



# Legislative Update

## Representative David A. Tarnas

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Aloha!

The 2022 Legislative Session has now adjourned, with over 300 bills approved by the Legislature now enrolled to the Governor.

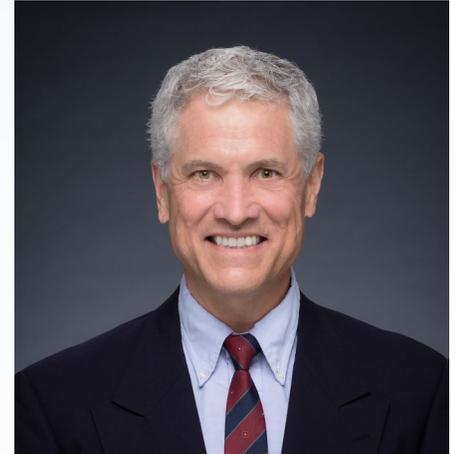
We passed legislation to address long-standing economic issues and provided unprecedented levels of financial support for our working families, Native Hawaiians, public schools, and kūpuna. We also provided \$300 million in tax relief for residents and committed nearly \$1 billion to budget reserves to invest in the State's fiscal stability.

In this newsletter, I report on the highlights of this session for our community and State, including key legislation and funding for Waikoloa, Waimea, Kawaihae, and North Kohala. Please contact me any time with your feedback about these or other legislative matters.

To stay up-to-date on the latest news from State government and our community, please sign up for my email newsletter at [bit.ly/reptarnas-signup](https://bit.ly/reptarnas-signup).

Mahalo for your support and advice this legislative session. I am grateful to serve as your State Representative and welcome hearing from you by email at [reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov) and by phone at 808-586-8510. Please keep in touch!

Mahalo,



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# 2022 Legislative Session Highlights

This legislative session, we were able to make unprecedented progress in addressing the most pressing needs in our community and State. Among the 343 bills passed by the Legislature, highlights include:

## Supporting Workers

In key legislation providing economic relief to workers and families, we made the **Earned Income Tax Credit** permanent and refundable and **increased the minimum wage** (HB 2510). To reduce the negative impact of the wage increase on small businesses, the bill initiates the increase in October, from \$10.10 to \$12 per hour, and staggers further increases over the next several years. A second bill provides a **tax rebate** of up to \$300 per resident (SB 514).



## Small Businesses & Agriculture

To support small business owners, we established the **State Small Business Credit Initiative**, allowing Hawai'i to access \$56 million in federal funds for small businesses (SB 2808). We also established the Small Business Initiative Program to facilitate small businesses' participation in State contracting opportunities (HB 1974). To support local farmers and food access, we provided \$1.5 million for grants to local **food hubs** (SB 2218) and established a **food safety certification training** program to help local farms comply with federal food safety requirements (SB 2960).

## Public Education

Public education is a top priority for our community. With that public support, the Legislature was able to **fund higher salaries to compensate public school teachers** for additional experience, professional development, and filling hard-to-staff positions, which include Hawaiian language immersion, special education, and rural positions (\$34.5 million). We also appropriated \$200 million to **develop and expand preschool facilities** statewide (HB 2000). To improve the relevance of public education, we established programs for **digital literacy** (SB 2214, SB 2184), **workforce readiness** (HB 1561), and career development (SB 2826).



## Caring for Kūpuna

We increased funding for the Kūpuna Care Program (\$2.6 million), Aging and Disability Resource Centers in each county (\$1.5 million), and the Long-term Care Ombudsman program (5 positions). We funded **adult dental benefits** for all Medicaid patients. We established the **Hawai'i Retirement Savings Program** to help workers without an employer-sponsored retirement plan to save for retirement (SB 3289). We also **extended the drivers' license renewal period** for licensees between 72-80 years of age from two to four years (SB 2679).

## Native Hawaiians

The Legislature took significant steps to fulfill the State's public trust responsibilities to Native Hawaiians. We appropriated \$600 million for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to **build more homes, buy more land, and provide rental and mortgage assistance to Native Hawaiians** on the DHHL waitlist (HB 2511). The State Budget additionally provided \$10 million for homestead services, \$20 million for DHHL lot development, and \$35 million of federal funds for new homestead development. And we paid for the settlement in a class action suit of Native Hawaiians who sued the State for the time they spent on the DHHL waitlist (SB 3041). **We also increased the annual payments of public land revenues to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)** from \$15.1 million to \$21.5 million and made this retroactive, resulting in a \$64 million payment to OHA (SB 2021). A working group created by the legislation will evaluate the amount of public land revenues due to OHA annually going forward.



## Energy & Sustainability

We established a goal to **limit greenhouse gas emissions** to less than 50% of 2005 emissions by 2030 (HB 1800). We also required cost-effective **energy savings** at State facilities (HB 1801). To encourage renewable energy systems, we allowed new electric vehicle charging stations to qualify for a rebate (SB2720) and reinstated a tax credit for **renewable fuel production** (SB 2478). We also set electronic device recycling goals and requirements for manufacturers (HB 1640) and banned the manufacture, sale or distribution of products that contain the toxic chemical substances perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl (HB 2195).



## Affordable Housing

A package of bills and budget items invest in programs to address the rising cost of living and increase housing inventory for those who need it most. We appropriated \$300 million to **build rental housing** and \$45 million to facilitate development of infrastructure for affordable housing (SB 3048). The budget funds those in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to receive up to \$500 per month in **rental assistance**. We also provided \$15 million to extend the Ohana Zones pilot program, providing temporary shelter, transitional housing, and services for people who are houseless (HB 2512). And we passed laws **prohibiting rental discrimination** against recipients of Section 8 housing vouchers and providing incentives for landlords who participate in Section 8 (SB 206, HB 1752).

## Community Health

To address the healthcare provider shortage, we funded the UH School of Medicine to **increase residency and training opportunities** (SB 2657) and provide loan repayment assistance to medical professionals in health-care shortage areas (SB 2597). We also established pilot projects to develop **telemedicine** (SB 2657) and **rural health care capacity** (SB 2624). In response to health concerns and student activism around youth vaping, we banned the sale of flavored tobacco products (HB 1570).

# Water and Land Committee

The House Water and Land Committee, which I lead as Committee Chair, considers legislation related to natural resources, environmental stewardship, and climate change adaptation. Here are highlights of the bills and funding considered by our Committee which succeeded in passing the Legislature this session:

## Natural Resource Stewardship

- Establishing and funding an **alternative management framework for Mauna Kea**, which includes Native Hawaiians in management decisions and supports astronomy consistent with a mutual stewardship paradigm, in which ecology, cultural practices, education, and science are in balance and synergy (HB 2024)
- Supporting the **Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission** with an additional \$500,000 and three new positions
- Exempting traditional in-stream **kalo cultivation** from the existing water rights disposition process (HB 1768)

## Climate Change Adaptation

- Allowing counties to transfer development rights to address areas at risk of sea level rise and related **coastal hazards** associated with climate change (HB 1436)
- Authorizing counties to establish **Special Improvement Districts** for the purpose of environmental research, restoration, and maintenance; natural resource management; and natural hazard mitigation (HB 1672)



## Fisheries & Marine Resources

- Increasing penalties for violations of **aquatic resource laws** and rules (HB 1653), and establishing and funding a **Marine Security Division** within the Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement
- Authorizing **in-lieu fee mitigation** to restore, create, enhance, and preserve aquatic habitats or resources, such as coral reefs and wetlands, as compensatory mitigation for aquatic resources damaged (SB 204)
- Providing \$350,000 for restoration of the statewide **fish aggregation buoy** program (SB 3767)
- Growing the State hatchery program with \$300,000 and a new position dedicated to providing fingerlings and limu for **fishpond restoration and restocking**



## Forestry & Wildlife

- Providing \$5 million for the **Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps** to offer temporary work and training opportunities to young people in natural resource management, agriculture, and other sustainability-related professions (SB 2768)
- Requiring Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) participants, such as wind farms, to hold a service contract with a facility that can provide emergency medical treatment and long-term **rehabilitation services to native wildlife** injured within the HCP area (SB 573)
- Providing \$8 million for **watershed protection**, particularly **fencing** for critical reforestation areas, and an additional \$1.7 million for Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death mitigation and response

## Public Recreation & Access

- Expanding the **public trails** program with two new positions and \$2 million for trail access and restoration
- Establishing 28 new positions statewide for **State Parks** development, maintenance, and management
- Authorizing the Division of State Parks to use additional funds, earned primarily through non-resident visitor fees, to maintain and improve the State Parks system



## Combatting Invasive Species

- Providing \$1.5 million for the **Hawai'i Invasive Species Council**, plus \$500,000 for **Little Fire Ant** control 
- Funding assistance for local farmers with **ungulate-proof fencing** (\$800,000) and to address agricultural pests, including the **two-line spittle bug** and **coffee berry borer beetle** (\$425,000)
- Funding the continuation of a **ports-of-entry biosecurity** program to prevent new invasive species from entering the State (\$525,000, SB 3379)
- Establishing a pilot program to harvest **gorse on Mauna Kea** and develop gorse as a marketable product (\$500,000, HB 1179)
- Establishing a task force to address overpopulation of **goats and pigs in West Hawai'i** (HCR 17)



# Funding for Our District

## Capital Improvement Projects

### Public Education

- **Waimea Elementary School, Middle School, Library, and Gym** - \$500,000 for a facilities and parking master plan
- **Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School** - \$550,000 for new stairs to connect buildings I and J courtyard area
- **Waimea Middle School** - \$3 million for improved accessibility and ADA compliance
- **Classroom cooling** - \$10 million to provide energy-efficient air conditioning, including filtration systems to improve COVID-19 and vog purification, in over 1,500 classrooms statewide
- **Waikoloa Library** - re-authorization of \$1.9 million for planning, design, and next steps towards construction

### Freshwater Infrastructure

- **North Kohala agricultural water** - \$5 million for development of Upolu Well to provide agricultural water
- **West Hawai'i water resources** - \$500,000 to expand marine electrical imaging surveys to investigate the availability of aquifers beneath the seabed that could be used as a freshwater resource

### Natural Resources

- **State Tree Nursery** - \$500,000 for Waimea and Maui facilities to improve infrastructure to support reforestation projects
- **Hawai'i District Land Office** - \$3.5 million for office space to support DLNR Land Division staff on Hawai'i Island
- **Puakō cesspool replacement** - re-authorization of \$1.8 million for the County to plan for a sewer system for Puakō, a statewide priority cesspool replacement area



### Waimea Transportation Safety Improvements

\$5.4 million in State funds as match for \$16 million in federal funds for infrastructure improvements, including pedestrian and bike safety upgrades in Waimea town, improvements at Kawaihae Road and Lindsey Road intersection, and Kawaihae Road bypass

### Kawaihae North Small Boat Harbor

\$8 million for repairs to harbor dock and break wall

### Economic Development

\$1.5 million for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) update to cover the 870-acre Hawai'i Ocean Science and Technology Park facility at NELHA



**Questions? Comments? Feedback?**

**Please contact me at  
reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov or 808-586-8510.**

## Community Grants

This year marked the return of State Grant-in-Aid funding, which was suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to declining State revenues during the pandemic. Grant-in-Aid funds support nonprofit organizations working to benefit the community.

### **This year's awardees include:**

- **Hawai'i Institute of Pacific Agriculture (HIP Ag)** - \$170,000 for farmer training, youth education, Kūpuna Box distribution, farm-to-school food sourcing, and expansion of the Food HUB in North Kohala
- **Bond Memorial Library Restoration** - \$200,000 towards restoration of the Bond Memorial Library in North Kohala
- **Project Vision** - \$600,000 towards mobile service delivery for people experiencing homelessness
- **Going Home Hawai'i** - \$250,000 for re-entry recovery housing programs and supportive services for justice-involved men, women, and families island-wide
- **Neighborhood Place of Kona** - \$120,000 for multi-generational Mobile Family Outreach in West Hawai'i
- **Hāmākua Health Center** - \$850,000 for planning, design, and construction of a new facility for a federally-qualified health center in Honoka'a
- **Hāmākua Youth Foundation** - \$200,000 for rehabilitation of the historic Okada Hospital to serve as permanent home of the Hāmākua Youth & Community Center
- **Hawai'i Island Humane Society** - \$250,000 for operations, including expansion of spay and neuter programs
- **Japanese Cultural Center of Kona** - \$250,000 towards establishment of a Japanese Cultural Center in Kona
- **Kona Historical Society** - \$250,000 for the visitor program
- **Re-Use Hawai'i** - \$75,000 towards waste diversion