



As part of the House Committee on Finance, Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa has been working hard to balance the state’s many important priorities with the need for fiscal prudence, especially as we plan for the state’s support of Lahaina’s recovery following the devastating August 2023 wildfires.

MID-SESSION UPDATE: \$24 Million+ For Kona Projects Secured In House Budget, Priority Policies Advancing

The 2024 Legislative session has passed the halfway mark, and the House-initiated bills have crossed over to the Senate. Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa is proud to announce that **over \$24 million in Kona priorities were secured** in the House version of HB1800, the state’s budget bill.

“I am proud that we were able to secure this funding in the House version of the state budget,” said Rep. Kahaloa. “Working together with Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha, I’m optimistic that these priorities will get carefully considered by the Senate and advance to the final budget that will go to Governor Josh Green for signature.”

INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION

Kahakai Elementary School

These projects are in addition to the \$2.5 million secured last session for parking lot improvements, and the pavement and extension of the access road.

- Plans, design, and construction for an accessible bridge to connect building A and building B. **\$2.9 million**
- Design for accessibility improvements for access for the campus. **\$390,000**

Konawaena High School

- Repair of the Ellison Onizuka Gymnasium roof, mold mitigation and replacement of damaged equipment. **\$1.2 million**
- Rekeying and access control improvements. **\$100,000**

Hawai'i Community College Pāalamanui

- Improvements and repair of buildings and public areas at Pāalamanui. **\$2 million**
- Planning and design for expansion of nursing and early childhood education labs. **\$500,000**

INVESTMENTS IN HEALTH CARE

Kona Community Hospital

Work also continues on the previously secured \$16.25 million in infrastructure upgrades to keep our community’s hospital operating, \$2.98 million for the expansion of the pharmacy, and \$2.5 million for the replacement of the oncology facility.

- Plans, design, and construction for the renovation of the current laboratory space to accommodate the move of the new imaging suite. **\$1.6 million**

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Rep. Kahaloa listens to Hawai'i Island farmer Eric Tanouye at Agriculture Awareness Day at the Capitol.

INVESTMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION

Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport

This appropriation is in addition to \$4.8 secured last session.

- Design and construction for improvements to terminals, systems, and facilities. **\$6.8 million**

Highway 11

- Design for intersection improvements at Nani Kailua Drive and Lako Street, to include widening, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and drainage and utility work. **\$1 million**

Daniel K. Inouye Highway

- Plans for a new roadway and/or realignment extending the Daniel K. Inouye Highway makai to Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway. **\$3 million**

INVESTMENTS IN OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Kealakekua Bay State Historic Park

- Plans, design and construction to implement master plan and address access, health and safety issues. **\$4.3 million**

POLICIES TO STRENGTHEN HAWAI'I'S FOOD SECURITY

With Rep. Kahaloa as Vice Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems, many of her priority policies to strengthen Hawai'i's food security advanced and crossed over to the Senate for further consideration.

HB2144 HD1 – Relating to Value-Added

Production (*Senate Companion SB2106, Crossed Over*)

This bill allows homemade food operations to expand the types of food products they can sell. In its original form, this bill would require permits from the Department of Health (DOH). However, Rep. Kahaloa is working with DOH on new language for the bill that would allow chutney, salsa, sourkraut, BBQ sauces, ketchup, relish, hot sauce, pickled mangoes, kim chee, chili sauce, tomato sauce, tomato paste, and other products to be sold without permits.

HB2146 HD2 – Relating to Agricultural Tourism

This bill authorizes agricultural tourism activities as a secondary source of income for farmers. It requires that the farming operation remain as the primary source of revenue. It also requires that certain conditions be met, including that individual counties adopt ordinances regulating agricultural tourism activities.

HB2278 HD2 – Relating to Labeling of Macadamia Nuts

The purpose of this bill is to enhance, preserve, and protect the premium brand and cachet of Hawai'i-grown macadamia nuts by clarifying the labeling requirements for macadamia nuts, including requiring the country of origin to be included on the principal display panel of a consumer package of raw or processed macadamia nuts. If the product is only partially Hawaiian-grown macadamia nuts, then the principal display should also include the percentage, by weight, of Hawaiian-grown macadamia nuts inside.

HB2619 HD1 – Relating to Agricultural Biosecurity

In honor of the late former House Agriculture Chair Rep. Clift Tsuji of Hilo, this bill appropriates funds for the biosecurity program of the Department of Agriculture to develop and implement projects for clean plant material, agricultural treatments, diagnostics and pest management. Invasive species are a larger issue in Hawai'i than in the Continental U.S. because they are more capable of collectively destabilizing Hawai'i's geographically isolated native ecosystems. Native ecosystems are vital for achieving economic independence and sustainability.

HB2620 HD2 – Relating to Department of Education Procurement

Currently, DOE is the only department limited to \$25,000 annually for procurement through the small purchase process, while other departments are limited to \$100,000. This bill would address the DOE's limited purchasing capacity and allow them the flexibility to purchase more local produce to boost their ability to reach farm-to-school goals.

HB2774 HD2 – Relating to Local Agricultural Products

This bill adjusts the existing Farm-to-School benchmarks to help our public schools – collectively the largest food service operation in Hawai'i – reach the broader Farm-to-State goal of serving 50% local agricultural, value-added, processed, and other food products by 2050.

HB2771 HD1 – Relating to Food Security

The "Double Bucks" program funds the bridge between low-income individuals and families, retailers and grocers, and local farms and agricultural producers by providing SNAP recipients with a 50% discount on fresh local produce while still allowing farmers to profit 100%. The difference is made up by a federal program that matches state funds by 6.4 times. \$2 million for this initiative is in the House draft of the state budget.

Track these and any other measures going through the Legislative process at the Capitol website, capitol.hawaii.gov. The website also includes a guide on how to navigate the site.

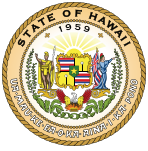


The team serving District 6 this session: Rep. Kahaloa, Office Manager Clare Ronquillo, Jake Morrow, and Jacob Leclerc.

In addition to Office Manager Clare Ronquillo, who will serve alongside Rep. Kahaloa year-round, we have two session staffers in the office.

Jake Morrow is our Committee Clerk, to provide support for Rep. Kahaloa's responsibilities as Vice Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems. Jake is a graduate of the University of California Berkeley and UH Mānoa and has a background in law and organic agriculture. He is from Kaua'i and California, will soon be applying to law school, and is passionate about leaving the world a better place than he found it. In his free time, he loves being outside and enjoys surfing, farming and soccer.

Jacob Leclerc joined Rep. Kahaloa for the 2024 session as a Legislative Aide. Jacob is a JD candidate at the William S. Richardson School of Law in the Environmental Law Program, and he hopes to learn more about energy law. He is originally from Maine and Colorado and loves being outside.



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Earlier this month, I joined the 28th Annual West Hawai'i Community Beach Cleanup along with Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, Mayor Mitch Roth, Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha, and hundreds of community volunteers. The collective commitment to keeping our Kona beautiful was a great reminder of the special community I have the honor of representing. Aloha!



Representative Kirstin Kahaloa

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