



During December site visits in Kona, Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha, and their teams visited Hölualoa Elementary School. During the visit, they spoke with administrators, teachers, and students to better understand the long-deferred, continuing maintenance and repair needs of the school.

Kona Priorities In Sharp Focus As 2024 Session Begins

The 2024 Legislative Session began on January 17, and Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa has been hard at work advocating for the needs of the community she represents.

Urgent Runway Repairs at Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport

The abrupt closure of the only runway at our airport on January 15 put a spotlight on the importance of air connectivity to our community – for the thousands of residents and visitors who fly through KOA every day, and the cargo service that kama’āina and local businesses count on.

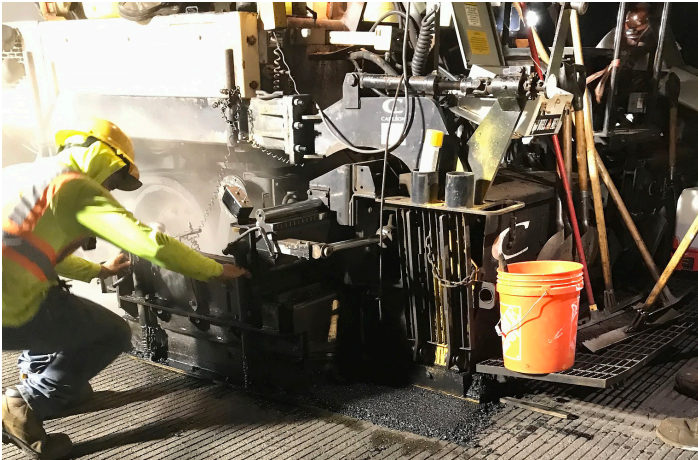
Many thanks to Governor Josh Green, Transportation Director Ed Sniffen, Airport District Manager Chauncey Wong Yuen, the airport staff, and crew from Grace Pacific who worked through the night to reopen the runway the morning of January 16. Gov. Green announced that a \$120 million project to resurface the 11,000-foot runway will commence this year.

Improvements To Kona Community Hospital

Work continues on \$21.7 million in projects to improve our community’s hospital: \$16.25 million



Informational briefings before the Committee on Finance, on which Rep. Kahaloa serves, began January 3 ahead of the session starting January 17.



Crews worked through the night of January 15 to reopen the KOA runway.

WORKING FOR KONA



Rep. Kahaloa, Sen. Kanuha and their teams met with Kahakai Elementary Principal Kori Takaki to discuss the school's needs and future vision.

in infrastructure upgrades to keep the hospital operating, \$2.98 million for the expansion of the pharmacy, and \$2.5 million for the replacement of the oncology facility.

Getting The Job Done At Our Kona Schools

Rep. Kahaloa is working closely with the Department of Education to ensure that projects already funded for Kona's schools get done: long-deferred repair and maintenance at Hōlualoa Elementary, a new preschool classroom and a second driveway for better access and traffic flow at Kahakai Elementary, and renovating Julian Yates Field at Konawaena High. This session, Rep. Kahaloa will be requesting more funding for Kona's beloved schools, such as:

- **Hōlualoa Elementary:** fencing and internal roadway safety improvements
- **Ke Kula 'O 'Ehunuikaimalino:** renovations to aging buildings
- **Konawaena High:** roof repair in the Ellison Onizuka Memorial Gym
- **Konawaena Middle:** drainage repairs
- **Konawaena Elementary:** fire alarm system replacement



Rep. Kahaloa and her Senate counterpart, Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha, tour the oncology facilities at Kona Community Hospital as part of their site visit.

House Majority Priorities Include Topics Important To Kona

In addition to Rep. Kahaloa's priorities, topics of interest to Kona residents are also part of the priorities agreed to by the majority of the House of Representatives:

- **Wildfire Prevention** to reduce the risk of wildfires throughout the state. Rep. Kahaloa served on the Wildfire Prevention working group in the interim.
- **Clean Drinking Water** to ensure clean water now and in the future for Hawai'i's residents.
- **Affordable Housing**, including funding to build more affordable rental and for-sale housing for low and moderate-income families.
- **Renewable Energy** to reach the state's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2045.
- **Healthcare Delivery** for our growing and aging population, including workforce development.
- **Mental Health Services** to address the needs of those experiencing mental health crises.
- **Recruitment and Retention of Public Workers** to improve service delivery to the public.



Partnering To Grow Hawai'i Island Agriculture

Rep. Kahaloa presented at the Hawai'i Island Agriculture Partnership's Annual Forum, held in Waimea in December. Partnership members represent a cross section of agriculture industry leaders and partners - from small family farms, to those with thousands of acres.

Among Rep. Kahaloa's priorities for agriculture and food security this session is securing funding for the Double Bux program, which doubles buying power of SNAP recipients for locally grown produce – expanding opportunities for local farmers.



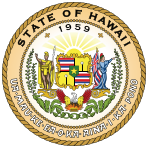
Progress on Agricultural Land Transfer

The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Land and Natural Resources are making steady progress in transferring state leases for pastoral and agricultural lands from DLNR to DOA. The complex and challenging work continues as both departments pursue their mandates to preserve the state's natural and cultural resources, and promote agriculture, respectively. As Vice Chair of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, Rep. Kahaloa has been tracking this issue closely. The transfer of these lands will help to further preserve agricultural lands and support the state's ability to produce food locally. Over 24,000 acres across the state have already been transferred to DOA, with nearly 22,000 acres in process.



New Office Manager Appointed To Serve Dist. 6

Clare Ronquillo joined Rep. Kahaloa as Office Manager in September. Clare brings to the office her experience gained in the State Senate, a role she was led to by her passion to improve her own neighborhood in Honolulu. Next time you call or stop by the office, please welcome Clare to the team!



Representative Kirstin Kahaloa
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 314
415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813



Hau'oli Makahiki Hou!

Happy New Year!

With every new year comes a new legislative session. I returned to the Capitol after spending the holidays with my family energized to keep working hard for the community I'm so honored to represent.

Please enjoy the updates in this edition of **Working For Kona**, and as always, feel free to let me know how I can be of service to you and your 'ohana. Aloha!



Representative Kirstin Kahaloa

House District 6: Hōnaunau, Nāpo'opo'o, Captain Cook, Kealakekua, Keauhou, Hōlualoa, Kailua
call (808) 586-8530 | email repkahaloa@capitol.hawaii.gov | stop by **State Capitol Room 314**
visit capitol.hawaii.gov/house/kahaloa | follow [@repkahaloa](https://twitter.com/repkahaloa) on social media