



February 26, 2026

Board of Land and Natural Resources
Department of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, we are in strong support of the proposed transfer of Hā'ena Beach Park and Maninihola Dry Cave from the County of Kaua'i to the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of State Parks.

Through ongoing DMAP implementation, our Kaua'i Destination Manager, Patti Ornellas, and I have had the privilege of engaging with residents, community leaders, cultural practitioners, nonprofit partners, and industry stakeholders across Kaua'i. A consistent message has emerged: the community-supported management model at Hā'ena State Park is working — and expanding that model to include Hā'ena Beach Park represents a thoughtful and necessary next step.

The reservation system, daily visitor limits, and co-management structure with Hui Maka'āinana o Makana and The Hanalei Initiative have demonstrated that collaborative stewardship can improve visitor experience, restore balance, and prioritize resident access. However, while Hā'ena State Park has seen measurable improvements, Hā'ena Beach Park continues to absorb overflow visitation, resulting in parking congestion, highway safety concerns, and increasing strain on surrounding areas.

Community members have expressed that piecemeal solutions to hotspot management are no longer sufficient. Integrating Hā'ena Beach Park into the broader State Parks framework allows for unified management, reduced confusion for visitors, and a more comprehensive approach to access, safety, and resource protection between Waipā and Hā'ena.

This proposed transfer is not simply about ownership — it is about stewardship. Under State Parks leadership, and in partnership with trusted community-based organizations, there is an opportunity to expand what is already working:

- Strengthened resident access
- Coordinated parking and transportation strategies
- Improved highway safety
- Protection of natural and cultural resources
- Development of a broader community action framework

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From a destination management perspective, supporting community-driven solutions to overcrowding and hotspot impacts is essential to the long-term sustainability of Kaua'i's visitor industry and quality of life for residents. This transfer aligns directly with the goals of the Kaua'i DMAP: managing visitor impacts, empowering community voice, and protecting the places that make our island special.

I respectfully urge the Board to approve the acquisition and addition of Hā'ena Beach Park and Maninihola Dry Cave to Hā'ena State Park. Expanding this proven co-management model will help ensure that Hā'ena remains a place of cultural integrity, environmental stewardship, and safe, managed access for generations to come.

Mahalo for your consideration and continued partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Anderson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Caroline Anderson
Interim President and CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority