**

Sept. 27, 5:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Kaunakakai, Moloka'i

Entertainment, food vendors, local artisans, cultural practitioners, FREE lomilomi and plenty aloha. www.kulaia.wix.com/kulaiamolokai

**Puana - A World Premiere
Hana Keaka (Hawaiian
Language Theatre)**

Sept. 27 - 28, Oct. 4 - 5, 7:30 p.m.,
Oct. 6, 2:00 p.m. | Mānoa, O'ahu

The world premiere of *Puana*, an original hana keaka written and directed by Tammy Haili'ōpua Baker that explores the deep connections Kānaka Maoli have with their kūpuna through song. Performances at Kennedy Theatre. Tickets <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/live-onstage/puana/>

Aloha Festivals

Waikīkī, O'ahu

www.alohafestivals.com

**Royal Court Investiture &
Opening Ceremony**

Sept. 7, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

The Aloha Festivals Royal Court is introduced at the Helumoa Gardens at The Royal Hawaiian Center.

Waikīkī Ho'ōlaule'a

Sept. 21, 6:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Hawai'i's largest annual block party on Kalākaua Ave. featuring local food, music and entertainment.

Annual Floral Parade

Sept. 28, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

A colorful procession of horseback riders, performances and floats covered with flowers traveling down Kalākaua Ave.

He Kōko‘olua Māmane a me Naio ma Maunakea

The Partnership of Māmane and Naio on Maunakea

By Bobby Camara



Our Endangered Palila dine mostly on tender māmane seeds in their winged, green pods. - Photo: weedmandan on Flickr



Pua māmane, source of foods for beloved manu ‘āne halapohe, our endangered birds. - Photo: weedmandan on Flickr



Naio, in various forms, is very adaptable, and can thrive from sea level to mauna treeline. - Photo: Forest and Kim Starr



A tray of hua kanu māmane, with hopes for future generations. - Photo: JB Friday

He kōā ‘ākea ma waena o Maunakea me Maunaloa.

Māmane (*Sophora chrysophylla*) and naio (*Myoporum sandwicense*) have been partners for centuries on the broad saddle between Maunakea and Maunaloa, as well as on the upper slopes of the former.

These days, though, they are under constant assault by sheep, goats, pigs and cattle; by drought and invasive plants and bugs; and because of the destruction of their habitat by fire, land clearing, and military practices such as bombing and target practice, and driving large vehicles over fragile terrain.

Kūpuna trees lean, break and die, and though successive generations may germinate, they too quickly die because of environmental stressors. Depressing? Sad? Definitely!

Everyone deserves to thrive, no matter their residence. But serious challenges arise when malihini desires confront kama‘āina sensibilities. Lā‘au naio was used for carving hi‘a, the shuttles for net-making, while durable hardwood of māmane formed runners of hōlua sleds. The past tense is accurate, but excellent stewardship can correct dire straits. ■

Nā Hilo, nā Kona, nā Kohala

Na Kalani Akana, Ph.D.



Kama‘aina anei ‘oe me nā Hilo, nā Kona, a me nā Kohala? Ua kapa a kāhea ‘ia kēia mau wahi e nā kūpuna i maopopo

nā kānaka o ka mahele hea o ka moku ā lākou e kuhi ana.

Nā Hilo

Aia ‘ekolu inoa no Hilo. ‘O ia ‘o Hilo One, Hilo Palikū, a ‘o Hilo Hanakahi.

Ua lohe pinepine ‘ia ‘o Hilo One me Hilo Hanakahi ma nā mele. ‘O Hilo One kāhi kahaone wali o ka hono nui o Hilo.

‘O Hilo Palikū ka mahele pali ma ka ‘ākau o Wailuku, ke kahawai e kahe ana mai Waiānuenue. Ma laila, ma Hilo Palikū, ma Kukuilau‘ānia hō‘i, kāhi ā Hi‘iaka i ‘ike maka ai i ka luku pau o kāna ulu ‘ōhi‘a lehua o Puna.

‘O Hilo Hanakahi ka ‘āina ākea ma uka o Wai‘ākea a i Keaukaha. ‘O Hanakahi kekahi ali‘i lokomaika‘i o Hilo. ‘O kāna keiki ‘o Nāihekukui, ka makuakāne o Kalama, ka wahine ali‘i a Kauikeaouli, ka mō‘i ‘o Kamehameha III. Lohe mau ‘ia kēia inoa kapakapa ‘o Hilo Hanakahi ma nā mele e like me ka lālani mele, “Hilo Hanakahi i ka ua kani lehua.” ‘A‘ole pili ka hua ‘ōlelo “kani” me ho‘okani, akā pili i ka ho‘okō ‘ana i kekahi pono o ke kanaka e like me kani wai a me kani ‘ai. Pau ka makewai a pau ka pōloli nō ho‘i.

Nā Kona

Ma ke mele a Alice Kū ‘o Kaulana nā Kona i ke Kuahiwi, ua ho‘ohana ‘ia kēia mau inoa kapakapa ‘o nā Kona. ‘O nā

Kona, ‘o ia ho‘i ‘o Kona Hema me Kona ‘Ākau. ‘O Kona Hema ka mahele me nā ahupua‘a ‘o Kapu‘a a i Ki‘ilae. A ‘o Kona ‘Ākau nā ahupua‘a mai Ki‘ilae a i Pu‘uanahulu. ‘O Nā Pu‘u kekahi inoa kapakapa i lohe ‘ia ma mua, ‘o ia nō ho‘i ‘o Pu‘uanahulu me Pu‘uwa‘awa‘a. Inā ‘ōlelo kekahi, “I Nā Pu‘u ana au,” inā hele ‘o ia i Pu‘uanahulu me Pu‘uwa‘awa‘a.

Nā Kohala

‘O ka inoa kahiko o Kohala Hema a ‘o Kohala Waho. ‘O ia ka mahele o ka moku ‘o Kohala me nā kānaka he nui e like me Waimea. ‘Okō‘a iki nā mahele o Kohala Waho. E la‘a, ‘o Waimea kekahi kalana nona nā ‘okana o ‘Ouli, Wai‘aka, Lālānilo, Puakō, Kālahuipua‘a, Pu‘ukapu, Waikōloa me kekahi mau inoa ‘āina‘ino a‘e. ‘O Kohala loko ma Kohala ‘Ākau a loa‘a ma laila nā awāwa nui me nā awāwa li‘ili‘i e like me Pololū. Aia ma waena o nā Kohala “nā pu‘u haelelua o ke kānaka” ‘o ia ‘o Pili me Kalāhikiola.

Kainō paha ke mau nei nō ka ho‘ohana ‘ana i kēia mau inoa kapa ‘āina. Kainō paha ua loa‘a kekahi inoa kapakapa no nā Puna, nā Ka‘ū, me nā Hāmākua. Inā ua lohe anei ‘oe i kekahi e leka uila mai ia‘u.

Nota: ‘A‘ole kākau ‘ia ka ‘s’ no ka helu nui no laila ua kaha‘apo ‘ia ma nā hua ‘ōlelo Pelekania ma ka unuhi. ■

Kalani Akana, Ph.D., is a kumu of hula, oli and ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. He has authored numerous articles on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

To read the English translation go to kawaiola.news

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Clearing the Fog



By Jodi Leslie Matsuo,
DrPH

“**B**rain fog” is one of the most challenging issues faced by

individuals with long COVID, where symptoms similar to COVID-19 persist or emerge after the initial infection has resolved. Those affected by brain fog report difficulty thinking clearly, memory problems, and struggling to focus or find their words during conversations.

It can affect anyone who has had COVID, regardless of age or severity of the infection.

One study estimates that close to half of people with long COVID have brain fog. It may last for a few days to years, varying widely from person to person. However, for most people, it will go away within six to nine months after getting the infection.

Researchers are not entirely clear on what causes long COVID brain fog, but there are several theories.

Persistent inflammation from a strong immune response after a COVID-19 infection can negatively affect the brain's function and abilities. Changes in certain brain chemicals, like serotonin (caused by gut imbalances and ongoing inflammation) can also lead to thinking and memory problems. Additionally, COVID-19 can cause blood vessel damage, leading to reduced blood flow and oxygen to the brain, further worsening brain fog issues.

What we do know is that the virus can cause direct nerve damage, as it is able to cross the blood-brain barrier – a protective layer of cells lining the inner surface of the blood vessels in your brain that prevent harmful substances in the bloodstream from entering the brain while allowing essential nutrients to pass through. This and other symptoms of long COVID, including chronic fatigue, stress, anxiety, and depression, also significantly worsen brain function.

Treating long COVID brain fog involves a combination of lifestyle and dietary strategies aimed at reducing inflammation, supporting brain health, and managing stress. Eating a diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods like omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish, limu, flaxseeds), antioxidants (from papaya, mango, berries, and green leafy vegetables), and polyphenols (ōlena, green tea, edamame, and cacao powder) helps reduce inflammation and improve cognitive function.

Adequate hydration and essential nutrients like vitamin D, B12, and magnesium support brain health. Regular exercise, including aerobic activities and strength training, improves blood flow to the brain, builds new brain cells, and releases natural mood-boosting chemicals, including serotonin.

Doing relaxing activities, whether it be fishing, lau hala weaving, stand-up paddle boarding, or hula, further reduce stress and help us get mentally refreshed. Māmaki tea has been shown to restore brain cell connections and improve memory.

In addition to diet and exercise, getting adequate and quality sleep is important for recovery. It is during sleep that our body works best at healing and repairing our body.

If you haven't done so already, set a consistent bedtime routine and sleep schedule to optimize the benefits of restful sleep. Stimulating and challenging your brain, by doing crossword and jigsaw puzzles, memory games, Sudoku, and board games, can help your brain to regain efficiency in processing information, memory, and learning.

With persistence and commitment to these strategies daily, brain fog can be overcome. ■

Born and raised in Kona, Hawai'i, Dr. Jodi Leslie Matsuo is a Native Hawaiian registered dietician and certified diabetes educator, with training in integrative and functional nutrition. Follow her on Facebook @DrJodiLeslieMatsuo, Instagram @drlesliematsuo and on Twitter @DrLeslieMatsuo.

E NHLC...

What is the midwives case about that protects cultural practitioners?



By Kirsha K.M. Durante,
NHLC Litigation Director

Earlier this year, NHLC, together with a national nonprofit called the Center for Reproductive Rights and a law firm called Perkins Coie, filed a lawsuit challenging the Midwife Licensure Act under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §457J.

NHLC participated to protect Hawaiian birthing practices, including pale keiki, ho'ohānau, and hānau that were being impacted by serious restrictions in the law preventing practitioners from practicing and families from receiving traditional care.

As part of the case, our team filed a Motion for Preliminary Injunction which requested, in part, that the court block the State of Hawai'i from pursuing criminal and civil penalties against cultural practitioners while the case is being litigated, so they can practice while the legality of the law is being decided. In mid-June 2024, the court conducted a four-day hearing on the request for injunction where multiple cultural practitioners testified about the impact the law was having on their ability to engage in traditional birthing practices.

Under Article XII, section 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, the State of Hawai'i has an affirmative duty to protect all “rights, customs, and traditions that are traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes...” This right, however, like all constitutional rights, is not without limits and can be subject to regulation by the state. The question in the case is whether HRS §457J is an allowable state regulation on Native Hawaiian birthing practices.

HRS §457J is a licensing statute, and it generally requires that caregivers for birthing obtain midwifery education and credentials that can only be obtained from training programs for Western healthcare outside of Hawai'i.

However, the law states it does not prohibit traditional Hawaiian healers from engaging in traditional healing practices of prenatal, maternal, and childcare by creating a licensing exemption for those recognized by any council of kūpuna convened by Papa Ola Lōkahi.

The problem is that for the past year, there was no actual pathway to obtain this recognition and benefit from the exemption. Testimony during the June injunction hearing revealed that our clients exhausted extensive efforts to be recognized as traditional birthing practitioners by existing kūpuna councils recognized by Papa Ola Lōkahi and/or to form a kūpuna council that could be recognized by Papa Ola Lōkahi. These efforts were unsuccessful, leaving these practitioners vulnerable to civil and criminal penalties for engaging in their Native Hawaiian birthing traditions.

On July 23, 2024, the court issued a decision acknowledging the strength of our client's arguments that the regulation of Native Hawaiian birthing traditions and practices under HRS §457J was unreasonable. The court also looked at the licensing pathways under HRS §457J where cultural practitioners might seek to become licensed as a midwife but determined those pathways, for cultural practitioners, also amounted to unreasonable regulation.

Ultimately, the court granted a statewide injunction preventing the state from enforcing, threatening to enforce, or applying penalties to individuals who practice, teach, and learn Native Hawaiian traditional birthing practices. The injunction will remain in effect until a kūpuna council exists that can recognize practitioners of Native Hawaiian birthing practices, or until there is another pathway for recognition of practitioners.

This case is ongoing, and trial in this matter has yet to be set. For updates on this case, you can follow the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. You may also read more about this case on the NHLC website. ■

NHLC is a nonprofit law firm dedicated to the advancement and protection of Native Hawaiian identity and culture. Each month, NHLC attorneys will answer questions from readers about legal issues relating to Native Hawaiian rights and protections, including issues regarding housing, land, water, and traditional and cultural practice. You can submit questions at NinauNHLC@nhlchi.org.

E Nīnau iā NHLC provides general information about the law. E Nīnau iā NHLC is not legal advice. You can contact NHLC about your legal needs by calling NHLC's offices at 808-521-2302. You can also learn more about NHLC at nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org.

He 'A'ali'i Kū Makani Mai Au



By Evan Mokuahi
Hayes

NaHHA would like to share a feature from one of our Lamakū Ho'okipa, our Beacons of Hospitality, who are making a positive impact through the value of mālama and as a contributing member of the Native Hawaiian community.

I am a descendant of warriors. My Native Hawaiian lineage includes nā koa (warriors) who fought under Kamehameha I as members of the chief's guard. In later generations my ancestors served as royal guards under Queen Lili'uokalani.

And in modern times I am a direct descendant of legendary Waikīkī Beachboys: Steamboat Mokuahi, Sr. (my Great-Grandfather), Steamboat Mokuahi, Jr. (my Grand-Uncle), and Bernie Mokuahi Ching (my beloved Grandfather) – all have lived out their physical lifetimes but continue to have a profound influence and play significant roles in my life. I continue to be mindful daily of their lessons as an ambassador of aloha.

As a child, I spent so much time in the water. Nestled in the safety of the beach at Waikīkī, I grew a confidence in me that allowed me to speak freely with people and share my own stories all the time. Never in my wildest dreams did I never envision myself in the tourism industry.

Fast forward to 2022. I had just returned home after a few years away and amidst great irony – found myself as a Kanaka in tourism working for a tour company.

I felt so much internal conflict. The scripted narratives I was expected to share felt hollow. I was starting to see Waikīkī being transformed into visitor-hosting-visitor interactions. Our stories were being told by others who weren't Hawaiian, weren't from here, who were blatantly lying at times, and who were not in the slightest bothered

by creating the craziest fabricated stories about our history.

I saw our culture become a punchline. I was over it and I knew I had to do something different.

When Ho'omau O'ahu Tours was founded in 2023, it wasn't just about starting a business. It was about creating an authentic cultural experience that delves deep into what makes Hawai'i unique – our people, our history, and our traditions.

Our tours are crafted with intention, inviting visitors to explore with a deeper sense of purpose and educated intention. We take them to places of cultural and historical significance, share the meanings behind our practices, and tell the stories of the Native Hawaiian people.

Hawai'i's history is complex, and not always comfortable to confront, but it is our responsibility to do our due diligence in crafting the message to ensure that what we educate others in, is based in strong research and shared with integrity.

"He 'a'ali'i kū makani mai au; 'a'o-he makani nana e kula'i."

I am a wind resistant 'a'ali'i; no gale can blow me over. - 'Ōlelo No'eau #507

We understand the importance of the value of mālama (to take care of, to care for). We mālama 'āina (the land), our people, our history, and our mo'olelo (stories). This guiding value is at the heart of everything we do. By embracing mālama, we create experiences that educate visitors about preserving our ecosystems and cultural practices while encouraging them to give back to the land, the people, and the places they visit. ■

Evan Mokuahi Hayes is the founder of Ho'omau O'ahu Tours, a Native Hawaiian-owned, operated, and led tour company on O'ahu. A highlighted offering is their "Mālama Experience," a family-friendly tour that includes engaging in the lo'i kalo (taro terrace). A portion of their proceeds are reinvested into stewardship efforts at the places they visit. For more information visit www.hoomauoahu.com or email info@hoomauoahu.com

A Testament to Courage and Vision



By Andrew Rosen

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce (NHCC), it's important to reflect on the journey that brought us to this pivotal moment.

Like many organizations, NHCC faced unprecedented challenges during the pandemic. The organization, which has always operated with a working board, was on the brink of closing its doors. Yet, the 2021-2022 board displayed remarkable courage and vision by investing in our future despite limited financial resources.

In alignment with the wisdom of organizational experts, who assert that every organization is "perfectly aligned to get the results it gets," the NHCC board made a bold decision. They decided to hire an executive director to steer the organization through those turbulent times. The immediate focus was on creating programs to support Native Hawaiian businesspeople and owners in achieving their potential.

The 'Ō'ō Awards and Beyond

NHCC is famous for the 'Ō'ō Awards, an annual event that honors up to three Native Hawaiian leaders who have dedicated their careers to uplifting the lāhui. This year marks the 47th 'Ō'ō Awards, a testament to the enduring spirit of our community.

Recognizing the need to deliver more comprehensive support, NHCC launched a pilot program called Ho'omana in the summer of 2023. This initiative aimed to increase the odds of long-term success and sustainability for Native Hawaiian businesses. Thanks to the federal and state grants secured in March, NHCC expanded this pilot into Project Ho'omana.

Project Ho'omana: Empowering Native Hawaiian Businesses

The goal for Project Ho'omana is to provide relevant programs, coaching and training for

at least 150 Native Hawaiian businesspeople and owners over a 12-month period, culminating with the Ho'omana Cohort in the third quarter of 2025.

Starting in September, NHCC will host at least one event per month, including seminars, guest speakers, and networking opportunities. These events are designed to equip our members with the knowledge and resources they need to thrive in today's rapidly changing and challenging economic times.

Strengthening Relationships and Expanding Alliances

Our mission is "to mālama Native Hawaiians in business and commerce through leadership, relationships, and connections to economic resources and opportunities." Over the past two years, NHCC has strengthened past relationships and expanded alliances with organizations that share our vision. These partnerships enable us to deliver high-quality content, training, and support to our members and the broader community.

Perfectly Aligned for the Future

Thanks to the patience and courage of our board, NHCC is now perfectly aligned to fulfill our mission. By making the critical investment, we have positioned ourselves to significantly increase our programs and services moving forward.

Our organization is better equipped to meet the needs of our members and the community, ensuring that NHCC remains a vital and "trusted" force in supporting Native Hawaiian commerce during these rapidly evolving times. In fact, NHCC is developing additional exciting initiatives that will be announced shortly.

We look forward to continuing this journey of transformation and growth, guided by core Hawaiian values. Mahalo to everyone who has supported us along the way. Together, we will continue to uplift and empower Native Hawaiians in business for generations to come. ■

To learn more and join, please go to www.native-hawaiianchamberofcommerce.org.



SCHHA's Mana Wāhine



By KipuKai Kualii

The Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Association (SCHHA) is proud to celebrate our mana wāhine. At last month's Homestead Community Development Corporation (HCDC) board meeting, two next generation mana wāhine Native Hawaiian leaders who had been serving for several years as deputy directors were promoted to co-executive directors.

Congratulations Ms. Kara Chow and Ms. Jordyn Danner! Kara has a degree in marketing and Jordyn has a degree in education. Both are accomplished community leaders originally from Kaua'i. I'm so very proud to be passing the baton of HCDC into their very capable hands.

As co-executive directors, Kara will continue her expert oversight of corporate, fiscal, compliance, and human resource management, while Jordyn will continue her execution of place-based housing, social enterprise, youth and leadership programs.

SCHHA's leadership has complete confidence that they will do a great job in leading HCDC, our statewide homestead nonprofit, into the next era of service to our Hawaiian Home Lands beneficiaries and our greater lāhui.

They both join Ms. Rolina Faagai, executive director of our Hawaiian

Lending & Investments (HLI) nonprofit who was promoted less than a year ago in October 2023. Rolina has been with HLI since the beginning; starting as our loan fund manager. She has been a confident, supportive presence for HLI, always encouraging her colleagues and the homesteaders we serve.

HCDC was founded in 2009 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to affordable housing, economic development and homestead capacity building on or near Hawaiian Home Lands. It operates affordable rental projects on Kaua'i and Maui, and operates a variety of job-creating social enterprises, as well as workforce development and youth leadership programs. HCDC also supports homestead associations through capacity trainings and fiscal sponsorship services statewide.

HLI was founded in 2020 as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit dedicated to accessing capital for consumer, agriculture, clean energy, social enterprise and housing purposes on or near Hawaiian Home Lands in the State of Hawai'i. ■

A longtime advocate for Hawaiian Home Lands trust beneficiaries and lands, KipuKai Kualii is the chair of the Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA), the oldest and largest coalition of native Hawaiians on or waiting for Hawaiian Home Lands. Kualii also serves as the Kaua'i County Council vice chair and the Anahola Hawaiian Homestead Association (AHHA) president.



Kara Chow - Courtesy Photos



Jordyn Danner



Rolina Faagai

Residential Camps at LT Ranch



By Jill Beatty
Program Director, LT Ranch

This summer, Lili'uokalani Trust (LT) hosted a series of one-week residential camps at LT Ranch, welcoming kamali'i from across the pae 'āina. These immersive camps offered a wonderful opportunity for the children to deepen their understanding of Hawaiian culture and heritage, interact with our ranch animals, and focus on healing and social-emotional development.



The peaceful, wide open spaces at LT Ranch in Waimea on Hawai'i Island provide a sanctuary for vulnerable kamali'i. - Courtesy Photo

Witnessing children come together at LT Ranch was a testament to the trust's mission to care for Native Hawaiian children, especially the most vulnerable. The pilina they established with one another, and the life skills they gained, confirmed the trust's commitment to the wellbeing of kamali'i.

Nestled in Waimea, Hawai'i Island, LT Ranch is stewarded by the trust. The ranch provides a sanctuary of open pastures and clean air, naturally embraced by the queen's children. Beyond residential camps during school breaks, LT Ranch also provides after-school activities and specialized programs for students in alternative learning environments.

Our programs focus on three pathways — the arts, 'āina, and animal-assisted therapy. The pathways help the children develop social-emotional skills and learn valuable life

lessons applicable to their homes, schools, and communities.

Animal-assisted therapy is an integral part of our approach. Our animal companions — rescued and retired horses, sheep, goats, pigs, and Silkie chickens — enrich the lives of children, teaching them essential values like kuleana, aloha, and respect (hō'ihi).

Horses, especially, inspire and guide our 'ōpio. As prey animals, they are highly attuned to their surroundings, teaching 'ōpio to stay connected to their physical presence instead of being distracted by their thoughts. This connection between horse and 'ōpio enhances self-awareness and emotional regulation, leading to better understanding and managing of their own feelings.

At the ranch, 'āina activities include planting and harvesting in our mala and hydroponic gardens, which nurture pilina with oneself, others and the 'āina. Art activities provide opportunities for self-reflection and expression as 'ōpio practice ho'omalu by taking time to ground themselves before diving into their projects. This mindful approach is especially valuable when handling delicate pottery and glazes.

Throughout their stay, campers are guided by Aloha Agreements — principles of aloha, onipa'a, 'imi 'ike, kuleana, and kūpono. Aloha Agreements, developed by ranch teammates and unique to LT, encourage campers to strive toward positive interactions within themselves, one another, and the environment.

We are deeply grateful to Queen Lili'uokalani, whose trust she established in 1909 continues to support Hawaiian kamali'i. Her vision for thriving children is realized at LT Ranch, a place where healing and growth are nurtured and encouraged. ■

Jill Beatty is the Program Director for LT Ranch, maintained by Lili'uokalani Trust. To learn more about the Ranch or LT, please contact the Mālama Line (808) 466-8080 or visit onipaa.org/malama-line.

Ka Uila 'Ōma'oma'o

By Lisa Kapono Mason



Some might call them "drab little birds"...but they are cute - Photos: Bret N. Mossman

What do you get when you mix the body of an 'amakihi, the feathers of an 'ōma'o, the walk of an 'akikiki, and the appetite of an 'akeke'e? 'Alawī, of course!

This endangered Hawai'i Island creeper's native name was unknown until its recent rediscovery in Hawaiian language newspapers and soon after confirmed in 2017 by the Hawaiian Lexicon Committee.

'Alawī (*Loxops mana*) is endemic to Hawai'i Island and commonly seen in the upland koa-ōhi'a forests of Ka'ū and the eastern-facing slopes of Mauna Kea, including Hakalau National Wildlife Refuge. If you are lucky, you might see them along the Pu'u 'Ō'ō Trail.

Look for a small, mossy olive-gray bird flittering around in the treetops alongside other honeycreepers like 'apapane, 'ākepa, and 'akiapōlā'au. Although

similar in appearance to juvenile and female 'ākepa and male Hawai'i 'amakihi, 'alawī have several distinct features: a lighter ivory colored throat patch, a shorter straight bill, and a wider "raccoon style" eye mask. ■

Lisa Kapono Mason was raised in Hilo and happily resides in Kea'au on the island of Hawai'i. She is a community educator, conservation researcher, and native bird enthusiast with a passion to help strengthen relationships between our manu and lāhui.



A green flash creeping in the 'umikoa. Is that a moth for lunch?

Stories of Fire and Water

By Christina Medina

Our understanding of past geological events is shaped primarily by the discoveries of western-trained scientists using carbon dating and other technologies.

Increasingly, however, connections are being made between the scientific data collected by modern scientists and the data recorded in our oli (chants) and mo'olelo (stories) that detail myriad aspects of our culture and history – including the many geological, hydrological, and biogeochemical processes our kūpuna observed.

For example, there are many Pele mo'olelo, but most do not mention 'Ailā'au, he who dwelled at Kīlauea before Pele. Perhaps it is because he left peacefully, avoiding Pele altogether.

The 'Ailā'au flow was named after him. Scientists estimate that the volume of magma within the summit caldera sufficiently provided for the 60–70-year 'Ailā'au flow, which flowed continuously without heat loss (evidenced by lava tubes) between 1400–1470 CE.

Due to the volume of lava produced, the flow may be linked to the story of the famous hōlua race between Kahawali and Pele, in which she chased him down and turned his students and all the spectators into lava tree molds that can still be seen today.

Or perhaps it is linked to the story of Pele and Hi'iaka wherein Pele destroys Hi'iaka's beloved 'ōhi'a grove along with her best friend, Hōpoe – casualties of Pele's jealousy over Lohi'au. It is possible that this story described the collapse of the summit.

When the magma supply dropped towards the end of the 'Ailā'au flow, the vast void left behind couldn't handle the weight of the summit

and it collapsed. The summit caldera fell 1,970 feet, with a diameter of approximately 2 miles. It was an epic event.

The crater floor was close enough to the water table that water seeped in and caused huge pyroclastic explosions – perhaps this was Hi'iaka throwing boulders far into the sky as she stomped through the crater floor in an effort to destroy Pele by extinguishing her fire.

Another example of the conflation of science and mo'olelo includes the story of a shapeshifting mo'o wahine (reptilian woman) named Meheanu, the guardian of He'eia Loko I'a (fishpond) on O'ahu. She was known to swish the water back and forth to circulate in the loko i'a.

If the hau tree foliage surrounding the loko i'a was yellow, fishing was prohibited. In her mo'o form, Meheanu urinates in the pond. But if the foliage was green, she is in her eel form, and away visiting her friend Huahine at Kawainui pond, so all can fish and enjoy.

At He'eia Loko I'a, the water was tested while the foliage was both yellow and green. It was learned that yellow foliage meant the loko i'a had high ammonia levels and increased nitrogen. This is beneficial for triggering phytoplankton blooms crucial for baby fish growth (hence, fishing was kapu). When the foliage returned to green, ammonia levels were back to normal and the kapu was lifted. Our people were scholars and scientists too.

There are many mo'olelo that align to scientific explanations or geological events. Modern scientists are increasingly looking to native practitioners to help unravel the secrets of ka wā kahiko. ■

Christina Medina is a student at Windward Community College in the Hawaiian Studies program.



This picture entitled "Escape From Pele" by the late renowned artist Herb Kawainui Kane, may have been inspired by the famous hōlua race between Kahawali and Pele. Artwork used with permission.

New Animated Short Film by Lacy

A new animated short film, *The Queen's Flowers*, by Emmy-nominated Ōiwi filmmaker Ciara Leina'ala Lacy is currently making the rounds on the international film festival circuit and being received with great enthusiasm.

Written and directed by Lacy, the film, set in 1915, tells the story of a little girl, Emma, and her gift to Queen Lili'uokalani. Emma is a boarding student at St. Andrew's Priory which is next door to the 77-year-old queen's Honolulu residence, "Washington Place."

The Queen's Flowers premiered at the New York International Children's Film Festival (NY-ICFF) this past March where it won the 2024 Audience Award, Ages 8+ and the 2024 Audience Award Grand Prize Short Film.

To date, the film has also been screened at the VC Film Festival in California, the Seattle International Film Festival in Washington, the Singapore International Children's Film Festival, the Zlín Film Festival in the Czech Republic, the Atlanta Children's Film Festival in Georgia, and at the Nantucket Film Festival in Massachusetts.

Unseen Films reviewer Steve Kopian writes, "This is glorious filmmaking and clearly the work of an artist who trusts their instincts."

Among the many notable contributors to the film are Director of Animation Daniel Sousa and Executive Producer Dean Ham-

er, both of whom were part of the team that created the Oscar-nominated animated short, *Kapaemahu*, in 2021.

Hawai'i audiences will have to wait to watch *The Queen's Flowers*; there are plans to screen the film this coming fall.

Caltech Observatory on Maunakea Dismantled

The Caltech Submillimeter Observatory was decommissioned and completely removed from the summit of Maunakea in July. The observatory began operations in 1987.

Throughout the decommissioning process, cultural observers were present to ensure that deconstruction was done respectfully. According to John De Fries, executive director of the Maunakea Stewardship Oversight Authority, the site was "restored to as near a pristine level" as can be expected.

Caltech came under fire when they, along with the University of California, proposed construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) which resulted in a months-long occupation in 2019 as kīa'i from across the pae āina acted to protect Maunakea from further development.

The Caltech Submillimeter Observatory's telescope will be relocated to the country of Chile with new, upgraded instruments, and will be renamed the Leighton Chajnantor Telescope.

Sunil Golwala, director of the observatory and a physics professor at Caltech, said that Caltech's team learned from

Blessing OHA's New Maui Office



Last month, OHA celebrated the opening of its new Maui office in Wailuku with an office blessing officiated by 'Ekela Kaniaupio-Crozier, Hope Kahu (assistant pastor) of Ekalesia o Kupaianaha church in Wailuku. Top Photo (l-r): OHA Board Chair and Maui Trustee Carmen "Hulu" Lindsey, Kaniaupio-Crozier, and OHA Maui Beneficiary Services Agent Roy Newton. Bottom Photo (l-r): OHA trustees Brickwood Galuteria and Keoni Souza, OHA CEO Stacy Ferreira, trustees Hulu Lindsey, Kalei Akaka, Luana Alapa and Keli'i Akina. - Photos: Joshua Koh

their experience on Maunakea. The Chile site is not considered sacred by the Indigenous community and is located further from population centers. Golwala said the new observatory will be constructed nearer other existing observatories to shrink its environmental footprint.

Removal of the Caltech Submillimeter Observatory follows the removal of a UH observatory a month earlier. There are still 11 telescopes on the mauna.

Clean Energy Testing at Kaka'ako Makai

Kaka'ako Makai will serve as a testing ground for Japanese clean energy technology.

It is the result of a partnership between the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) and Kanoa Winds, a Hawai'i-based company founded by Dr. Kaname Takeya, who has developed a new type of wind energy technology called Vertical Coaxial Contra-Rotating



Vertical Coaxial Contra-Rotating Twin Blades (VCCT) wind turbines are compact and leave a much smaller footprint than wind turbines. - Courtesy Photo

Twin Blades (VCCT) wind turbines.

The compact VCCT turbines leave a much smaller footprint than the behemoth wind turbines that dominate the landscapes of O'ahu's north shore and the West Maui Mountains. VCCT turbines have been used successfully in Japan for more than 15 years near transporta-

tion hubs, industrial facilities and in densely populated residential mixed-use communities.

For this project, Kanoa Winds will install a 0.5 kW VCCT unit near the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation Entrepreneur Sandbox. The unit is shorter than a typical streetlight and has a footprint of about 24 square feet.

VCCT turbines can generate power using a much wider range of wind speeds (7-134 mph) than traditional wind turbines that stop generating power at 44 mph. Additionally, VCCT wind turbines do not pose a threat to birds and bats as traditional horizontal-axis wind turbines do.

"VCCT wind turbines in Japan have been known to have birds nesting within the device, proving the safety and coexistence between the birds and the VCCT technology," said Takeya.

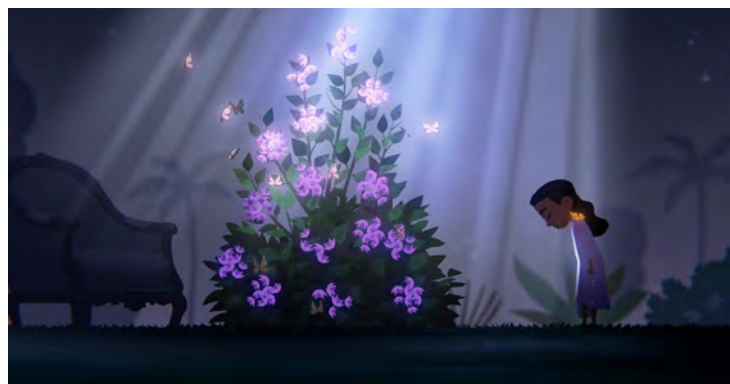
A Win for Native Hawaiian Midwives

On July 24, a Hawai'i State court temporarily blocked part of the Midwifery Restriction Law which prevents pregnant people in Hawai'i from using traditional midwives. This was a result of a lawsuit filed by the Center for Reproductive Rights, the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (NHLC) and the law firm Perkins Coie.

The law went into effect a year ago. Last month's ruling ensures that the threat of prison time and fines for utilizing traditional birthing practices is halted as the case continues.

In her ruling, Judge Shirley M. Kawamura wrote, "If Plaintiffs, especially student midwives, and other...practitioners, educators, and apprentices are not able to practice, teach, and learn, they will lose the opportunity to gain knowledge from the kūpuna [elders] to pass on to future generations."

"The court's decision reaffirms the state's constitutional duties to protect Native Hawaiian traditional and cultural practices



A scene from the animated short film, "The Queen's Flowers" by Emmy-nominated Ōiwi filmmaker Ciara Lacy. - Courtesy Photo

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and to ensure that such practices are not regulated out of existence,” said Kirsha Durante, NHLHC Litigation Director.

The Midwifery Restriction Law penalizes anyone providing advice, information, or care, during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum without a specific state license. However, there are no education programs in Hawai‘i that meet the law’s requirements, meaning that already-trained traditional midwives would need to travel thousands of miles to be re-educated through western programs.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of plaintiffs Alex Amey, A. Ezinne Dawson, Makalani Franco-Francis, Ki‘inaniokalani Kaho‘ohanohano, Kawehi Kū‘ailani, Morea Mendoza, Kiana Rowley, Moriah Salado, and Pi‘ilani Schneider-Furuya. A full trial date has not been set.

Aiu Named Kīpuka Kuleana ED



Tina Aiu
- Courtesy Photo

Kīpuka Kuleana, a Kaua‘i community-based land trust, has named Tina Aiu its first-ever executive director. Kīpuka Kuleana was formed in 2016 in response to intensifying land-loss among local families on Kaua‘i – a result of rising land values, high taxes, speculative real estate and increasing pressure to sell their land. For its first eight years, the organization operated as a volunteer-run hui.

Raised in Wailua, Kaua‘i, Aiu is a graduate of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama and the William S. Richardson School of Law at UH Mānoa. She is the former O‘ahu director of the Hawai‘i Land Trust where she managed multiple conservation easement projects and oversaw the purchase and permanent protection

of Maunawila Heiau in Hau‘ula. As program manager for Livable Hawai‘i Kai Hui, she managed cultural programs at Hāwea Heiau Complex and the Keawāwā Wetland in Maunaloa and led efforts to establish a community garden for families residing in Honolulu’s urban core.

Aiu has taught conservation transactions at the Richardson law school and history and economics at Island School on Kaua‘i. She and her husband, Franz Schmutzer, have coproduced and directed numerous films documenting stories of place and community resilience throughout Hawai‘i.

“Having spent much of my career working on land conservation efforts on O‘ahu, I’m so grateful to bring my expertise home to Kaua‘i,” Aiu said.

Kīpuka Kuleana is working to perpetuate ahupua‘a-based natural resource management and connection to place through protection of cultural landscapes and family lands on Kaua‘i.

Sai and Ryan to be Honored

Sisters Marlene Sai and Yvonne “Pee Wee” Ryan will be honored at the Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club’s Kalaniana‘ole Scholarship Gala Awards Ceremony and fundraiser in October.

Sai is known for her lifelong award-winning contributions to Hawaiian music and acting. In addition to her work in the music industry, she has had an extensive and varied business career, having worked in the travel industry, for Kamehameha Schools where she established the popular “Alumni Week,” and at the Hawai‘i State Legislature. A member of the Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club for decades, Sai has served as its pelekikena (president) and on its board.

Ryan retired as a member of the investment team at Kamehameha Schools, having served the organization for almost 30 years. Prior to that, she worked in the travel industry. She is also a decades-long member of the Prince

Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club, serving in many capacities, including as pelekikena for several terms, and has worked in many different positions for the O‘ahu Council and the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs.

The event will be on October 19 at the Alohilani Resort in Waikīkī and will include a silent auction and live entertainment. Proceeds will be used to provide scholarships. For more information go to www.pkfcc.org or email info@pkfcc.org.

New Solar Project Proposed for Waikōloa

AES Hawai‘i has proposed development of an 86 megawatt alternating current solar photovoltaic array and 344 megawatt hour Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on about 525 acres of land ma uka of Waikōloa Village in West Hawai‘i.

According to AES, its Ke‘āmuku Solar + Storage project could generate 20% of Hawai‘i Island’s energy needs, powering more than 35,000 homes at a fixed, low-cost under a 25-year power purchase agreement with Hawaiian Electric that has already been approved by the Public Utilities Commission.

The project would connect to the existing Hawai‘i Electric grid via a proposed new Ke‘āmoku substation that would be rebuilt on land 350-500 feet away from the existing Hawai‘i Electric Ke‘āmoku substation.

AES already owns the land targeted for the project and has stated on its website that it will “restore the land to its existing condition (or comparable) at the end of the project’s life.”

The company anticipates that over the project’s 25-year lifespan, it will prevent the consumption of some 8.4 million barrels of oil.

Powwow at Bishop Museum

Ho‘opili Tribal Council (formerly the O‘ahu Intertribal Council) is hosting its 48th Annual Honolulu Intertribal Pow-



The Honolulu Intertribal Powwow will be held September 21-22 at Bishop Museum.
- Courtesy Photo

wow at Bishop Museum September 21-22.

This annual event offers O‘ahu residents an opportunity to experience the culture, music, flavor and spirit of the peoples of Turtle Island (i.e., the continent). For two days, Bishop Museum will be a gathering place for In-

igenous people who live in Hawai‘i, as well as visitors from the continent, including Alaska and Canada.

The event features Native American traditional and contemporary drumming, singing and dancing – including the dance styles of many Tribal Nations, such as grass dancers, fancy shawl, and jingle dress dancers. The powwow will also include Native American and Indigenous arts and crafts vendors, keiki crafts, educational booths, and food vendors including Navajo frybread and tacos.

Head Man dancer will be Baac Garcia (Tohono O‘odham Nation) from Arizona, and Head Lady dancer will be Kat Warren (Diné) from Utah. Serving as emcee will be Clifton Goodwill (Ojibwe, Plains Cree, Lakota, Dakota) from Kansas. For more information go to: <https://htchawaii.org/>. ■



Did you have
‘ohana at the
Waiale‘e
Training School
for Boys
(1903-1950)?

We are seeking the ‘ohana of boys held there to assist in planning educational resources and an onsite memorial at Waiale‘e.

Please contact us if you or your ‘ohana have direct ties to boys who were at this school.

Visit our website naleipoinaole.com via QR code:



Questions?
naleipoinaole@gmail.com





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AMOS STAR: The Only Acceptable Action is "No Action"

This month I am sharing a condensed version of my testimony regarding the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the construction/operation of the proposed Air Force Maui Optical and Supercomputing Site Small Telescope Advanced Research (AMOS STAR) facility at Haleakalā, Maui.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) acknowledges the Department of Air Force's (DAF) notice regarding the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Air Force Maui Optical and Supercomputing Site Small Telescope Advanced Research (AMOS STAR) facility on Haleakalā, Maui.

The EIS will assess the environmental impact of constructing and operating up to seven dome-enclosed telescopes on a 0.878-acre site, including a No Action Alternative, as required by environmental regulations.

OHA was established in 1978 to address the challenges faced by Native Hawaiians and to protect their rights and culture. The U.S. government, however, has a long history of harmful practices in Hawai'i, including military activities that have devastated lands and disrupted traditional practices.

The apology resolution of 1993, passed by the U.S. Congress, acknowledged the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1893, but has yet to result in meaningful reconciliation. Instead, the U.S. military continues its activities, causing further harm to Native Hawaiian communities and sacred lands.

The AMOS STAR project would involve significant construction at the summit of Haleakalā, a site of profound cultural and religious significance to Native Hawaiians. The summit is considered a "wahi pana" (legendary place) and "wao akua" (realm of the gods), where Native Hawaiians have conducted religious ceremonies, prayers, and burials for

**Carmen "Hulu" Lindsey**CHAIR
Trustee, Maui

generations. The summit is also home to endangered species, including the 'ua'u (Hawaiian Storm Petrel), and construction could threaten these delicate ecosystems.

Moreover, DAF is responsible for a 700-gallon diesel spill on Haleakalā in January 2023, raising concerns about future environmental risks associated with the AMOS STAR project. The spill highlights

the potential for further destructive impacts on the sacred site and its fragile environment.

OHA strongly objects to the proposed AMOS STAR project, emphasizing that no mitigation can offset the negative and irreversible impacts on traditional and cultural practices, as well as the sacredness of Haleakalā. The construction of the AMOS STAR facility represents a continuation of the U.S. government's disregard for Native Hawaiian rights and cultural heritage, a legacy that began with the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i.

OHA calls for the DAF to honor the wishes of the Native Hawaiian community and to consider the profound cultural, historical, and environmental significance of Haleakalā. The organization asserts that the only acceptable course of action is the No Action Alternative, meaning that the AMOS STAR project should not proceed. Furthermore, OHA stresses the need for proper consultations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and underscores that the summit area is a historic property with deep religious and cultural significance.

OHA reserves the right to provide further comments on any draft EIS and to pursue all necessary actions to protect the rights and cultural heritage of Native Hawaiians. The organization reiterates its strong opposition to the AMOS STAR project and calls for the U.S. government to engage in the long-overdue reconciliation process with the Native Hawaiian people. ■

The Myth of the Ceded Land Trust in Hawai'i

In 1959, when the State of Hawai'i was created by the USA, something happened that had never occurred before and has never happened again.

Unlike other U.S. states, who received their allocation of land for "public" uses, Hawai'i was given its state lands for the "public" and also for the "betterment of the conditions of native Hawaiians."

By the federal definition, "native Hawaiian" meant that only those who could prove by the white man's palapala (documentation) that they had 50% or more Hawaiian blood, were considered Hawaiian!

That racial classification did not include Native Hawaiians who were later defined in federal legislation as persons of Hawaiian ancestry without regard to blood quantum. Native Hawaiian health, education, and services in other critical areas for all Hawaiians are funded through federal U.S. legislation. However, land rights – including rights to ceded lands and Hawaiian Home Lands – were EXCLUDED.

This is why today most Native Hawaiians cannot qualify for Hawaiian Home Lands – it's because they don't have enough "native blood" to qualify for a home on their 'āina hānau!

Where are we today? Thousands have died waiting for homesteads. And DHHL's list currently exceeds 29,000. OHA, the leading state agency for Native Hawaiians, has not gone to court for an inventory.

Hawaiians are not the only victims of the state's failure to inventory ceded land trust assets. The public has also been denied its right as public trust beneficiaries to have the ceded lands and assets inventoried and reserved for public needs and uses. It's important to note that the Hawai'i ceded land trust inventory also includes the submerged lands (shoals, reefs and atolls) as well as minerals, fisheries, and the natural biodiversity of both our lands and seas.

Since its creation in 1978, OHA has not been able to obtain an inventory of our people's land base and oth-

**Mililani B. Trask**VICE CHAIR
Trustee,
Hawai'i Island

er assets. OHA tried years ago but was only able to identify ceded lands on two islands – Kaua'i and Lāna'i – the two islands with the least ceded lands acreage. OHA could never complete a statewide inventory because it has been unable to obtain the necessary data and maps from other agencies (state, federal and county).

Where is OHA today? For years I have tried to get the Board of Trustees to file

legal action against the state and the U.S. to obtain a comprehensive ceded land trust inventory.

The only way we can assess and address public trust assets is to seek the help of the courts to compel and mandate the state (and its agencies) and the U.S. (including the military) to participate in the inventory. The first legal obligation of all trustees is to identify and inventory all assets including lands, investment portfolios, and resources (including renewable energy resources).

This is the third time I have served on OHA's board of trustees. For the last six months I have requested that the board put the critical need for a ceded land inventory on its agenda for a full discussion and vote, and so that our beneficiaries can be included, but I have not been able to secure their support. Instead, I was told that the inventory issue will cause "pilikia" with others in the state and it's not a good thing to do in an election year!

I disagree. While OHA ignores its legal obligation to inventory ceded lands, we are losing thousands of acres. Kaho'olawe, Mākua Valley and Pāhe'ehe'e Ridge are only a few examples of DHHL and ceded lands that are toxic and unusable for growing food, building housing or cultural practices. OHA has attorneys capable of undertaking this case, but it appears we do not want any "pilikia." ■

E kala mai. Due to an editorial error made last month we are publishing this corrected version of Trustee Trask's August column.

A Legacy of Service and Aloha

The grand opening of the new Daniel Kahikina Akaka Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Clinic continues a legacy of service and aloha.

On April 5, 2024, my 'ohana and I participated in the ceremonies and blessing of this first-of-its-kind facility in the Pacific. Located at 91-1051 Franklin D Roosevelt Avenue in Kapolei, the \$130 million, 88,675 square-foot multi-specialty outpatient clinic offers primary and mental health care, x-ray, laboratory and diagnostic services, a pharmacy, and specialty care for veterans on O'ahu and throughout the Pacific.

The clinic also provides courtesy valet service, has 528 parking spots (43 of which are reserved for disabled veterans), provides a shuttle service to nearby housing areas, and is



Kaleihikina Akaka

Trustee,
O'ahu



U.S. Sen. Daniel Kahikina Akaka's portrait greets visitors to the new Kapolei VA Clinic. "This clinic will carry forward Danny's incredible legacy." - President Joe Biden. - Photos: Courtesy of VA Pacific Islands Health Care System



Kahu Daniel "Kaniela" Akaka, Jr. leads a Hawaiian blessing. Pictured behind him are his daughter Trustee Akaka, his wife Anna, and Sen. Mazie Hirono.



Trustee Akaka's 'ohana were honored to participate in the grand opening of the Daniel Kahikina Akaka VA Clinic.

landscaped with native Hawaiian plants.

This state-of-the-art clinic is named to honor my dearest pa, U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Akaka, a Native Hawaiian WWII Veteran who was a strong advocate for veterans' issues and instrumental in advancing initiatives on their behalf as chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Planning for this new clinic started more than 10 years ago, with the groundbreaking in December 2021. In June 2022, President Joe Biden signed legislation naming the clinic after my grandfather. The President's letter marking this momentous celebration was read highlighting, "the life and legacy of Senator Akaka - my dear friend and an extraordinary leader...Danny's life can be defined in a single word: service."

My father, Kahu Daniel "Kaniela" Akaka Jr., and Kahu Kordell Kekoa offered oli and prayer before honored guests,

ceremoniously untied the maile lei, and extended a warm welcome to all present. Among the first to enter was my grandmother, Millie Akaka, affectionately known as Auntie Millie, the ever-present, supportive wife and partner to her husband and statesman.

This is a culmination of his life's work of service and care. Having this clinic named in his honor brings to full circle his legacy of service and aloha. From chairing the Committee on Veterans Affairs with the vision of caring for our veterans, to this sanctuary of healing, and the upcoming opening of the Daniel Kahikina Akaka State Veterans Home, his legacy continues.

Mahalo to all who made the Daniel Kahikina Akaka VA Clinic a reality. ■

I'm Hawaiian and I Vote: Kuleana and Leadership

The power to shape the future of our community lies within each of us, and one of the most significant ways we can wield this power is through voting.

As Native Hawaiians, it is our kuleana to ensure that our voices are heard, our values are upheld, and our people are represented in the leadership of Hawai'i. For too long, Native Hawaiians have been underrepresented in positions of leadership and decision-making, both locally and nationally.

This underrepresentation has had profound effects on our lāhui, from the preservation of our culture and language to the management of our natural resources and protection of iwi kūpuna. By voting, we can change this narrative. We can elect leaders who understand our unique challenges and who are committed to advocating for Native Hawaiians.

I had the honor of participating in Our Kaiāulu Votes, a powerful collective effort aimed at increasing election participation among 'Ōiwi, youth, first-time voters, and the broader Native Hawaiian community.

This initiative holds deep personal significance for me, as I firmly believe that the right to vote is not only a fundamental aspect of our democracy but also a powerful tool for creating meaningful change in our communities. When we encourage our people to exercise their right to vote, we are empowering them to have a voice in shaping the future of our 'āina and the lives of generations to come.

Young voters hold the key to driving progress in our community. I began voting when I was 18 years old. Despite the common belief that a single vote won't make a difference, young voters can indeed be THE transformative force.

This is evident in recent local primary races won by margins as small as 70-100 votes. In the August 2024 primary, only 32% of Hawai'i's registered voters participated, highlighting the need for greater engagement.



Keoni Souza

Trustee,
At-Large

If you're not yet registered, there's still time to make your voice heard: register online by Oct. 28, 2024, or 10 days before and through the election day for "same day" registration for the general election on Nov. 5, 2024.

At the heart of any thriving community are leaders who not only understand our unique challenges but are also committed to advocating for our rights and promoting our wellbeing.

This is why quality leadership is so crucial. For Native Hawaiians, this means electing representatives who are deeply connected to our land, culture, and traditions.

When we elect leaders who embody these qualities, we empower our community to achieve positive change. We create a future where our children can grow up in a Hawai'i that respects and nurtures our Kānaka Maoli and our culture. A future where our community is strong, resilient, and united.

Voting is more than just a right; it is a powerful tool for change. We need that change at OHA.



Sign-waving during the "Walk to the Box" event on August 9. (L-R) OHA staffers Angela Lopes, Richelle Kim and Kau'i Robello, Trustee Keoni Souza, and CEO Stacy Ferreira. - Photo: Joshua Koh

By casting our ballots, we ensure that our voices resonate, and our needs are met.

I'm Hawaiian and I vote.

As November 5 approaches, let's come together to shape a future where Native Hawaiians thrive under strong, compassionate leadership. Our collective action today will define the Hawai'i of tomorrow. The power to make this change is in our hands.

Our Kaiāulu Votes. WE DECIDE! ■

Kalima Lawsuit Settlement Update

By Thomas Grande, esq. and Carl Varady, esq.

Settlement Payments to Deceased Class Members' Heirs

Probate Special Master Emily Kawashima and Probate Special Counsel Scott Suzuki are filing Petitions in Probate Court to seek approval for settlement payments to the heirs of Deceased Class Members.

Two petitions are being filed each month. Each petition seeks probate court approval for payment to approximately eight to 10 families. A total of 11 petitions now have been filed.

Whenever a new petition is filed, it is placed on the www.kalima-lawsuit.com website under the "Documents" link. Each petition contains details on hearings dates and the parties involved. This information is also published in the Legal Notices section of the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*.

More information about the probate process and how Deceased Class Members' claims will be handled can be found on www.kalima-lawsuit.com. The Probate Plan notice that was mailed out by the Claims Administrator on Dec. 4, 2023, is available under the "Documents" link on the website.

This Probate Process is expected to take about two years to complete. Estates of Deceased Class Members with the most accurate and complete information about possible heirs will be processed first. Those with incomplete information will take longer. The process is complex, as some potential heirs of Deceased Class members have also passed and their potential heirs must be identified and notified, where possible. Counsel has requested, and the state has agreed, to use data sources available to the state to assist this search.

Deceased Class Member and Family Information Forms

To advance the process of distributing payment to heirs, Deceased Class Member and Family Information Forms should be completed by family members. If you have submitted these forms already, you do not

need to submit them again unless the information has changed.

Please note that the Claims Administrator still has not received Deceased Class Member and Family Information forms for approximately 263 deceased Class Members. Both forms can be found at the Kalima website. Any family member can fill them in online or print and e-mail them to info@kalima-lawsuit.com or mail them to Kalima Claims Administrator P.O. Box 135035 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801.

It is critical that these forms be completed and submitted to the Claims Administrator to ensure prompt payments to Deceased Class Members' heirs.

Settlement Payments to Living Class Members

Settlement checks have been mailed to approximately 1,300 living Class Members. Settlement checks must be cashed within 120 days after issuance.

The Special Master has extended the date by which checks must be cashed. If you have not cashed your check within 150 days after the check was issued, the old check will be voided and a replacement check will have to be issued. This will cause further delays. Please contact the Claims Administrator if you have not cashed your check.

A small number of checks have been returned as undeliverable. Please contact the Claims Administrator if you have not received your check to update your address.

Living Class Members should continue to update their contact information in case there is an additional payment after the probate period is completed. Please continue to update your contact information even after you receive your check. ■

If you have any questions, please contact the Claims Administrator at info@kalima-lawsuit.com or at 1-808-650-5551 or 1-833-639-1308 (Toll-Free). If you are only available at limited times, please include that information in your message.

CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: KEAUHOU BAY MANAGEMENT PLAN

ASM Affiliates is preparing a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) to inform an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared for the proposed maintenance to support the continued operation of the Kaheawa Wind 1 wind farm facility. The area of focus totals approximately 200 acres and is in the vicinity of the Lahaina Pali Trail and Ukumehame Beach Park, Ukumehame Ahupua'a, Lahaina District, Island of Maui.

ASM is seeking consultation with any community members that have long-standing cultural connections to this area, might have knowledge of traditional cultural uses of the proposed project area; or who are involved in any ongoing cultural practices that may be occurring on or in the general vicinity of the project area. If you have and are willing to share any such information, please contact Candace Gonzales at cgonzales@asmaffiliates.com, phone (808) 969-6066, mailing address ASM Affiliates 507A E. Lanikaula Street, Hilo, HI 96720. Mahalo. ■

Looking for a back issue of **Ka Wai Ola**?

To explore a complete archive of all issues, please visit:

<https://kawaiola.news>

HALI'A ALOHA FOND REMEMBRANCE

To create a space for our readers to honor their loved ones, Ka Wai Ola will print *Hali'a Aloha - obituaries and mele kanikau (mourning chants)*. Hali'a Aloha appearing in the print version of Ka Wai Ola should be recent (within six months of passing) and should not exceed 250 words in length. All other Hali'a Aloha submitted will be published on kawaiola.news. Hali'a Aloha must be submitted by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. Photos accompanying Hali'a Aloha will only be included in the print version of the newspaper if space permits. However, all photos will be shared on kawaiola.news.

EDMUND M.K. ENOMOTO JAN. 16, 1946 – AUG. 3, 2024



Honolulu, Hawai'i – Edmund M.K. Enomoto of Waiohuli Hawaiian homestead in Kula, Maui, died Aug. 3, 2024, at Kaiser Moanalua Medical Center. He was 78. Services were held August 12 at Ballard Family Mortuary in Kahului. He was buried at Maui Veterans Cemetery in Makawao. Enomoto was born Jan. 16, 1946, at Pu'unene. He graduated from

Holy Rosary School in Pa'ia, Kamehameha School for Boys, and the California College of Arts & Crafts. He held a teaching certificate from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He was stationed as an Army illustrator at Fort Knox, KY, where he won the first annual Armed Forces Art Show. Enomoto became the art director for Kaizawa Advertising, then a freelance artist associated with the Hawai'i Potters Guild. He retired from St. Andrew's Priory School, where he had served as art department head and athletic director. He also retired from King Kekaulike High School, where he taught ceramics, drawing and painting. He was named a Living Treasure of Hawai'i as a ceramicist in 1987 at the age of 41 – one of the youngest ever to receive that accolade. He was founding head coach of the former Mulletts Volleyball Club, he co-founded the Hawaiian Canoe Club's recreational paddling program, and he was an avid he'e free diver. Enomoto is survived by his wife, Kekoa Enomoto, daughter Elisabeth Lehua Enomoto, son Edmund Honu Enomoto, brother Andrew Enomoto, and granddaughter Kamalani Hue Enomoto. ■



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E Ō Mai, e Kuleana Land Holders!

THE KULEANA LAND TAX exemption helps Native Hawaiians keep their ancestral lands by reducing the rising cost of property taxes. All four counties have ordinances in place that allow eligible kuleana land owners to pay minimal to zero property taxes. Applications are available on each county's website.

For more information on kuleana land tax ordinances go to www.oha.org/kuleanaland and for assistance with genealogy verification, contact the Office of Hawaiian Affairs at 808-594-1835 or 808-594-1888.



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SEARCH

HOLT - The Holt 'Ohana (descendants of Robert William Holt and Tuwati Robinson and their three sons John Dominis Holt I, James Holt and Owen Holt) is planning a reunion for June 11-20, 2025 on O'ahu. If you are interested in attending the planning meetings (held via Zoom), or being updated on the details, please email ahulii.holt@gmail.com. Mālama pono!

NAEHU-SAFFERY REUNION - Descendants of Edmund Saffery, wives Kupuna & Waiki Naehu holding reunion meetings. Combined 14 children: Fanny (Kaiaokamalie), Edmund II (Wallace), Henry (Kaanaana), Caroline (Rose), William (Cockett & Makekau), John (Kahalelio & Nahookaika), Thomas (Luna), Mary (Palena), Emma (Pogue), Anna (Kealoha & Nahaku) Juliana (Freitas), Charles (Hawele & Kauwahi), Helen (Tripp), Emalia Nellie (Ernestberg & Conradt & Kaloa). Interested in helping? tinyurl.com/NSOASite Contact Dayton Labanon, 808-232-9869, dlabanon@gmail.com, Manu Goodhue manu_losch@hotmail.com, 808-551-9386 or Naomi Losch, 808-261-9038.

LOO-KELI'IOLOMOKU - Descendants of Pak Sing Loo and Hannah Keli'iholomoku are planning a first family reunion October 10 - 13, 2024, on O'ahu. For more information contact Maureen Loo-Martinez at: maloomartinez@hotmail.com. Mahalo and hope to see you all! ■



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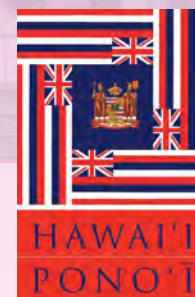
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From: [Chelsaelynn Kobzi](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda D1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:26:15 PM

Aloha Board Members

My name is Chelsae Kobzi. I am born and raised in Ka'u. As a native hawaiian I strongly urge for you to DENY the renewal of further desecration on our sacred Aina o Pohakuloa.

The time is up! 60 years too long of stripping Hawaiians of their precious land and resources. Poisoning our lands and PEOPLE for generations. It is time for TRUTH and JUSTICE for our people. It is time for HEALING and RESTORATION

The many years of military debris have accumulated over the years, leaving behind dangerous radioactive contamination of our land and people.

As the board members, you made a constitutional PROMISE to MALAMA AINA! AINA OVER PROFIT!! WHAT ARE WE WITHOUT AINA? I beg you to please deny Agenda D1. Mahalo for your time.

From: [Zachary Kubo](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:28:45 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

This email is a continuation of others in protest to the proposed continuation of military occupation in Pōhakuloa. I implore you to read the message below and consider the environmental ramifications of this:

Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**

b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**

c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**

d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it

already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

a. *Can* the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it? In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says "cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action" and "future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown." **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: "Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land." **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it's too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

c. The Army said it will comply with the "Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act" (CERCLA), which requires remedial action concerning stored hazardous substances, "necessary to protect human health and the environment with respect to any such substance remaining on the property has been taken before" transferring the land back. However, the Army will not be clear on what this will mean, changing its stance on whether it stores hazardous substances on state lands (see #3c) and refusing to disclose any remediation actions.

(3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.

a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211** The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

b. The EIS does not tell us how much contamination has accumulated, despite these procedures, and its impacts.

c. KAHEA asked about PTA's hazardous waste spill risks. The Army responded by: (1) telling KAHEA to file a Freedom of Information Act

request for the information, (2) deleting the section describing hazardous waste storage on PTA State lands. Has hazardous waste spilled on state lands? Where are these records?

(4) Why can't the Army start cleaning up now?

a. The state Department of Health ("DOH") commented "There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible." **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as "not resolved".

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there's no evidence that it has, but also "[g]roundwater quality data are limited"; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

a. DHHL "feel[s] strongly" that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined, pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.

b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are "potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils" but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are "unlikely to impact public health." **V1 at 3-107**

c. The FEIS acknowledges "airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational

Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels". **V1 at 3-117** Yet there is no mitigation or study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai'i's economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly "habituated" to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?

b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the FEIS **Submittal at 23**

(8) Fire impacts are worse than disclosed.

a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283**. Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.

b. The Department of Interior pointed out the "entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021." **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions ("GHGs") for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?

b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army's "generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change." **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

- a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**
- b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.
- c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. **Submittal at 23**
- d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army's FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai'i's land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.
Zachary Kubo

From: [Mar](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda Item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:55:52 PM

Agenda Item D-1 – Final Environmental Impact Statement for Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area

Date: 5/7/8

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

My name is Mar Leatherman, and I am a member of the Democratic Socialists of O'ahu. I write in strong opposition to the acceptance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Army's proposal to retain approximately 22,750 acres of seized Hawaiian national lands at Pōhakuloa. These are not simply "state lands"—they are stolen 'āina under illegal U.S. occupation. The BLNR has both a legal obligation and a moral duty to reject this FEIS and stand against the further destruction of our homeland.

This EIS is a deeply flawed attempt to greenlight ongoing destruction. It is evasive, incomplete, and in violation of HRS Chapter 343. The Army has provided no assurance of environmental protection, no credible accountability, and no respect for the cultural and political status of this 'āina.

The most egregious failures of the FEIS include:

Toxic Contamination with No Cleanup Plan

The FEIS acknowledges heavy metals and hazardous waste (lead, diesel, ammunition remnants) at PTA but does not offer a credible plan to monitor or clean them. The Army's claim that minimal rainfall reduces risk ignores the presence of shallow aquifers and the possibility of long-term groundwater contamination.

Fire Risk Minimization

Over 2,000 wildfires have occurred at PTA since training began in 1943 — more than 1,000 of them directly caused by Army activity. Despite this staggering number, the FEIS offers little in terms of wildfire prevention or response planning, a glaring omission especially during Wildfire Awareness Month.

Outdated and Insufficient Air Quality Data

The most recent air quality monitoring cited in the FEIS dates back to 2007. No current data is provided to assess the impact of decades of training and combustion activities on surrounding communities and ecosystems.

Lack of Comprehensive Cultural Survey and Consultation

The Army has failed to survey vast areas of the land — including sections confirmed to

contain Native Hawaiian cultural and historic sites. The FEIS also notes the presence of iwi kūpuna but fails to ensure full consultation with Island Burial Councils as required under state law.

No Incidental Take Permit for State Lands

While the Army operates under an incidental take permit for RIMPAC in marine environments, there is no such permit disclosed for PTA. This means there is no accountability for the ongoing harm to endangered birds, plants, and other protected species — several of which are known to inhabit the leased lands.

Neglect of Cumulative and Long-Term Impacts

The FEIS narrowly focuses on the 23,000 acres of state land without meaningfully considering the interconnectedness of the 110,000+ adjacent federally held acres. The Army's continued refusal to acknowledge this cumulative impact renders their environmental analysis incomplete and misleading.

Violation of Public Trust and Fiduciary Duty

These lands are “ceded” lands — held in trust for the benefit of Native Hawaiians and the public. The state has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure these lands are not desecrated or mismanaged. The FEIS fails to account for the significance of this trust relationship and instead treats the land as a disposable training ground.

Military Activity is Incompatible with Conservation Lands

Large portions of the state-leased lands at PTA fall within the Conservation District, where military training activities — including live-fire, munitions testing, and heavy vehicle use — are **not allowed** under Hawai'i law. The BLNR's own Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands has previously stated that such uses are inconsistent with the purposes of the Conservation District. The FEIS does not resolve this contradiction and makes no effort to align the proposed land use with state zoning and land use regulations.

REJECT THIS EIS. PROTECT 'ĀINA. HONOR YOUR DUTY.

This Board is not bound to accept an EIS that fails to inform, fails to mitigate, and fails to protect. The Army has had decades to prove it can care for this land—and has only shown harm. You have the right—and the responsibility—to say enough. The community expects you to uphold its values, wishes, and interests, and nothing is more important to us than accountability in land stewardship. To accept this EIS statement is to accept the blatant disregard for safety and community welfare, and further perpetuate a downward spiral into environmental desecration.

Reject this EIS. Refuse to rubber-stamp desecration. Stand for Pōhakuloa, for Hawai'i, and for future generations.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ka 'ōia'i'o,

Marissa Leatherman

Kahalu'u, O'ahu

DSO Member

marissa.e.leatherman@gmail.com

(925)216-6865

From: clomp-burly4b@icloud.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] "A"OLE US ARMY GARRISON POHAKULO A
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:45:15 PM

Oppose their BS EIS. US Army is a mega polluter who makes violence and problems around the world, steals and wrecks land with their dumbass donkey ordinance and desecration. DO THE RIGHT THING. VOTE AOLE

Alika Leavy
Volcano, Hi

From: [Jordan Lee Loy](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Requesting a Rejection of the US Army's FEIS for Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:46:22 PM

Aloha,

My name is Jordan Kekamahoolu Lee Loy. I am a native Hawaiian born and raised on the east side of Hawaii Island, and I strongly oppose the approval of the Final Environmental Impact Statement completed by the US Army for their request to extend their lease of the land at Pohakuloa. It would seem as though writing this testimony wouldn't actually bring about any change when going up against a gigantic organization like the US military, but there are too many facts in their own EIS that prove that they are unworthy stewards of State (ceded) lands. Take depleted uranium (DU) for example. It's harmful to humans due to its heavy metal toxicity and potential for radioactive exposure, primarily through inhalation or ingestion. DU retains the same chemical toxicity as natural uranium, potentially damaging the kidneys and other organs in the human body. Additionally, dust or fragments from DU munitions can contaminate environments, posing a risk to both humans and the environment.

Brush fires. Bombing. In an area where land is such a finite resource (i.e. and ISLAND) how can we allow even one acre of our land to be mistreated in such a fashion? Do the benefits outweigh the costs? Are my kids' lives, lungs and kidneys worth it? Are yours? Please reject this EIS and restore some faith in the BLNR. To approve this FEIS is a slap in the face to every resident of Hawaii Island, saying you don't care what happens to us, because somewhere - maybe in your pockets, maybe in your next political aspiration - the benefit outweighs the cost. And it will cost us our home and we won't ever have another one.

I genuinely hope this email reaches human eyes and someone on the BLNR can read and feel the weight of the decision they have to make. Most of me didn't want to write this because I feel like it won't make a difference. If the vote is to approve this FEIS, I will remember each one of your names and the names of your families and tell the story of the ones who voted to destroy Hawaii. Please don't let that be your story.

Respectfully,
Jordan K Lee Loy

From: [Bri Leever](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:59:43 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this 'āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting

further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Bri Leever
Kailua-kona, HI
Concerned Citizen
808-464-3801

--

Bri Leever
she/her
Community Strategist + Founder
[Ember](#)





Ka Moku'aina 'O Hawai'i Aha Moku O Pae'Aina

State of Hawai'i Aha Moku

P. O. Box 621

Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

Testimony of the Hawaii State Aha Moku

Board of Land and Natural Resources

Friday, May 9, 2025

9:00 a.m.

DLNR Boardroom, Kalanimoku Bldg.

OPPOSITION TO D-1

Decision Making regarding the Acceptance or Non-Acceptance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Army Training Land Retention at Pohakuloa Training Area, Island of Hawai'i, Tax Map Keys (TMKs) (3)4-4-015:008; 4-4-016:005; and 7-1-004:007.

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR),

On behalf of the generational, lineal, cultural descendants of Moku O Keawe (Hawai'i Island), and Public Trust communities that are connected to the Moku of Hamakua, Hilo, Kohala and Kona - four of the six traditional Moku that encompass the Hawai'i Island, The Hawaii State Aha Moku (Aha Moku) offers our testimony of **Opposition** to the request of the United States (U.S.) Army Garrison-Hawaii (USAG-HI) and U.S. Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) which is to accept the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Army Training and Retention at Pohakuloa Training Area, listed directly below.

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/Doc_Library/2025-04-23-HA-FEIS-Army-Training-Land-Retention-at-Pohakuloa-Training-Area-Vol-1.pdf

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/Doc_Library/2025-04-23-HA-FEIS-Army-Training-Land-Retention-at-Pohakuloa-Training-Area-Vol-2.pdf

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/Doc_Library/2025-04-23-HA-FEIS-Army-Training-Land-Retention-at-Pohakuloa-Training-Area-Vol-3.pdf

While we support the DLNR Land Division submittal and listings of their areas of concern:

- Lack of evaluation of impacts in the main impact area which is the receiving area for live rounds being fired during training activities;
- Inventory of archaeological sites is incomplete (historical and cultural artifacts taken from state lands into USAG-HI possession in their belief that NAGPRA is the controlling authority;
- Lack of current studies and summaries that would provide data and analysis regarding endangered biological resources;
- "Existing military use is NOT consistent with the overall objective NOR the allowable uses in the Conservation District, and that a rule amendment to allow such use should not be allowed."

Kapa'akai Analysis

The September 11, 2000, Hawai'i Supreme Court decision in *Ka Pa'akai O Ka 'Aina v Land Use Commission* ruled that State agencies are obligated to protect the reasonable exercise of customarily and traditionally exercised rights of native Hawaiians to the extent feasible. Agencies are obligated to make an assessment, independent of the developer or applicant, of the impacts on customary and traditional practices of native Hawaiians. The independent assessment must include three factors known as the "Ka Pa'akai framework¹." The framework includes determining:

- 1) Identify the scope of valued cultural, historical, or natural resources in the petition or impacted area, including the extent to which traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights are exercised in the petition area.
- 2) Determine the extent to which those resources, including traditional and customary native Hawaiian rights, will be affected or impaired by the proposed action.
- 3) Identify feasible actions, if any, to be taken to reasonably protect native Hawaiian rights if they are found to exist.

Using this framework to assess the impacts of the proposed work, including EIS's and Cultural Impact Statements (CIS) is referred to as the Ka Pa'akai Analysis (KPA) and is used herein as the primary means to fulfill mandatory Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents and Cultural Impact Assessments (CIA). **This was not done and is missing from the existing EIS, CIS and CIA.**

Because the lands in question are Hawaii State Conservation Lands currently leased to the United States Army, we believe that the Army must complete the Kapa'akai Analysis before their Final Documents- the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is accepted by the Hawaii State Land Board.

Hawaii State Aha Moku²

The Hawaii State Aha Moku (Aha Moku) and the Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) was established by Act 288 (2012, codified in HRS 171-4.5) and is administratively attached to the DLNR. The eight members were appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate from a list of nominations submitted by the Aha Moku of each island. The Luna Alaka'i/Executive Director of the Hawaii State Aha Moku resides in the Chairpersons Office in DLNR. AMAC represents eight island Po'o (island representatives), 46 Moku (district) representatives, and 606 Ahupua'a (land divisions or boundaries). The Aha Moku Act was authored by almost 200 native Hawaiian kupuna and traditional practitioners from the eight main Hawaiian Islands – Moku O Keawe (Hawai'i), Moku O Pi'ilani (Maui), Moku O Kanaloa (Kaho'olawe), Moloka'i Pule O'o (Moloka'i), Nana'i Kaula (Lana'i), Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu), Manokalanipo (Kaua'i), and Moku O Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau) – and was meant to be the implementation of the Kapa'akai Hawai'i Supreme Court Law.

¹ *Ka Pa'akai O Ka 'Aina v Land Use Commission*, 94 Hawai'i 31, 7 P.3d 1068 (2000:10).

² Hawaii State Aha Moku, Act 288 SLH2012

Aha Moku works with the traditional, generational native Hawaiians attached to specific ahupua'a, moku and Mokupuni (islands) in the Pae'Aina (State of Hawaii). In the case of Pohakuloa, lineal, generational and cultural descendants of the Moku of Hamakua, Kohala, Hilo and Kona were not consulted or addressed. This is a huge oversight of the Army and extremely disrespectful to the indigenous people who continue to exercise their traditional practices in the areas listed in the Army EIS. In the case of Pohakuloa, where all physical access is denied, religious and spiritual practices still exist.

Pressing Concern

We know and understand that this Land Board meeting is to ONLY a Decision Making regarding the Acceptance or Non-Acceptance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Army Training Land Retention at Pohakuloa Training Area, Island of Hawai'i, Tax Map Keys (TMKs) (3)4-4-015:008; 4-4-016:005; and 7-1-004:007.

However, we fear that if the Land Board *accepts* the EIS as it has been submitted, then when the time comes for the Army to request a new lease for these lands, and the Kapa'akai Analysis is not done for the EIS, CIS, and CIA, it will be too late to ask for the Analysis then.

We believe that to accurately complete the Kapa'akai Analysis, the Army must conform with the concerns brought up by the DLNR Land Division in their submittal – including efforts made to consult with the correct kupuna who are lineal, generational and cultural descendants, as well as members of the Public Trust of the Hamakua, Hilo, Kohala and Kona Moku of Moku O Keawe on the existing conditions of Pohakuloa, how to address these conditions for future preservation and protection of this wahi pana.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to share our testimony and thoughts with this Land Board. As the EIS as submitted stands, we ask that the Land Board deny and **NOT ACCEPT** this document.

Respectfully yours,

Leimana DaMate, Luna Alaka'i/Executive Director

Hawaii State Aha Moku

808-640-1214

Leimana.k.damate@hawaii.gov

Charles Young, Po'o, Moku O Keawe

Hawaii State Aha Moku Advisory Committee

808-987-9052

Youngc042@hawaii.rr.com

From: [Ginger Lua](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:50:25 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli in the diaspora and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR’s kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai‘i’s natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha ‘āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your

deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka ‘oia‘i‘o,

Ginger Kwan
Alameda, CA 94501
Kanaka Maoli

From: [Aulii Ludington](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:36:54 PM

Aloha Land Board Members,

I am writing to express my **strong** opposition to the U.S. Army's proposed retention of leased lands at Pōhakuloa Training Area, and to urge the land board to reject the Army's EIS.

Pōhakuloa is not just a piece of land—it is a wahi pana, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable Native Hawaiian cultural sites and some of Hawai'i's most endangered species. The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land, and the FEIS fails to meaningfully address these concerns.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the burning of nearly 20,000 acres, including designated critical habitat for native flora and fauna. This is absolutely unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation of the land and water.

Military training activities of this scale are simply not compatible with conservation, cultural integrity, or aloha 'āina.

Enough is enough.

The EIS is insufficient and should be rejected on several grounds:

- Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis
- Lack of a sufficient plan to mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources
- Concerns about depleted uranium on the site have gone unaddressed
- Military usage is incompatible with the conservation district designation
- The approval of the EIS ultimately conflicts with the BLNR's constitutional

duty mālama ‘āina

I urge the members of the land board to respect the land, the culture, and the people of Hawai‘i by rejecting the Army’s FEIS for Pōhakuloa. It’s time to return these lands and begin a real process of healing and restoration.

Me ka pono,
Auli‘i Ludington

From: [Emily Luke](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda Item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:11:52 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Emily and I respectfully urge you to do the right thing, and reject the clearly insufficient FEIS in Item D-1.

This FEIS disregards clear Hawaii law, as even DLNR staff repeatedly point out in the staff submittal. The Army is not above the law, and yet they refuse to address basic legal requirements, such as analyzing the environmental and cultural impacts that will take place on federal lands, and completing basic surveys so that a true objective assessment can be made about the impacts of proposed Army "retention" of aina in Pohakuloa.

Please uphold the law, and your mission, and reject this incomplete and unlawful document.

Accordingly, I urge you to please REJECT the FEIS put forward in Agenda Item D-1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Emily Luke

From: [Tamara Luthy](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Testimony: The EIS for the Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:38:18 PM

Aloha Land Board Members,

I write to urge you to oppose the renewal of the U.S. Army's lease for the Pōhakuloa Training Area. The Army's continued failure to be good stewards of the land and lack of good-faith engagement with the Native Hawaiian community leave no reasonable justification for the lease renewal.

Pōhakuloa is a sacred and storied wahi pana, home to irreplaceable Native Hawaiian cultural sites and some of Hawaiʻi's most endangered species. The Army's actions have resulted in the burning of nearly 20,000 acres, including designated critical habitats. This ecological devastation, combined with the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area, raises serious concerns about environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation.

The Army's Environmental Impact Statement fails to provide a sufficient plan for mitigating these impacts. Given their track record of cleaning up debris and caring for the site, it is unrealistic to expect the Army to comply with the requirements of a conservation district.

As affirmed by the Hawaiʻi Supreme Court (*Kahaulelio v. DLNR*, 2019), the State has a "highest duty" to preserve and maintain trust lands rooted in the constitutional obligation to mālama ʻāina. This duty is proactive and preventative, existing even without proven lease violations.

The Court found that the State breached its constitutional trust duties by failing to: monitor and inspect trust lands at Pōhakuloa, ensure compliance with cleanup and safety provisions, take timely action on contamination or violations, and provide transparency to the public.

Additionally, ongoing military exercises stir up depleted uranium in the soil, which is linked to cancer and other severe health impacts. It is challenging to conceive of any military use compatible with the site's conservation designation. Proposed military uses threaten the native flora, fauna, and cultural resources, including endangered species, with no specific mitigation measures outlined in the EIS.

In light of these concerns, I implore you to uphold your constitutional obligation and deny the Army's lease renewal for the Pōhakuloa Training Area. The protection of Hawaiʻi's natural and cultural resources must take precedence over military operations that pose a significant threat to this treasured land.

Sincerely,

Tamara Luthy, PhD

Honolulu, Hawai‘i

Tamara Luthy, PhD
Alum, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
Department of Anthropology
she/her/hers

From: [Auli'i Mahuna](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item D1 Opposition - 'Auli'i Mahuna
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:04:43 PM

Aloha Land Board Members:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the U.S. Army's proposed retention of leased lands at Pōhakuloa Training Area, and to urge the land board to reject the Army's EIS.

Pōhakuloa is not just a piece of land—it is a wahi pana, a sacred and storied place, home to irreplaceable Native Hawaiian cultural sites and some of Hawai'i's most endangered species. The Army has not demonstrated the capacity or will to serve as a proper steward of this land, and the FEIS fails to meaningfully address these concerns.

For example, the Army's actions have already resulted in the burning of nearly 20,000 acres, including designated critical habitat for native flora and fauna. This is unacceptable. Additionally, the ongoing use of live-fire and bombing in the impact area raises serious concerns about environmental contamination, safety, and long-term degradation of both the land and water.

Military training activities of this scale are simply not compatible with conservation, cultural integrity, or aloha 'āina. Enough is enough.

The EIS is insufficient and should be rejected on several grounds:

Inadequate Environmental and Cultural Impact Analysis

Lack of a sufficient plan to mitigate impacts to cultural and natural resources

Concerns about depleted uranium on the site have gone unaddressed

Military usage is incompatible with the conservation district designation

The approval of the EIS ultimately conflicts with the BLNR's constitutional duty mālama 'āina

I urge the members of the land board to respect the land, the culture, and

the people of Hawai'i by rejecting the Army's FEIS for Pōhakuloa. It's time to return these lands and begin a real process of healing and restoration.

Sincerely,

‘Auli‘i ‘Iolana ‘Ōhi‘aLaka Mahuna

Mai ka ahupua‘a o Pu‘ukapu ma ka moku o Waimea, ma ka mokupuni o Hawai‘i

From: [Aku Maka](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa
Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 10:54:10 PM

'Both the ethnocide and ecocide the Pacific Islands continue to face are a result of militarization in the service of continued exploitation and control by powerful nations of the Global North...'

-Spencer, Fentress, Touch, Hernandez

"In the Pacific we find stolen lands a plenty, stolen kingdoms, islands transformed into fortresses, bodies and lands poisoned through military testing and an array of colonial bodies shipped off to war."

-Na'puti & Bevacqua

We demand you leave the island of Hawaii bc it's next to our sacred sites like Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, Kilauea & much more

Military knows what they are doing to kānaka maoli, that this is environmental injustice, environmental racism yet their cruelty & entitlement knows no end

We should not have to explain why this needs to end now

I find it interesting that we never hear about Military polluting any of the other 49 states

From: [Aku Maka](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa
Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 10:48:06 PM

- Military activities, including training exercises and the use of munitions, have caused pollution and damage to the natural environment, including soil and water contamination.
- Displacement of Communities:
Military land use has resulted in the displacement of residents from their homes and the destruction of cultural sites.
- Impact on Native Hawaiian Health:
The military's presence has been linked to negative health outcomes among Native Hawaiians, such as increased rates of stress and mental health problems.
- Violence in the Military:
Domestic violence and other forms of violence within the military are also a concern
- Military prey on natives

From: [Aku Maka](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa
Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 10:44:41 PM

The environmental impacts of such widespread presence
are far-reaching.

According to the

Environmental Defense Fund, 2002 rankings of major chemical releases and waste generation, Honolulu County ranks in the top 20% of the

"dirtiest/worst counties in the U.S." for total environmental releases." Military installations make up five of the top ten polluters in Hawaii.

' More than 798 military contamination sites have been identified by a report prepared for Congress, entitled the 2004 Defense and Restoration Program. Currently, there are three "Superfund" locations™ in Honolulu County.

"Superfund" is a deceptively benign sounding term for areas that are defined by the significant dangers they impose upon the environment and the population due to abandoned or uncontrolled waste. Two out of the three sites are associated with the U.S. military, including the U.S. Pacific Command Naval Computer and Telecommunications area, and the Pearl Harbor Naval Complex.

The Impact of the Military Presence in Hawai'i on the Health of Na Kanaka Maoli

Kalamaoka'aina Niheu, MD*

Laurel Mei Turbin, MPH**

Seiji Yamada, MD, MPH***

Subject: Testimony Opposing Agenda Item Regarding Final EIS for Pōhakuloa Training Area – May 9, 2025

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Jamie Martinez , and I am writing in strong opposition to the acceptance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Pōhakuloa Training Area and the proposed renewal of the U.S. Army's lease.

Pōhakuloa is a conservation district, a wahi pana, and home to one of the last remaining sub-alpine tropical dryland ecosystems on Earth. It is also a sacred cultural landscape, holding spiritual and historical significance for Kānaka 'Ōiwi. For over 60 years, the military has desecrated this 'āina—bombing it, contaminating it with depleted uranium, sparking wildfires, and violating the terms of the original \$1 lease granted in 1964.

The Final EIS is grossly dishonest. It fails to fully acknowledge decades of environmental destruction, cultural harm, and community opposition. It assumes future compliance without reckoning with the military's historical neglect and repeated disregard for both state law and the county resolutions passed in 2008 demanding a halt to live fire and cleanup of existing contamination.

The courts have already ruled that the State has failed to care for this land. Approving this EIS and renewing the lease without proper accountability would not only violate your trust responsibilities, it would enable further desecration of a place that should never have been used for war training in the first place.

I urge the BLNR to reject the Final EIS and deny the lease renewal. Pōhakuloa is not a bombing range. It is sacred, and it is time for it to be healed, not further destroyed.

Please stand for the 'āina. Reject the Final EIS.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Jamie Martinez

.

From: [Jules McCarty](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] EIS 2025 rejection
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:06:18 PM

As a citizen oh Hawaii island, I reject the army's EIS for pōhākioloa.

Environment risks have been downplayed

The protection of cultural and natural resources has been ignored

Enraged species list, fire risks, evaluation of alternatives, has not been adequately addressed and the long term effects on the aquifers, endangered plants and animals, and air quality has been downplayed.

Community opposition has been ignored.

Let us not forget that The Kingdom of Hawaii is under belligerent illegal occupation by the US and US military. The US military has no right to the land, and no right to destroy the land.

Land back now,

Julee McCarty

--

Jules McCarty (she,they)

From: [Jewels McClintock](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:24:08 PM

Aloha! My name is Jewels and I'm a 14th year old student on 'Oahu. I **do not** want the lease renewed for Pohakuloa or any other US base on our 'Āina because it is part of us in every way. We are connected to the 'Āina in every way possible, from the ground to the sky. Our ancestors have been here since day 1 and created life on this island. They've been buried in caves around our island and YOU want to bomb it up for some reason. It makes no sense for you to do that to someone else's home that you kicked out of. How would you feel if we kicked you out of your own home just to mess it up and leave it in shreds and ruined? You have no right to do this at all without our own right after all that we fight for. And our own people can't live on their homeland anymore because they can't afford it because of YOU. My own friend/classmate was priced out and moved to Utah because she can't afford it because you raised prices while you unoccupied our land with no price. Tomorrow I won't let you take over my home, my land, my 'āina that my people have been living on for many years. I would not watch my culture die for a group of people's opinions over many other Hawaiians who don't want this. Again, I **DO NOT** want the lease renamed for the US military at Pohakuloa or any other case!!!

Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana
1733 Wili Pa Loop, B-1
Wailuku, Hawai‘i 96793

May 8, 2025

Chair and members of the
Board of Land and Natural Resources



Re: Final EIS for Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area

The Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana offers the following testimony and strongly urges the Board of Land and Natural Resources to **reject** the U.S. Army’s Final Environmental Impact Statement for “Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area.”

The Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana is a grassroots nonprofit organization formed in 1976 and dedicated to the island of Kaho‘olawe and the principles of Aloha ‘Āina throughout Hawai‘i. In our work to heal Kaho‘olawe after nearly 50 years of desecration due to live-fire activities conducted by the U.S. Navy, we pay respect to, and strengthen our relationship with the land. We also work to protect the natural and cultural resources of our ancestral lands on the other islands throughout Hawai‘i and Moananuiākea.

The island of Kaho‘olawe serves as a cautionary tale of the destruction and subsequent ineptitude for remediation the U.S. Military has historically demonstrated in Hawai‘i and that should not be repeated at Pōhakuloa.

Throughout the FEIS, the Army fails to “fully declare environmental implications of the proposed action and . . . discuss all reasonably foreseeable consequences of the action.” Hawai‘i Administrative Rules (HAR) 11-200.1-24.

First, the Army fails to provide a complete inventory of archeological sites within the State-leased lands in light of the adverse impacts the Navy’s presence had on archeological sites on Kaho‘olawe.¹ [EIS Vol. 1](#) at 3-75–77; [Staff Submittal](#) at 13. The Army admits previous military training in the PTA has had adverse impacts on historic properties there and that continued use of PTA for military training “may also continue to impact resources through accidental damage.” [EIS Vol. 1](#) at 3-76. Without a full inventory of the culturally and historically significant sites in the area, the Board cannot consider the full impacts the proposed action could have. To add to the full discussion of potential impacts, the Army should disclose all sites that have already been impacted by the Army’s historic activities at PTA. Given the Army’s failure to provide the Board with a complete inventory of cultural or historic sites that may be impacted by the Army’s renewed lease of public lands, the

¹ Although Kaho‘olawe was placed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1981 considering over 540 traditional sites identified throughout the island, many of these sites were either partially damaged or destroyed by the Navy’s training activities.

Board does not have a full range of impacts to discuss the foreseeable consequences of accepting the FEIS. Therefore, the Board must reject the FEIS.

Second, the FEIS does not include comments from two key agencies about potential impacts on water resources—the Commission on Water Resource Management and the Division of Aquatic Resources. The issue of water is important to the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana because the Navy’s activities on Kaho‘olawe resulted in permanent damage to the island’s aquifer. Moreover, the island’s lack of vegetation has made its near-shore reefs susceptible to the impacts of runoff. Insights from CWRM could inform the Board about the agency’s perspectives on the proposed action’s impacts on surface water or the Waimea and Anaeho‘omalu aquifer systems that the State-leased lands are located above. This is especially important considering the FEIS does not find that soil contaminants within the PTA would impact ground or surface water and pollutant migration due to erosion and runoff would not have significant environmental impacts. [EIS Vol. 1](#) at 3-43, -112,-119. DAR’s input is also critical to inform the Board as to how contaminants migrating by runoff from PTA’s State-leased lands could impact aquatic resources in Kōhala and Kona. The FEIS appears to lack any substantive discussion regarding the potential impacts to aquatic resources. Without meaningful input from the relevant agencies on how the proposed action would impact water resources, the Board cannot discuss the foreseeable consequences. Thus, the Board should reject the FEIS.

Third, The US military has failed to demonstrate that they are able to adequately clean up areas of Hawai‘i after use and contamination of these precious ‘āina. On the island of Kaho‘olawe, the U.S. Navy signed a Memorandum of Understanding on May 6, 1994 committing to clean 100 percent of the island's surface of unexploded ordnance and 30 percent of the island to a depth of four feet. They cleared 77 percent of the surface, of which 9 percent was to a depth of 4 feet. 23 percent of the island and all of the surrounding ocean has not been cleared. At Pohakuloa, the impact area (approximately 51,000 acres) has been impacted by tens of millions of live rounds, including depleted uranium. Not only is the record keeping regarding unexploded ordnance in the Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) inadequate and unavailable, there has never been any demonstration that the U.S. Army can and will clean the landscape.

Finally, the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana also takes issue with the Army’s failure to consult the ‘Aha Moku Council for Hawai‘i Island despite strong encouragement on multiple occasions from BLNR’s Chair. [Staff Submittal](#) at 31. The stories of kūpuna who retain invaluable knowledge about cultural practices of an area are critical to the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian identity and our connection to ‘āina. Without consulting the kūpuna of Waimea who are active practitioners at PTA, the Army’s FEIS, by its own omission, does not provide the Board with a full range of

environmental impacts the proposed action might have. On these grounds, the Board should also reject the FEIS.

In light of the reasons provided above, as well as the multiple concerns stated in the Department's staff submittal with comments from various agencies, the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana strongly urges the Board to reject the FEIS.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter for the future of Hawai'i.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Davianna B. McGregor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Davianna" being the most prominent part.

Davianna Pōmaika'i McGregor, PhD
Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana

From: [Riley Mendoza](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:14:34 PM

Aloha, my name is Riley, and I'm a **14 year old on O'ahu**. I **don't** want the lease renewed for Pohakuloa or any other US base on our land and 'āina because I **do not** want to blow up or ruin my home, land, or ancestors and kapa items. This is not your land, I will continue to protest. In closing, I **don't** want the lease renewed for the US military at Pohakuloa or any other base.

From: [nate m.](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:57:03 PM

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha ‘āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your

deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'ōia'i'o,
Nathanial Jared Montalbo
Pleasanton, CA
Kanaka Oiwi / Cultural Practitioner / Descendant of na lii
Nathanial0207@gmail.com

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Subject: Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned constituent and as someone who has experience being in the Pōhakuloa Training Area, I urge your **firm rejection** of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

As I have experience being at the base, and seeing the desecration being done onto this land on a first hand account. Seeing that even designated conservation regions on base are riddled with abandoned UXOs, left to degrade from decades prior, sometimes directly next to critically endangered species. Some of these species only exist within the base. There is not even a proper protocol for when these abandoned UXOs are found in conservation areas, which would explain why there are graveyards of them throughout the base - again, in regions which are supposed to be 100% designated for conservation efforts. While none of these are recent to my knowledge, from the looks of these UXOs, some of these have been abandoned possibly since the genesis of the base.

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of **this EIS does not represent responsible stewardship**, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of Native Hawaiians homelands.

I offer this testimony on behalf to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. **Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites**

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

2. **Environmental Irreversibility**

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, disrupted fragile ecosystems, and has the potential to possibly damage our aquifers. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. **Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.**

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of Hawaiian homelands.

The time to act is now. **Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers.** And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

Giulia Marenco di Moriondo
Hilo, HI

From: [halia.nahalea](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for REJECTING Agenda Item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:54:59 PM

*Aloha e Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,
My name is Hali'a Nahale-a and I respectfully urge you to do the right thing, and reject the
clearly insufficient FEIS in Item D-1.*

*Native Hawaiians have long borne a disproportionate burden in witnessing Pōhakuloa's
sacred 'āina be bombed, poisoned, and desecrated - for generations. The US Congress
itself, in the 1993 Apology Resolution, recognized the intrinsic and unique relationship
between the well-being of the Hawaiian people and their connection to 'āina. Yet the FEIS
fails to account for the deep psychological, spiritual, and physical harms that will continue to
be borne by the Native Hawaiian community in particular, should their demands for justice,
healing, and reconnection with ancestral (and illegally stolen) 'āina at Pōhakuloa be ignored
for another 65 years or longer.*

*Please reject this FEIS, to ensure that the Army fully accounts for the harms it has and will
continue to inflict with its "retention" proposal, including to the Native Hawaiian community.
Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.*

Sincerely,

Hali'a Nahale-a

From: [D. Ongory](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:11:52 PM

To: Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this 'āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Darylyn Ongory
Hawaii island
808-769-8971

God Bless you, Darylyn Ongory

From: [Lomana Opunui-Kissinger](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pōhakuloa testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:22:34 PM

Aloha I am Lomana a 13 year old student from a school on O'ahu I don't want the lease renewed for Pohakuloa. There are never ending reasons why I do **NOT** want this to happen. What is the point of keeping this place that's been around for thousands of years. This is where our ancestors and our food are planted. To use it to bomb and destroy our 'āina. There are no words to describe how this makes me feel. You've destroyed caves where our ancestors' bones lay. You are destroying our land, our 'āina and you continue to do so. Is that what you really want for our future? I'm so very sure that's not what I want. Not what the people of Hawai'i. I'm begging that you please make the right choice. Think of the people of Hawai'i as what they would want. This isn't even bringing up the fact the US does not own Hawai'i we are not supposed to be a state. That's a whole different Argument. In closing I do not want this to happen to our native lands. SO please consider my testimony and the many others I'm sure are sent.

From: [Melody Ozuna](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda Item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:48:48 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Melody Ozuna and I respectfully urge you to REJECT the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in Agenda Item D-1.

As outlined in the DLNR staff submittal, this FEIS is fundamentally flawed. It fails to include critical biological and archaeological surveys, overlooks serious environmental impacts to federal lands, and minimizes the significant threats posed to endangered native birds, wildlife, and ecosystems.

Accepting this incomplete and inadequate document opens the door to irreversible harm — including the loss of native species, damage to iwi kūpuna, and destruction of historic properties. These are not small oversights; they represent deep and immeasurable threats to the public trust and to Hawai‘i’s cultural and natural heritage.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to do what is pono and reject the FEIS in Item D-1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,
Melody

From: [Jayzen Pahia](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:17:33 PM

Aloha, My name is Jayzen and I

am 10 years old **I DO**

NOT want the lease

renewal for pohakuloa or any other US base on our 'Āina because to us Hawaiians the 'Āina was really important because we had important burials over there. I do not want the lease renewal for the US military at pohakuloa or any other base.

From: [Polly Parkinson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BLNR must reject the FEIS
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:45:30 PM

Dear BLNR,

Greetings and peace to you all. Please hear my concerns.

Basic questions are left unanswered on the FEIS and new information presented in the FEIS only serves to raise more questions. Because the Army's FEIS fails to meet the basic standard of informing the public about the consequences of potential actions, the BLNR must reject the FEIS.

- 1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.
- 2) Potential and means to restore these lands.
- (3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.
- (4) Why can't the Army start cleaning up now?
- (5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?
- (6) Could contaminants have impacts on humans
- (7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA
- 8) Fire dangers
- 9) Greenhouse gases disclosure
10. Mitigation plans needed

The Army's FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai'i's land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.
Polly Parkinson

From: [Keala Pitoy](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reject Pohakuloa EIS
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:57:36 PM

Aloha,

Please reject Pohakuloa EIS.

Mahalo,
Ke'ala Pitoy
Hawaii Island Resident
(808) 969-9098
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Delilah Propios-Mahaulu](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony For Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:20:17 PM

Testimony

Aloha my name is Delilah And I am a 14 year old student on oáhu.I do NOT want the lease to be renewed for Pohakuloa.Or any other U.S. Base on our 'aina Because Its unnecessary to blow up things on kapu (sacred) land.How would you feel if someone went to your grandparents and great grandparents grave and blew it up for no reason.How would you like it if someone disrespected you and where you come from because they wanted to blow up stuff.I know you know that the bombs work so what's the point of wasting it.It's honestly BS that you do this if feel the need to blow something up do it in the mainland why are you destroying our land where in your mind do you think that's ok.It's not.your poisoning our water and destroying our soil.So just stop.

In conclusion I do NOT want the lease renewed for the U.S. Military at Pohakuloa or any other base ever again.what would your kids think if they knew what you were doing to us???

Sincerely,Delilah

From: [Heather Quintana](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reject Army's FEIS for Pohakuloa Training Area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:04:57 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and members of the Board

My name is Heather Quintana, a resident of Hawaii Island, and biological science specialist with experience working with the US Army at Pohakuloa Training Area.

I am writing to urge the board to uphold their kuleana, and reject the US Army's clearly inadequate FEIS, agenda item D-1 at tomorrow's meeting.

The FEIS fails to address biological and cultural impacts of the US Army's activities, so much so that the board can not possibly uphold its due diligence in making informed decisions about our resource protections.

I have witnessed the desecration of aina at Pohakuloa first-hand, and been personally affected by the US Army's blatant disregard for safety of civilian contractors working there. They are not acting in good faith putting forward this document. We must demand better of them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Heather Quintana

From: Clante Quintero <clantequintero@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 7:50 AM
To: DLNR.BLNR.Testimony <blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov>
Subject:

Aloha my name is Clante Quintero.

As a student of Hawaiian values and history, I stand against Agenda Item D-1. The Army didn't consult with Native voices or conduct proper surveys. This violates our rights and our laws. Reject this FEIS.

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Clante Quintero <clantequintero@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 7:49 AM
To: DLNR.BLNR.Testimony <blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov>
Subject:

Aloha my name is Clante Quintero.

We are the future of Hawai'i. As a Hawaiian student, I believe our voices matter. The Army's FEIS silences our community and skips cultural consultation. Reject Agenda Item D-1 and protect our 'āina.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Clante Quintero <clantequintero@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 7:49 AM
To: DLNR.BLNR.Testimony <blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov>
Subject:

Aloha my name is Clante Quintero.

I'm a proud Native Hawaiian student learning how to care for our 'āina. The FEIS ignores the cultural significance of Pōhakuloa and fails to follow state laws. Do what's right—reject Agenda Item D-1.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kiope Raymond](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:00:31 PM

Aloha Chair Case and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing to urge you to reject the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) submitted by the U.S. Army in support of its proposal to continue occupying 22,750 acres of public trust lands at the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) on Hawai'i Island.

This FEIS fails to meet the basic requirements of Hawai'i's environmental review laws and does not provide the public or this Board with the information needed to make an informed, lawful decision. Rather than address valid concerns raised during the draft process, the Army's final document raises more red flags, avoids key questions, and withholds critical data.

Key issues that warrant immediate rejection include:

- Confirmed toxic contamination of state lands from lead, arsenic, petroleum compounds, and other munitions constituents—with no clear plan or commitment for cleanup.
- A failure to conduct comprehensive soil and groundwater testing, despite known risks of contamination spreading through highly permeable soils and shallow aquifers.
- Lack of transparency, as the Army refuses to disclose Standard Operating Procedures it claims limit contamination.
- Failure to assess human health risks, especially for nearby communities and cultural practitioners with potential exposure to contaminated air, soil, and water.
- No cumulative impact analysis of the full 132,000-acre PTA operation, which artificially narrows the scope of environmental review.

- Acknowledged ongoing fire risks, with over 1,000 fires caused by military activities since 1975, threatening fragile species like the Palila.
- Incomplete greenhouse gas data, while making unsupported claims about climate impacts.

This FEIS does not meet the legal or ethical standards for protecting Hawai'i's lands, waters, ecosystems, or communities. It would be irresponsible for the Board to accept a document that sidesteps so many critical issues and puts future generations at risk.

I ask you to reject this FEIS and require the Army to conduct a full and lawful environmental review, with transparent data, community accountability, and a credible cleanup and mitigation plan.

Sincerely,

Stanley H. Kī'ope Raymond
Waiakoa, Kula, Maui

President, Kilakila 'o Haleakalā
kioperaymond@gmail.com

Retired Professor of Hawaiian Studies at UHMC
kiope@hawaii.edu

--

Stanley H. Kī'ope Raymond
(808) 280-5149

Aloha and good morning. I'm COL Rachel Sullivan, Commander of U.S. Army Garrison Hawai'i. I am responsible for all the U.S. Army installations in Hawai'i. Joining me today are LTC Tim Alvarado, Commander of Pōhakuloa Training Area, and Alice Roberts, program manager for the Army training land retention effort.

Thank you all for the opportunity to sit before you and provide testimony in support of acceptance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area. I would like to briefly highlight some of the reasons why the Army needs to retain the use of the state-owned lands.

Because of its location, the State of Hawai'i is vital for national defense as a logistics hub and for rapid troop deployment. The Army's presence in Hawai'i is vital to our nation's strategy to deter conflict and maintain a safe, stable, and secure Indo-Pacific. This could not be more important than it is right now from a national security perspective and given the current state of the Pacific region.

The mission of PTA is to serve as a quality joint/combined arms facility that provides logistics, public works, and airfield capabilities in support of the U.S. Army Pacific training strategy while maintaining an enduring partnership with the Hawai'i Island community and upholding environmental and cultural stewardship.

The state-owned land provides access between the major parcels of U.S. Government-owned land at PTA and includes maneuver areas, training facilities, infrastructure, and U.S. Government-owned utilities that are essential for military, state, and local agency training. Some of these assets are not available elsewhere within Hawai'i.

PTA is used by the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Army Reserve, and Hawai'i Army and Air National Guard. It is the primary tactical training area for Hawai'i-based units and supports joint and multi-national training to ensure that the U.S. military and allied nations can effectively work together.

PTA is particularly important to the U.S. military because it is the largest contiguous live-fire range and maneuver training area in Hawai'i. It is the only area in Hawai'i that supports larger-unit live-fire and maneuver training, and the only training area in Hawai'i able to support weapons systems training at maximum capabilities.

Training forces to the highest standard is critical for readiness, preparedness, and safety. Troops need to be proficient in required weapon systems.

With the pause of live-fire training at Mākua in 2004, and the recent Army decision to end all live-fire training at Mākua, PTA is critical both for achieving the highest standard for Army training and for meeting weapon system requirements. This cannot be done elsewhere in Hawai‘i.

PTA is also used for training by State and local government agencies, such as the Hawai‘i Police Department, Hawai‘i Civil Defense Agency, State Office of Homeland Security, Hawai‘i Emergency First-Responders, and Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency. Over the last 5 years, approximately 300 HPD officers trained at PTA, and PTA was used for more than 13,000 hours of training by Hawai‘i fire departments from all islands. This included 350 firefighters and new recruits.

In summary, PTA is a critical training facility and the state-owned land is an integral component of that critical need.

I will now turn it over to Alice Roberts, who will briefly discuss the final EIS and can answer questions related to the HEPA-compliant final EIS submission.

My name is Alice Roberts. I am the program manager for the Army training land retention effort and will discuss the EIS and address any questions that the board may have about the project or the EIS submission.

The Army currently leases 23,000 acres of land at Pōhakuloa Training Area from the State of Hawai‘i. The leases expire in 2029. For everyone’s awareness, the EIS process is one of the steps in a multi-year real estate process. The EIS process has allowed the Army to be transparent and has also given the Army the opportunity to hear comments and recommendations from reviewing agencies and the public.

The Army began the scoping process for environmental compliance in 2019, at which time state officials provided input on the Army’s approach to applying the Hawai‘i Environmental Policy Act, or HEPA. Following the Army’s Environmental Impact Statement Preparation Notice in the fall of 2020, a 40-day public scoping comment period was held along with a virtual open house. Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) correspondence indicated the Land Division had no scoping comments.

In April 2022, the Army published the Draft EIS for the PTA land retention effort. The Army published a second draft in response to a request from DLNR Land Division to address comments received from the public and from state and federal agencies on the Draft EIS. This allowed additional public review. For those of you who

reviewed and provided comments throughout the public engagement process, we thank you for your comments and your participation.

The EIS team worked diligently to ensure that all comments were reviewed, and that substantive comments were adequately addressed in the second draft. Some changes that were made from the first draft included revising the proposed action to no longer retain 250 acres of land administered by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, and analyzing the impacts of a lease retention method in addition to the impacts of a fee simple retention method. Following public meetings and receipt of additional public comments, the final EIS was developed. The Hawai'i Environmental Review Program published it on April 23, 2025.

The proposed action – the Army's retention of approximately 22,750 acres – is a real estate transaction that allows for the continuation of military activities, including training, and conservation management of the cultural and natural resources for which we have the privilege of caring. The Army is not proposing new construction or changes in military training. It should be stressed that all training currently conducted has been subject to prior NEPA analyses and resulted in mitigation measures, many of which are ongoing. The NEPA compliance for ongoing training is documented in tables ES-1 and 3-1, and is fully described in Appendix E of the final EIS.

The final EIS examines the impacts of retaining leased land, either through fee simple title or a new lease, to determine how much land should be retained, and whether impacts vary by retention method. The final EIS does not make a recommendation on how the land should be retained – i.e., fee or lease.

The final EIS applies compliance with applicable regulations, best management practices, and standard operating procedures to the analysis before making impact conclusions. If compliance with applicable regulations and implementation of existing best management practices and standard operating procedures is insufficient to lessen the intensity of an impact, project-specific mitigation measures have been recommended to actively avoid or minimize new adverse impacts.

The final EIS indicates that under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, which varied by the amount of land retained, significant adverse impacts could occur on land use (land tenure), biological resources, cultural practices, and environmental justice. The Army has identified measures in the final EIS to mitigate these adverse impacts. The No-Action Alternative, wherein the lease would simply expire, could have significant adverse impacts on biological resources, socioeconomics, and utilities, significant beneficial impacts on land use, cultural practices, and environmental justice, and less-than-significant impacts on all other resources.

The Army believes that all HEPA requirements have been met and notes that the 2019 update to the HEPA rules allows federal NEPA EISs to be submitted to comply with HEPA as long as other requirements (for example, a cultural impact statement) are complete. The Army has carefully cross-walked the NEPA/HEPA requirements throughout the document to make it easier for the reader to track compliance.

With regard to DLNR Land Division comments on perceived shortcomings of the final EIS, the Army offers the following responses:

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

LACK OF EVALUATION OF PTA IMPACT AREA FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Army has previously conducted National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation for the continued use of the impact area with the acknowledgment that intensive pedestrian survey cannot be conducted within the high-hazard impact area. The programmatic agreement was signed in 2018; the state, Native Hawaiian organizations, and lineal descendants are parties to that agreement. Please note that portions of the duded impact area have been surveyed for cultural resources, and one burial site has been documented and is currently protected through avoidance (with a large buffer) during training. Although DLNR asserts that U.S. Army Garrison Hawai'i (USAG-HI) was directed early in the process to consider the impact area, the Army has no record of that assertion and, as I indicated before, no comments were received from DLNR during scoping.

INCOMPLETE CULTURAL SURVEY OF STATE-LEASED LANDS

To date, approximately 83,000 acres of land at PTA has been subject to intensive pedestrian survey, to include the majority of the state-owned land.

In July 2020, Dr. Downer, then Administrator of State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD), agreed that existing surveys could be used to fulfill the requirements of the proposed action. Approximately 16,000 acres of leased land have been subject to intensive archaeological survey. Approximately 2,000 acres have not been surveyed due to an historic a'ā lava flow, which is dangerous to survey on foot and is unlikely to contain cultural resources; and approximately 1,600 acres were subject to aerial survey (in the western portion of the state land currently fenced for plant conservation). The steep, talus foot slope of Mauna Kea has also not been subject to an intensive pedestrian survey due to the degree of slope and difficulty traversing, and is also unlikely to contain

cultural resources. The stringent requirement proposed by DLNR is contrary to findings for prior applicants (for example, the East Maui Water Lease), where aerial and windshield survey was found sufficient.

To date, 105 archaeological sites have been identified and recorded in detail on leased land. Traditional Hawaiian sites (n=79) consist of: 29 lava tubes with evidence of habitation; 26 volcanic glass quarries; 7 pahoehoe pit complexes interpreted to represent procurement of uʻau (Hawaiian petrel); 6 habitation complexes (1 with pictographs); 2 trails; 2 ahu; and 7 artifact scatters. Remaining archaeological sites include historic ranching features (walls, enclosures, mounds) and indeterminate features (mounds, walls, c-shapes) for which a cultural affiliation determination is difficult.

Also, within the leased lands are 4 sites with iwi kūpuna that are preserved in place and that have special protections.

WITH RESPECT TO THE DLNR STATEMENTS REGARDING A FIND ON LEASED LANDS IN 2022 THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT (NAGPRA), THE ARMY IS PROVIDING CLARIFYING INFORMATION

In July 2022, objects were identified in a lava tube on leased lands; and DLNR, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Hawaiʻi Island Burial Council and consulting parties were notified within one business day. Consulting parties and lineal descendants visited the site with USAG-HI cultural staff in August 2022. Because of an ongoing wildland fire, the consulting parties requested that the items be removed to the Army curation facility at PTA. Consulting parties indicated that they did not want photographs of the items or for them to be shown to anyone else. Following a consultation meeting in February 2023, Army staff met with DLNR and SHPD to discuss the finds and there was agreement that the Army would continue to follow the NAGPRA process. In January 2024, a joint NAGPRA claim was received from the lineal descendants. The Army moved forward and published a Notice of Intended Disposition in the Federal Register in March 2024. Subsequently, one of the consulting parties split from the joint claim with a competing claim. In October 2024, it was determined that the joint claim was more clearly supported and the Army requested that DLNR concur with that finding. In February 2025, DLNR informed the Army that the matter must go before BLNR for decision and requested a full inventory of artifacts collected from leased lands, which was provided in March 2025. In April 2025, the Land Division notified the Army that the preference is to delay the BLNR hearing until the EISs have gone through acceptability hearings. The stated intention of the claimants is to return the artifacts to their original location.

WITH REGARD TO THE INVENTORIES OF ARTIFACTS MAINTAINED IN ARMY CURATION FACILITY AT PTA

~ 43% collected by UH field school in 1997-1998

~ 8% collected as part of saddle road expansion project (Daniel K. Inouye Highway or DKI) 1990

~ 49% collected as part of NHPA Section 106 site evaluation for determination of function and protective measures

Majority are samples (charcoal, faunal material, kukui nut, lithic debris)

Contrary to statements in the Board submittal, removal of artifacts does not inherently damage them, and is a critical component of archaeological research to interpret sites (i.e., to date the use of the site, to determine what was being consumed at the sites, to assess the activities occurring at a site, and in some cases – such as with the wildfire described above – to protect the artifacts).

LACK OF NHPA SECTION 106 CONSULTATION FOR PROPOSED ACTION

As previously noted, the proposed action would be consistent with the NHPA. For ongoing activities facilitated by the proposed action, mitigation measures have been established through a Programmatic Agreement (PA) executed with the SHPD and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in 2018. The 2018 NHPA Section 106 PA for PTA resolves adverse effects on historic and cultural resources that may result from ongoing military and related activities at PTA, including those activities on the state-owned land. The PA is a 15-year agreement that will remain in effect until at least 2033 and includes a process to extend the life of the agreement.

This concern is linked to DLNR's contention that the proposed action is not administrative. The Army firmly disagrees with that notion. The proposed action is a real estate action that is listed in the exemptions list for DLNR under Item 37.

DATA GAPS FOR BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Army has one of the most robust and comprehensive natural resources programs in the state. The natural resources program areas include botanical, wildlife, invasive plants and animals, game management, agricultural grazing, wildland fire support, conservation outreach, and research partnerships.

On its Hawai'i installations, the Army's Natural Resource Staff manages and protects more than 20 endangered plant species (6 of which only occur at PTA), two insect species, one mammal species, and three bird species. They maintain 15 conservation fence units totaling 86 miles of fence protecting 37,000 acres of native habitat that have been ungulate-free since 2017. They also maintain and monitor 14 fuel breaks that extend for a total of 40 miles. Propagation and out-planting of native, threatened, and endangered species is supported by an on-site seed lab and greenhouse.

Furthermore, from fiscal year (FY) 2006 to FY 2023, over \$108.8 million in Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) funding has been granted to community and environmental non-profit organizations and to federal and state agencies to protect, manage, and/or improve over 13,157 acres of USAG-HI and neighboring habitats on both O'ahu and Hawai'i Island.

DLNR expressed concern that the Biological Opinions from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are not current and took issue with the fact that the development of a Programmatic Biological Assessment (PBA), which is in progress, was not detailed in the final EIS. As we have informed DLNR, the existing Biological Opinions (2003, 2008, 2013) are in effect, and the terms of the PBA are still being developed – in consultation with USFWS – to begin in late 2025.

One area of concern for DLNR is the invertebrate populations at PTA, which have not been specifically surveyed in over 20 years. While specific studies have not been completed, invertebrate species are monitored during biological surveys of the installation, which are detailed in the Biennial Report (with a courtesy copy regularly provided to DLNR Department of Forestry and Wildlife). One specific concern DLNR noted is related to the yellow-faced bee (listed in 2016). This is typically a coastal species and only a single specimen has been documented at PTA, which was suspected to have resulted from an accidental transport to the saddle. The other specific concern DLNR noted was the Blackburn's sphinx moth, which was first documented at PTA in 2019. Both species are monitored, but none were observed during the 2021-23 reporting period. One additional note about invertebrate studies: These studies are inherently difficult because invertebrates are seasonal, so species can be challenging to document. Studies must be completed at various times to ensure full coverage. This is precisely why an associated mitigation measure is being proposed.

REFERENCE TO STATEMENTS REGARDING SITE CONTAMINATION AND CLEANUP

The Army completed an Environmental Condition of Property survey in 2017 that examined and tested three active sites and seven formerly-used sites on state-owned land. One of the formerly-used sites – Bazooka Range

– has been cleaned up, with the removal of 35 tons of debris. Of the remaining sites, one had exceedances for total petroleum hydrocarbon at a formerly-used forward arming and refueling point, and one had exceedances for antimony and lead at the active Battle Area Complex Target V-10. The conclusion reached for those sites with exceedances is that site conditions would constrain any further contamination and corrective measures were taken.

During construction of the Battle Area Complex at PTA in 2007, spotting rounds were identified, which led to Army-wide accountability for the Davey Crockett weapon system and the number of rounds used at each installation. Following extensive archival research, it was determined that approximately 400 rounds were issued at 4 ranges at PTA. From 2007-09, research, testing, and surveys were conducted for the 4 ranges to determine if depleted uranium (DU) was present. This included visual ground and aerial surveys for DU spotting rounds and radiation levels, and collection and analysis of dust samples, all of which were within the range of naturally-occurring concentration. From 2009-10, a year-long monitoring effort was conducted with 210 air samples collected, all of which were within the range of naturally-occurring concentration. In 2011, a DU risk assessment was conducted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which concluded that the current land use does not pose a risk to human health for installation users or off-site populations. The State Department of Health concurred with those findings. The DU monitoring plan requires ongoing sampling with results posted on the NRC website.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Army has participated in over 500 community events over the last year, a subset of which were specific to the land retention issue, which are documented in Appendix M of the final EIS. Contrary to the DLNR submittal, Army staff did meet with Aha Moku on two occasions over the last year to gain input and insight, and to identify other Hawai'i Island stakeholders with whom to consult.

From: [Puanani Rogers](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in strong OPPOSITION of an extention for military use at Pohakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:53:57 PM

My name is Puanani Rogers, a living kupuna o Kauai.
I stand in strong opposition of any extentions of permits at Pohakuloa and the use of our lands for war games. Hawai'i is a neutral and peace loving country, we do not condone war exercises on our lands.

Your United States military's presence here has been far too long and have worn out their welcome. They are reserving thousands of acres of our lands and restricts our uses of them and calls us trespassers on our own lands. They have ignored our pleas to stop the blatant destructive uses of our sacred sites and our environment of these lands. They have destroyed our lands and our trust in them. We are outraged by their failures and would like them to stop, clean up their mess, and to de-occupy our nation once and for all.

I live on Kaua'i and the military facility here at Mana, PMRF army is also asking for an extension on their stay here and we are protesting their EIS and the use of Ni'ihau island and are also asking the you stop to bombing of Ka'ula island for their war exercises.

Mahalo for reading my concerns and I remain again, strong in opposition of this issue.
Mahalo and aloha.

Respectfully submitted by
Puanani Rogers, Pelekikena, Women's Patriotic League
Kauai Branch
4702 Mailihuna Road
Kapa'a, HI 96746

From: [anjoli.roy](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:11:17 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**

b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**

c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**

d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it

already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

a. *Can the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it?* In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says “cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action” and “future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown.” **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: “Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land.” **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it's too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

c. The Army said it will comply with the “Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act” (CERCLA), which requires remedial action concerning stored hazardous substances, “necessary to protect human health and the environment with respect to any such substance remaining on the property has been taken before” transferring the land back. However, the Army will not be clear on what this will mean, changing its stance on whether it stores hazardous substances on state lands (see #3c) and refusing to disclose any remediation actions.

(3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.

a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211** The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

b. The EIS does not tell us how much contamination has accumulated, despite these procedures, and its impacts.

c. KAHEA asked about PTA's hazardous waste spill risks. The Army responded by: (1) telling KAHEA to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the information, (2) deleting the section describing hazardous waste storage on PTA State lands. Has hazardous waste spilled on state lands? Where are these records?

(4) Why can't the Army start cleaning up now?

a. The state Department of Health ("DOH") commented "There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible." **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as "not resolved".

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there's no evidence that it has, but also "[g]roundwater quality data are limited"; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

a. DHHL "feel[s] strongly" that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined, pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.

b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are

“potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils” but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are “unlikely to impact public health.” **V1 at 3-107**

c. The FEIS acknowledges “airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels”. **V1 at 3-117** Yet there is no mitigation or study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai‘i’s economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly “habituated” to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?

b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the FEIS **Submittal at 23**

(8) Fire impacts are worse than disclosed.

a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283**. Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.

b. The Department of Interior pointed out the “entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021.” **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”) for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?

b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army’s “generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change.” **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**

b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.

c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. **Submittal at 23**

d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army’s FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai’i’s land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Anjoli Roy

Sent from my iPhone

Acceptance or Non-acceptance of the
Final EIS for the Army Training Land Retention at Pohakuloa

Agenda Item D1

Testimony of Lanny Sinkin

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed retention of Hawaiian lands by the United States Army is a classic case of “fruit of the poisonous tree.”

Had the United States minister to the Kingdom of Hawai’i not acted in concert with traitors within the Kingdom to overthrow the Kingdom’s legitimate government there would be no foreign occupation of the Kingdom and no illegal seizure of the Crown and Govern lands.

There would be no leases of those lands by BLNR.

There would be no bombs being dropped on sacred lands.

There would be no reason to prepare the EIS at issue in this proceeding.

There would be no “annexation” without consent.

The EIS is simply a further exploitation of the false reality created by the overthrow.

These are facts that are not disputed. Nevertheless, the Army seeks to continue the pretense of legitimacy.

I would urge the BLNR to review the Apology Resolution for a more detailed presentation of those facts.

For all the reasons set forth above, BLNR should reject the EIS.

Lanny Sinkin
Attorney at Law (Federal Practice)
Lanny.sinkin@gmail.com
(808) 936-4428
P. O. Box 944
Hilo, Hawai’i 96721

From: [Marya Szaur](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony opposing final environmental impact statement for US military use of Pohakuloa training area
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:43:58 PM

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Subject: Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned citizen and steward of this ‘āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

I offer this testimony on behalf of our lāhui to raise four urgent and interconnected concerns:

1. Continued Desecration of Sacred Sites

Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama ‘āina.

2. Environmental Irreversibility

The EIS gravely underestimates the environmental damage caused by decades of military activity. The use of live ammunition, chemical contaminants, and heavy artillery has poisoned soil, threatened endangered species, and disrupted fragile ecosystems. No mitigation plan within the EIS adequately restores what has already been lost—let alone justifies further occupation.

3. Illegitimacy of U.S. Military Occupation

The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

4. Failure to Uphold the Public Trust Doctrine

As trustees of the land under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, DLNR is legally bound to conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources for present and future generations. Approving this EIS would be a failure of that trust—permitting further destruction rather than conservation.

In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side

of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,
Marya Szaur
Hilo, HI
8088549702

From: [Trevon Taylor](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Approval of the Army's FEIS, Meeting Item D-1, 5-9-25
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:36:33 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Trevon Taylor. I am from Ewa Beach, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to the approval of the Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not just any place—it is a wahi pana and wahi kūpuna, a sacred, ancestral place. It is home to irreplaceable Native Hawaiian cultural sites and some of Hawaii's most endangered species. The Army has already admitted to widespread contamination, not just in Pōhakuloa, but anywhere they have touched in Hawai'i, including Mākua Valley, my community's piko. Similarly, the Army cannot prove that this contamination has not spread into water or ecosystems—the army gate keeps this information, as well as any safety procedures or spill data. They also delete critical information from their FEIS and other public access record(s). Fires, endangered species, and climate harms have been dismissed without evidence, and the FEIS they have submitted evades Hawaii law by ignoring very obvious cumulative impacts.

The approval of this FEIS does not reflect the will of Native Hawaiians, the traditional custodians of this land, and does not reflect your constitutional responsibility to the public trust of the water that feeds and provides for Hawai'i. In *Kahaulelio v. DLNR* in 2019, the state of Hawaii has already been proven to breach its constitutional trust duty by failing to reasonably monitor and inspect trust lands at Pōhakuloa leased to the US military, failing to ensure compliance with cleanup and safety provision, failing to take action after learning of possible contamination, and failing to document efforts and provide transparency to the public. Ultimately, the potential approval of this FEIS does not reflect what is pono.

In today's political climate, where science is being dismissed daily, where federal dollars are being pulled based on wrongful agendas, and where the very idea of 'āina protections are being stripped daily, I urge you to be on the right side of history. It is unacceptable and wrong that anyone gets to flit around laws and regulations that were created to protect our 'āina. These safeguards exist for a reason. Demand the Army clean up their mess, and rightfully restore the land to its natural state to begin a much-needed process of healing and restoration.

Thank you for considering my testimony in your final decision, and allowing me to use my voice on this important matter.

Ke aloha 'āina,

Trevon Taylor

From: [Chazstyn Titcomb](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pohakuloa Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:24:18 PM

Aloha my name is Chazstyn and I am a 13 Year old boy at a school on the island of Oahu. I

DO NOT want the lease renewed for Pohakuloa or any other US base on our 'Āina because you have been blowing up our ancestors' caves which hold the items of our ancestors and who says you haven't blown up the cave holding King Kamehameha's body. What you guys are doing is wrong and complete BULL\$H!T because it is our island and using an area bigger than Molokai and Lanai just as a bombing place WITH OUR ANCESTRAL CAVES and Ancestral Items which are important to us and everyone on the Hawaiian Islands. We are the next generation and we WILL be heard, we are the 'Elele, We are the ones putting up the fight not the old Generation We are the ones to be Heard, If we are concerned then what you guys are doing is Wrong and you NEED to stop. I will NOT accept no as an answer, You Will Listen to what we have to say and if you have any problems You will respond to us. It is OUR LAND we have no reason to let you use our Island as Bombing grounds, You are poisoning our water and our land with the lead inside of your bullets.

In closing, I DO NOT WANT THE RENEWAL OF THE LEASE OF POHAKULOA AND ANY OTHER US MILITARY BASE YOU WILL LISTEN TO WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY. WE CHILDREN DO NOT NEED TO BE TELLING YOU WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG YOU GUYS SHOULD BE HOLDING ALL THE KNOWLEDGE BUT IT SEEMS WE HAVE MORE COMMON SENSE

From: [Tamara Umiamaka](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tamara Umiamaka Reject
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:44:24 PM

Edit with the Docs app

Make tweaks, leave comments, and share with others to edit at the same time.

NO THANKS

USE THE APP

Pohakuloa Testimony - May 2025

Email to: blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

To:
Chair Dawn Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
& Honorable Committee Members

Subject: Testimony Opposing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for U.S. Military Use of Pōhakuloa Training Area

Aloha e Chair Chang and Esteemed Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Kanaka Maoli and steward of this 'āina to urge your firm rejection of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted in support of continued military use of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA).

Pōhakuloa is not merely land. It is sacred—a wahi pana rooted in ancestral knowledge, ceremony, and responsibility. For over 70 years, this sacred landscape has endured relentless degradation under U.S. military occupation. The submission of this EIS represents not responsible stewardship, but a continuation of the desecration and dispossession of our homeland.

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Pōhakuloa is rich in cultural and spiritual significance, housing ancient trails, heiau, and iwi kūpuna. Military activity has repeatedly bombed and bulldozed these sacred spaces, despite legal and ethical protections. This is a violation not only of Native Hawaiian religious and cultural rights but of the DLNR's kuleana to mālama 'āina.

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The U.S. military presence at Pōhakuloa stems from an illegal overthrow and unlawful annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Therefore, its continued use of Hawaiian lands for destructive military purposes is a direct violation of international law, self-determination, and the political rights of Kanaka Maoli.

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In the face of pressure from federal agencies, I implore this committee to stand on the side of justice, pono, and true aloha 'āina. The legacy you leave will be remembered not by your deference to power, but by your courage to protect the most sacred and irreplaceable parts of our homeland.

The time to act is now. Reject this EIS. Return the land to its rightful caretakers. And let the healing of Pōhakuloa begin.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

[Your Full Name]

[City, Island]

[Kanaka Maoli / Cultural Practitioner / Title if applicable]

[Contact Information]

From: [Haylee Watson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony for Agenda Item D-1
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:48:29 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Kamalu Watson and I respectfully urge you to do the right thing, and REJECT the clearly insufficient FEIS in Item D-1.

As the DLNR staff submission makes clear, the FEIS fails to include needed biological and archaeological surveys, turns a blind eye to environmental impacts on federal lands, and downplays obviously significant threats to endangered native birds and wildlife - among many other issues. Accepting this dangerously deficient document may accordingly result in actions that threaten the permanent and inadvertent loss of native species, iwi kūpuna, and historic properties, among other deep and immeasurable harms to the public interest.

Accordingly, please REJECT the FEIS put forward in Agenda Item D-1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Kamalu Watson

From: [Loraine Webb](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No more leases!
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:59:58 PM

**In the name of God, do your duty!
Perform your sacred trust!**

**No more leases on Pōhakuloa!
No more bombing of Pōhakuloa!
Let Pōhakuloa heal!**

Loraine Webb
11110 White Oak Way
Nevada City, Ca
95959

From: [Kayson Werner-Danielson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] STOPPING THE LEASE
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:17:07 PM

Aloha, my name is Kayson and I am 13 years old and a proud Kanaka and elel'e at my school on oahu. I would like to tell you about how you are taking our history and destroying it. I do not want the lease to get renewed as you are taking advantage of rights that were never supposed to be yours. As for me, I am part of the future generation and would not appreciate my kids not knowing our culture and our ancestors. Me and my friends had learned too much about you guys and how to take advantage of us and I am tired of it. How would you feel if strangers were building out your great grandparents and I don't know about you but I would be furious.

CLOSING, I DO NOT WANT THE LEASE RENEWED FOR THE U.S MILITARY AT
POHAKULOA OR ANY OTHER LAND THAT BELONGS TO US KANAKA'S!

From: [Katia Worley](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:08:24 PM

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- b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. V1 at 3-193
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a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”) for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?

b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army’s “generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change.” V1 at 4-16 How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

(10) Existing mitigation proven insufficient by ongoing impacts.

a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. V1 at 4-11 - 4-25

b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. V1 at 3-220 As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.

c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. Submittal at 23

d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. V1 at Fig. 3-8 How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army's FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai'i's land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.
Katia Worley

From: robin.worley@icloud.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Calling on BLNR to Reject the Army's FEIS: Unanswered Questions and Ongoing Harms at Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:44:29 PM

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please REJECT the Army's final Environmental Impact Statement (Agenda item D-1) for their proposal to continue to occupy 22,750 acres of State land at Pōhakuloa Training Area on Hawai'i island ("PTA") for an undetermined amount of time and conditions.

The Board should require the Army to provide the following information to assist with the Board's future decision making on any "real estate" proposal for PTA:

(1) Contamination from past, present, and future military actions.

a. The FEIS discloses significant lead and heavy metal contamination in PTA lands caused by live fire training. The Army's surface soil sampling detected the following in site soils: antimony, arsenic, cobalt, copper, iron, 1-methylnaphthalene, lead, manganese, naphthalene, selenium, silver, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) as diesel range organics (DRO) and residual range organics, and zirconium. **V1 at 3-106**

b. The Army said there's no significant impact because low rainfall means the contamination won't spread much and the aquifer is deep. But the Army also concedes "shallower aquifers" were supposed to be tested, but weren't. It's unacceptable to claim there is no significant impact when areas that are more likely to be affected haven't been studied. **V1 at 3-193**

c. The EPA pointed out PTA soils are highly permeable and some compounds are highly soluble and won't be absorbed into the soil. The EPA asked for soil sampling analysis to show how the Army knows contamination hasn't spread. The Army responded it has not sampled all of its lands "to determine the presence or absence of munitions constituents." **V2 at D-210**

d. The FEIS does not address logical questions. How can existing and

future contamination be removed? Will it be removed? How much has it already spread into the soils, vegetation, and animal life? How much worse will it get with continued Army operations?

(2) Potential and means to restore these lands.

a. *Can* the Army clean up these lands? How? To what degree will the lands be remediated? What happens if they can't do it? In response to these questions, the Army refers to FEIS section 3.5.6, which says "cleanup and restoration . . . are not part of the Proposed Action" and "future cleanup and restoration requirements, standard processes, and associated cost are unknown." **V1 at 3-122**

b. The existing leases only require: "Weapons and shells used in connection with training activities are to be removed to the extent that technical and economic capability exists and provided that expenditure for removal would not exceed the fair market value of the land." **DEIS V.1 at 3-14** (emphasis added). Left unchallenged, the Army could simply say that it's too expensive to clean up and leave their mess behind – in fact, the inclusion of such language incentivizes them to do so.

c. The Army said it will comply with the "Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act" (CERCLA), which requires remedial action concerning stored hazardous substances, "necessary to protect human health and the environment with respect to any such substance remaining on the property has been taken before" transferring the land back. However, the Army will not be clear on what this will mean, changing its stance on whether it stores hazardous substances on state lands (see #3c) and refusing to disclose any remediation actions.

(3) Army is withholding information on accumulating contamination.

a. In addition to the harm that has already occurred, how much worse will land contamination get with continued Army operations? What practices does the Army follow to prevent munitions contaminants from accumulating? The Army says it follows Standard Operating Procedures that are not available for public disclosure. **V2 at D-211** The EIS only gives a vague summary. **V2 at E-15 & E-16**

b. The EIS does not tell us how much contamination has accumulated, despite these procedures, and its impacts.

c. KAHEA asked about PTA's hazardous waste spill risks. The Army responded by: (1) telling KAHEA to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the information, (2) deleting the section describing hazardous waste storage on PTA State lands. Has hazardous waste spilled on state lands? Where are these records?

(4) Why can't the Army start cleaning up now?

a. The state Department of Health ("DOH") commented "There is no need for the Army to wait for the end of the lease period to address known and potential contamination under [federal laws]. Sites identified in the first and second Draft EIS documents . . . that are on state land and no longer within currently active range locations should begin the cleanup process as soon as possible." **V2 at D-223**

b. The Army flagged this comment as "not resolved".

(5) Have contaminants entered groundwater? How does the Army know either way?

a. The Army says there's no evidence that it has, but also "[g]roundwater quality data are limited"; researchers recommended sampling groundwater in shallower aquifers; and no one has done this sampling or analysis. **V1 at 3-193**

b. Without completing the research, how can the Army discount the spread of contaminants, especially highly soluble perchlorate, into these water bodies?

(6) Could contaminants have impacts on human health?

a. DHHL "feel[s] strongly" that the Army should do long-term air-quality and water-table testing at PTA. **V2 at D-220** The Army declined, pointing to a one-year air quality monitoring program in 2007 that did not find levels outside standards and that the aquifer is very deep. However, the Army admits there is a shallow aquifer that has not been tested despite recommendations to do so.

b. The FEIS is inconsistent on this issue. It discloses there are “potentially complete exposure pathways for human receptors from contaminants within the State-owned land surface soils” but because the same is not true for water and sediment, contaminants are “unlikely to impact public health.” **V1 at 3-107**

c. The FEIS acknowledges “airborne concentrations of lead on [Department of Defense] firing ranges have exceeded the Occupational Safety and Health Administration permissible exposure limit for some job duties, which might lead to increased blood lead levels”. **V1 at 3-117**
Yet there is no mitigation or study proposed to prevent this from happening at PTA.

(7) Cumulative impacts of the entirety of PTA

a. The FEIS only considers impacts of continuing military training on 22,750 acres of State lands, even though these training operations are inextricable from the entire 132,000 acres of PTA. What are the true cumulative impacts of these operations? How does PTA as a whole impact Hawai‘i’s economy? Housing availability? Native species supposedly “habituated” to the sound of military training and potentially exposed to munitions contaminants?

b. What alternatives are foreclosed by using these lands and resources for military training? Land Board staff also point out this is missing from the FEIS **Submittal at 23**

(8) Fire impacts are worse than disclosed.

a. Between 1975 and August 2024, there were 1,261 fires of which 1007 fires were due to military activities. **V1 at 3-283**. Pōhakuloa is a TERRIBLE, fire prone place to do military training. Yet, the Army rejects proposals to relocate training - only mitigation for monitoring fires and inhibiting invasive grass growth.

b. The Department of Interior pointed out the “entire population of Palila are restricted to the west slope of Mauna Kea and are extremely vulnerable to an extinction event such as a wildland fire, as happened in 2021.” **V2 at D-214**

(9) No disclosure of greenhouse gases

- a. The EIS discloses the Army does not have data on its greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”) for activities on State lands. Why not? The U.S. military reportedly produces more GHGs than the entire nations of Portugal or Denmark,[1] but does not track its own emissions?
- b. At the same time, the FEIS concludes the Army’s “generation of GHGs has not meaningfully contributed to the impacts of global or local climate change.” **V1 at 4-16** How can it reach this conclusion if it does not have data?

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- a. The FEIS concedes ongoing impacts from past PTA operations - which the Army proposes to continue indefinitely. **V1 at 4-11 - 4-25**
- b. And yet, proposed new mitigation solely consists in studies, reporting, monitoring, and potentially deploying a biological control directed at reducing wildfires and to formalize an access agreement with Native Hawaiian groups and individuals. **V1 at 3-220** As noted by DLNR staff, the Army should have done these studies as part of this EIS - not afterwards.
- c. For all other impacts, the Army will just continue existing mitigation measures. But these are not working because impacts continue to accrue, particularly to cultural resources as pointed out by Land Board staff who disagree that Army cultural resource programs are protecting these resources. **Submittal at 23**
- d. The FEIS excluded many lands from its survey of historic properties, including iwi kupuna, on state lands. **V1 at Fig. 3-8** How can the Army assess impacts to cultural resources if it does not even know if they are there?

Far from providing a comprehensive reference, the Army’s FEIS obstinately refuses to disclose the foreseeable harms their actions cause to Hawai’i’s land, water, cultural resources, and its people. If the Army does not know, the Board should reject the FEIS and require the Army to conduct necessary investigations as part of this environmental review process and not relegate these important issues to some

unaccounted-for future scenario.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Robin Worley

From: [Tom Coffman](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FEIS draft for Pohakuloa 5/9/29 - In Opposition
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 1:29:08 PM

Because of the gravity and complexity of this measure, I favor deferring action and instead developing a public education program on this and related measures, providing history and an overview of Federal control of land through the archipelago. Tom Coffman

From: [Ceri Zablan](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FEI - Pōhakuloa
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:47:19 PM

Aloha kākou,

My name is Ceri Zablan. I'm a Native Hawaiian high school student who was raised to believe in the power of our traditions. These traditions are crucial to the survival of our culture and home. One of these practices is protection and service to the land. Whether you're native or not, it is our job to perpetuate these practices. This FEIS ignores what makes our 'āina sacred and therefore disregards our responsibility to this land. The Board must follow the law and reject Agenda Item D-1.