

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

January 23, 2026

Chairperson and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Land Board Members:

SUBJECT: 1. APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND
NATURAL RESOURCES/DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
AND PARKER RANCH, INC. FOR ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION
MANAGEMENT IN THE HĀMĀKUA DISTRICT, HAWAI'I, TAX MAP KEY:
(3) 4-4-014:004

2. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE CHAIRPERSON TO
NEGOTIATE, APPROVE, AND EXECUTE THE MEMORANDUM, RIGHT
OF ENTRY, AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY AGREEMENTS, WITH
PARKER RANCH, INC., FOR ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION
MANAGEMENT IN THE HAMAKUA DISTRICT, HAWAI'I, TAX MAP KEY:
(3) 4-4-014:004; AND

3. APPROVAL OF DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION FROM CHAPTER
343, HRS ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO THE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING.

SUMMARY:

This Board Submittal requests approval to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Forestry and Wildlife (Division), and Parker Ranch, Inc. (PRI), a Hawaii corporation, for managing the land mauka of Kaluamakani, near the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve (see map in Exhibit A). The Division also seeks approval for a declaration of exemption from Chapter 343, HRS environmental compliance requirements, and requests delegation of authority to the Chairperson to negotiate, approve, and execute this and future MOUs, Right-of-Entries (ROEs), and Release of Liability Agreements with PRI, as appropriate, related to this project.

TERM OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: The term of the MOU will be twenty-five years.

CONSIDERATION: Gratis.

BACKGROUND:

The Tax Map Key parcel (3) 4-4-014:004 covers about 101 acres. The Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) recommended designating this parcel as an extension of the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve on March 24, 2023. Additionally, an ROE between the Land Division and the Division of Forestry and Wildlife was approved by the BLNR on October 10, 2025, to grant the Division of Forestry and Wildlife management authority pending processing of the set-aside.

This section of land was previously used by PRI for grazing but was fenced off in 2019 as part of the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve reforestation project. It is also within the boundaries of the Mauna Kea Watershed Alliance, of which both PRI and DLNR are members. PRI plans to perform fence maintenance and upgrades in the area, reforestation with native species, monitoring, invasive species control, and wildlife management in coordination with the Division. PRI's management interest in this area stems from its importance as a watershed that, if reforested, could improve water supplies for the entire ahupua'a. Additionally, this area is near other PRI restoration sites. Restoring it could boost the success of restoration efforts on PRI land by creating habitat connectivity and a buffer zone for invasive species control.

DISCUSSION:

The Division aims to establish a 25-year MOU with PRI to oversee this area. This MOU would formalize a long-term partnership between the Division and PRI to implement actions in line with the Mauna Kea Watershed Management Plan.

This MOU will be non-exclusive, as other community organizations are interested in implementing management plans for this area in a complementary manner.

CHAPTER 343 – ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

In accordance with the requirements of Chapter 343, HRS, and Hawai'i Administrative Rule Section 11-200-8(6), the Exemption List for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), as reviewed and approved by the Environmental Council on November 10, 2020, declares that the subject project is exempt from preparing an environmental assessment under the following exemption classes.

From the DLNR Exemption List dated November 10, 2020:

General Exemption Type 1, Part 1, #4. *Operation, repair, and maintenance of existing structures and facilities, including ... fencing.*

General Exemption Type 3, Part 2, #1. *Natural resource management actions that the Department declares are specifically designed to monitor, conserve, or improve the condition of native species or their habitats, such as fences around or for the management of rare, threatened, or endangered plants.*

General Exemption Type 4, Part 1, #3. *Removal of invasive vegetation using cutting, mowing, applying federal and state-approved herbicides according to label instructions, distributing biocontrol agents already approved and permitted by the State of Hawai'i, and other approved methods. #9 "Control of pests using federal and state-approved pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and toxicants according to label instructions; traps, snares, lures, and repellents; and other approved methods.*

General Exemption Type 4, Part 1, #5. *Allows establishing temporary or permanent vegetative cover such as trees, shrubs, grasses, and sod for landscaping, reforestation, soil stabilization, watershed protection, native wildlife habitat, native ecosystem restoration, and rare plant preservation.*

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Approve entering a Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife and Parker Ranch, Inc. for management in the Hāmākua District, Hawai'i, Tax Map Key: (3) 4-4-014:004.
2. Declare that, after considering the potential effects of the proposed agreement under Chapter 343, HRS, and Chapter 11-200, HAR, this project will likely have minimal or no significant impact on the environment and is therefore exempt from environmental assessment requirements.
3. Delegate to the Chairperson the authority to negotiate, approve, and execute this MOU and related Right-of-Entry and Release of Liability Agreements, as appropriate, between the State of Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife and PRI for management in the Hāmākua District, subject to the following:
 - a. Review and approval as to form by the Department of the Attorney General; and
 - b. Such other terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Chairperson to best serve the interests of the State.

APPROVAL OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES/DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE AND PARKER RANCH, INC. FOR ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

Respectfully submitted,



DAVID G. SMITH
Administrator

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



RYAN KANAAKA`OLE, Acting Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources

Attachment: Exhibit A: Map of TMK: (3) 4-4-014:004

Exhibit A: Map of TMK: (3) 4-4-014:004
Hāmākua District, makai of Kaluamakani.

