

## Hawai'i State House of Representatives Update

From the Desk of District 8 Representative David Tarnas

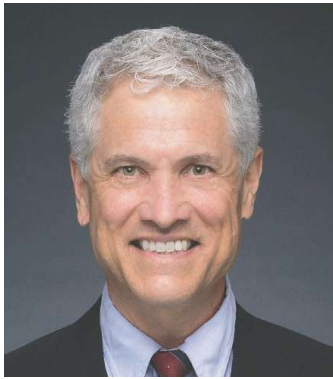


Photo courtesy of David Tarnas  
Representative David Tarnas speaks for North Kohala as a member of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives.

Aloha. After the legislature completed its 2025 session in early May, the Governor met with agency leadership, legislators and advocates and decided to sign 313 of the 321 bills approved by the legislature, vetoing eight bills. This article highlights those bills signed by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor in special public ceremonies, indicating their importance.

The most important bill signed by the Governor is HB300, a two-year budget for State agencies with \$19.8 billion in FY26 and \$19.7 billion in FY27 (FY26 means fiscal year 2026, starting July 1, 2025, ending June 30, 2026), including \$10.53 billion in general funds in FY26 and \$10.58 billion in FY27. Public construction funding of \$3.3 billion in FY26 and \$2.3 billion in FY27 includes general obligation bonds totaling \$1.4 billion in FY26 and \$432 million for FY27. Using his line-item veto authority, the Governor vetoed \$110 million in various vetoes to balance the State budget after the Council on Revenues projected slightly less tax revenue over the next two years in a decision made at their regular meeting in late May after the legislative session.

As Acting Governor when Governor Green was out of state, Lieutenant Governor (LG) Sylvia Luke signed HB934 to establish the State Broadband Office and fund "digital navigators" in each county to implement the Connect

Kakou high-speed internet initiative to provide all State residents access to reliable internet and the digital skills to use it.

LG Luke also signed HB692 to improve the State's Preschool Open Doors (POD) tuition subsidy program by expanding eligibility to include two-year-olds and to remove burdensome accreditation requirements for childcare providers. This law helps implement the State's Ready Keiki plan to provide universal access to early learning programs by 2032.

The following bills were signed into law by Governor Green in bill-signing ceremonies:

SB1396 establishes the nation's first "Green Fee" to fund State programs in climate and hazard mitigation, environmental stewardship and sustainable tourism through revenue generated by a 0.75 percent increase to the TAT (transient accommodations tax) on all hotel rooms, short term vacation rentals and cruise ships while in port.

SB1300 expands access to free school meals for Hawai'i public school students with an additional \$3.3 million over the next two school years.

HB1483 strengthens statutes relating to fireworks crimes, clarifies definitions of illegal fireworks, creates civil fines and infractions for certain offenses, and increases criminal penalties for other offenses.

HB550 allows police to use drones over public property to collect evidence of illegal fireworks, which can be used to establish probable cause for an arrest.

SB1044 reactivates the Hawai'i Hurricane Relief Fund to provide insurance coverage in scenarios where there are no private insurers offering coverage. The bill enhances the powers of the Hawai'i Property Insurance Association, establishes the Condominium Loan Program to help buildings remain insurable, and mandates the Insurance Commissioner to develop additional effective strategies to stabilize the market.

HB1001 establishes the Maui Wildfires Settlement Trust Fund to pay settlement claims from the 2023 Maui wildfires with an appropriation of \$807.5 million

as the State's portion of the total \$4.037 billion settlement agreement. This is to provide timely compensation for survivors as an alternative to lengthy litigation, while also prioritizing victims and their families by specifying that property and casualty insurance companies can only recover payments made to a policyholder through a statutory lien.

HB1064 implements the recommendations of the Phase Three report by the Fire Safety Research Institute, to improve the state's fire preparedness and response following the 2023 Maui wildfires. The law establishes the Office of the State Fire Marshal in the Department of Law Enforcement, led by the State Fire Marshal, establishes roles and duties for both the Office and the State Fire Marshal, and clarifies responsibility and reporting requirements for the Fire Marshal and Fire Council. Part of the State Fire Marshal's responsibility is to provide centralized analysis of fire occurrences in the state using annual records from each county, and mandates publication of a biennial statistical report to keep the public informed and reports to the legislature regarding the office's operations.

HB420 streamlines and improves the Hawai'i Contractor Repair Act, supporting prompt repair and remediation by establishing standardized requirements for defect claims to ensure contractors are given sufficient evidence to address the matter. The bill sets timelines regarding inspections, testing, and mediation to provide homeowners and contractors with a clear path for remedies. The bill also clarifies the statute of repose and limitation periods to deter unnecessary litigation.

SB933 appropriates \$50 million for FY26 to fund grants-in-aid for nonprofit organizations that lost federal funding. Organizations will be selected by a special legislative committee.

Information on all bills passed in the 2025 session is at [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov). Please contact me anytime with questions or concerns at (808) 586-8510 and [reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov). Mahalo!

## County Council Update

From the Desk of District 9 Councilmember James Hustace

Aloha kākou,

Infrastructure, including water availability, is a top concern across our district. Following the tsunami evacuations, North Kohala experienced a water emergency. I have been working closely with the Department of Water Supply (DWS) to ensure North Kohala's needs are prioritized. While short-term solutions like emergency upgrades to critical components

are necessary, it is paramount that long-term investments are made.

I realize it was challenging earlier this month with restricted water usage. Thank you for your patience and understanding. This action was taken because only one well was operational, causing residents to have no water, or at best, low pressure. Through this process, DWS identified high water users and urged them to reduce

water use, even installing flow restrictors to lessen the impact on the larger community. Contractors were brought on site to begin repairs and haul water from outside the system to supplement use, with potable water tankers stationed at the top of Hawi Road. DWS worked as diligently and efficiently as possible to restore

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## Future KMN Deadlines

It's important for the Kohala Mountain News to receive ads and news submissions by the following deadlines. Otherwise, submissions may not be accommodated.

**September Deadlines**  
Ads and News: 9/12/25  
Calendar: 9/19/25  
Distribution: 9/26/25

**October Deadlines**  
Ads and News: 10/10/25  
Calendar: 10/17/25  
Distribution: 10/24/25

*Our purpose is to enhance and strengthen the community by fostering continuous communication and understanding among the various cultures, residents and constituents.*

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**Letters to the Editor and Viewpoint articles must address issues affecting North Kohala and be accompanied by the author's name, address and telephone number. Letters and Viewpoints are subject to editing, and shorter submissions will receive preference for publication.**

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