

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 Kohala.

The legislative session has reached its midpoint when bills approved by one chamber cross over to the other chamber for consideration. This article highlights bills approved by the House that are priorities of the Majority Caucus and the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee, along with the public construction projects in Kohala funded in the House version of the State Budget.

Majority Package Bills:

HB427 HD2 renames the Department of Agriculture (DOA) as the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, establishes a new Deputy Director of Biosecurity, and authorizes the Department to declare a biosecurity emergency, during which the Department and Governor may take certain actions to prevent the establishment or spread of pests and prohibited or restricted organisms. The bill also broadens the objectives and general actions of the Department to achieve the objectives of the Biosecurity Program.

HB428 HD1 establishes and funds the Hawaii Farm to Families Program within the DOA to provide funds to food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or Hawaii-produced food in the State to recipients at no cost to the recipients.

HB429 HD1 appropriates funds to hire teachers and teacher assistants and for equipment and services for public preschools.

HB432 HD1 modifies the Rental Housing Revolving Fund so that the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) can make loans to work-force rental housing projects or units for persons and families with incomes at or below 140 percent of the area median income.

HB431 HD2 funds the continued operation of the Kauhale Initiative to address the needs of Hawaii's homeless population, funds the Ohana Zones Pilot Program, and also establishes the Supportive Housing Special Fund to assist HHFDC in financing the development, operation, and maintenance of affordable, supportive housing projects and the provision of supportive services for households with special needs who reside in the supportive housing projects.

HB430 HD1 permits the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish contracts with qualifying employers or registered apprenticeship programs in the private sector to offer on-the-job training opportunities for eligible interns.

HB433 HD1 appropriates funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for reentry services to connect offenders with community-based services.

Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee Priority Bills:

HB371 HD1 prohibits state or county grantees and officers and immediate family members of state or county contractors or grantees from contributing to candidate or noncandidate committees, candidates, or any person for any political purpose or use for the duration of the contract. The bill also requires the Campaign Spending Commission to publish the names of the state and county contractors and grantees, and their officers and adult immediate family members, on its website, as reported by the state and county agencies.

HB1483 HD1 establishes systems and procedures to process

fireworks infractions; establishes various criminal offenses and penalties related to fireworks and articles pyrotechnics; amends multiple fireworks definitions, fireworks licensing and permitting requirements, and penalties for fireworks offenses, including heightened penalties if another person suffers substantial bodily injury, serious bodily injury, or death because of the fireworks offenses.

HB1001 HD1 appropriates funds to the Maui Wildfires Settlement Trust Fund to fund the State's contribution to the settlement of claims related to the August 8, 2023, Maui wildfires and for the payment of administrative expenses relating to the Maui wildfires settlement agreements.

HB606 HD1 extends the Act 279 Special Fund until 2028 to allow the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) sufficient time to continue to encumber and expend the balance of the \$600 million appropriate to provide more housing for the native Hawaiians on the DHHL waitlist.

HB1064 HD2 implements recommendations of the "Phase 3" Report by the Fire Safety Research Institute on the August 2023 Maui wildfires and clarifies the role of the State Fire Marshal.

House District 8 Capital Improvement Projects

Kohala High School New Gymnasium construction: \$37 million.

Kawaihae North Small Boat Harbor construction of new break-wall and harbor dock: \$9.6 million.

Pololū Trailhead and Historic Trail design and construction of trailhead improvements, minimal parking, new lookout, development of interpretive signage, and historic trail improvements: \$1 million.

South Kohala District Courthouse plans and design: \$5 million.

Mahalo for the opportunity to serve as your State Representative. Please contact me anytime with your advice and ideas regarding legislation. For more frequent updates, sign up for my e-newsletter by sending an email to reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov or calling 808-586-8510. Aloha!

County Council Update

From the Desk of District 9 Councilmember James Hustace



Photo courtesy of James Hustace
Councilmember James Hustace represents North Kohala as part of Hawai'i County Council District 9.

Aloha Kohala!

In February I was thrilled to attend the Kohala Senior Club meeting, allowing me an opportunity to share my background and goals with our treasured kūpuna. I look forward to joining the hui once again to sing songs and hear more stories. Please celebrate and support our Kohala seniors at the 11th Annual Kūpuna Dinner on Saturday, April 19.

Over the last month it has been meaningful to connect with partners dedicated to enhancing our food systems and feeding our community. From those conversations, I was thrilled to learn of the work from Kohala Cares to restart the Kohala Community Meal, an effort designed to address food insecurity

and bring us closer together. I believe that a strong community is built on the foundation of shared resources and mutual support, and this monthly event is one step toward ensuring that no one in Kohala goes hungry.

I encourage those interested in contributing or volunteering to get involved and help make this program a success.

The Kohala Resilience Hub held another successful 'Ohana Fun Day at Kamehameha Park with resources and partners committed to enhancing community resilience. It was great to connect with community members and dedicated organizations. Mahalo for holding

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.

April Deadlines

Ads and News: 4/11/25
Calendar: 4/18/25
Distribution: 4/25/25

May Deadlines

Ads and News: 5/9/25
Calendar: 5/16/25
Distribution: 5/23/25

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.

For a twelve month subscription, please send your check for \$36, made out to the Kohala Mountain News, P.O. Box 639, Kapa'au HI 96755. Be sure to include a note stating the name and mailing address of the recipient.

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