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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RENTALS FOR PUBLIC LAND LEASES.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there are a number  
2 of long-term leases of public lands originally entered into in  
3 the 1940s that have expired in recent years. Some of these  
4 leases were used for hotels, and significant hotel improvements  
5 were constructed on the premises during the lease term. In some  
6 cases, the leasehold improvements have exceeded their useful  
7 life and require costly demolition in the range of \$8,000,000 to  
8 \$10,000,000 for a single property. However, the lease forms  
9 used for these leases did not require the lessee to remove the  
10 improvements at the expiration of the lease term. As a result,  
11 the demolition cost falls on the State unless the State can pass  
12 the cost on to a future lessee who undertakes redevelopment of  
13 the land.

14           The legislature further finds that there are unimproved  
15 public lands in the State's inventory that the State desires to  
16 develop for resort, commercial, industrial, or other business or  
17 residential use. However, substantial investments in



1 infrastructure, including drainage, sewer, water, electricity,  
2 and other utilities, will be required to facilitate development  
3 of the lands with costs in the tens of millions of dollars. The  
4 legislature recognizes the State's desire to pass the  
5 infrastructure and other development costs of these lands on to  
6 a future lessee of the lands.

7 Furthermore, the legislature recognizes that chapter 171,  
8 Hawaii Revised Statutes, regarding conservation and resources,  
9 limits the amount of rent reduction or waiver that a lessee of  
10 public lands can receive for redeveloping or improving public  
11 lands to one year's rent for land leased for resort, commercial,  
12 industrial, or other business use. In many cases, a rent  
13 reduction or waiver equal to one year of ground rent would be an  
14 insufficient incentive to induce a developer to invest in the  
15 demolition of aged improvements on and redevelopment of public  
16 land, or in the provision of basic infrastructure necessary to  
17 facilitate the further development of unimproved public land.

18 The purpose of this Act is to authorize the board of land  
19 and natural resources to approve rental reductions or waivers  
20 for leases that require substantial demolition costs or



1 infrastructure improvement costs for the lessee to utilize the  
2 premises.

3 SECTION 2. Section 171-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended to read as follows:

5 "**§171-6 Powers.** Except as otherwise provided by law, the  
6 board of land and natural resources shall have the powers and  
7 functions granted to the heads of departments and the board of  
8 land and natural resources under chapter 26.

9 In addition to the foregoing, the board may:

- 10 (1) Adopt a seal;
- 11 (2) Administer oaths;
- 12 (3) Prescribe forms of instruments and documents;
- 13 (4) Adopt rules which, upon compliance with chapter 91,  
14 shall have the force and effect of law;
- 15 (5) Set, charge, demand, and collect reasonable fees for  
16 the preparation of documents to be issued, for the  
17 surveying of public lands, and for the issuing of  
18 certified copies of its government records, which  
19 fees, when collected, shall be deposited into the  
20 state general fund, unless otherwise specified in this  
21 chapter;



- 1 (6) Establish additional restrictions, requirements, or  
2 conditions, [~~not inconsistent~~] consistent with those  
3 prescribed in this chapter, relating to the use of  
4 particular land being disposed of, the terms of sale,  
5 lease, license, or permit, and the qualifications of  
6 any person to draw, bid, or negotiate for public land;
- 7 (7) Reduce or waive the lease rental at the beginning of  
8 the lease on any lease of public land to be used for  
9 any agricultural or pastoral use, or for resort,  
10 commercial, industrial, or other business use where  
11 the land being leased requires substantial  
12 improvements to be placed thereon; provided that  
13 [~~such~~] the reduction or waiver shall not exceed two  
14 years for land to be used for any agricultural or  
15 pastoral use, or exceed one year for land to be used  
16 for resort, commercial, industrial, or other business  
17 use; provided further that, if a lease for resort,  
18 commercial, industrial, or other business or  
19 residential purposes requires a lessee to demolish  
20 existing improvements or provide basic infrastructure,  
21 including drainage, sewer, water, electricity, and



1           other utilities, before the lessee can make productive  
2           use of the land, the board may approve a reduction or  
3           waiver of lease rental of up to twenty years that  
4           shall not exceed the amount of the lessee's total  
5           expenditures for demolition or provision of the  
6           infrastructure;

7           (8) Delegate to the chairperson or employees of the  
8           department of land and natural resources, subject to  
9           the board's control and responsibility, such powers  
10          and duties as may be lawful or proper for the  
11          performance of the functions vested in the board;

12          (9) Use arbitration under chapter 658A to settle any  
13          controversy arising out of any existing or future  
14          lease;

15          (10) Set, charge, and collect reasonable fees in an amount  
16          sufficient to defray the cost of performing or  
17          otherwise providing for the inspection of activities  
18          permitted upon the issuance of a land license  
19          involving a commercial purpose;



- 1 (11) Appoint [~~masters or~~] hearing officers to conduct  
2 public hearings as provided by law and under such  
3 conditions as the board by rules shall establish;
- 4 (12) Bring such actions as may be necessary to remove or  
5 remedy encroachments upon public lands. Any person  
6 causing an encroachment upon public land shall:
- 7 (A) Be fined not more than \$1,000 a day for the first  
8 offense;
- 9 (B) Be fined not less than \$1,000 nor more than  
10 \$4,000 per day upon the second offense and  
11 thereafter;
- 12 (C) If required by the board, restore the land to its  
13 original condition if altered and assume the  
14 costs thereof;
- 15 (D) Assume such costs as may result from adverse  
16 effects from such restoration; and
- 17 (E) Be liable for administrative costs incurred by  
18 the department and for payment of damages;
- 19 (13) Set, charge, and collect interest and a service charge  
20 on delinquent payments due on leases, sales, or other  
21 accounts. The rate of interest shall not exceed



1 one per cent a month and the service charge shall not  
2 exceed \$50 a month for each delinquent payment;  
3 provided that the contract shall state the interest  
4 rate and the service charge and be signed by the party  
5 to be charged;

6 (14) Set, charge, and collect additional rentals for the  
7 unauthorized use of public lands by a lessee,  
8 licensee, grantee, or permittee who is in violation of  
9 any term or condition of a lease, license, easement,  
10 or revocable permit, retroactive to the date of the  
11 occurrence of the violation. Such amounts shall be  
12 considered delinquent payments and shall be subject to  
13 interest and service charges as provided in  
14 paragraph (13);

15 (15) Set, charge, and collect reasonable fines for  
16 violation of this chapter or any rule adopted  
17 thereunder. Any person engaging in any prohibited use  
18 of public lands or conducting any prohibited activity  
19 on public lands, or violating any of the other  
20 provisions of this chapter or any rule adopted

1           thereunder, for which violation a penalty is not  
2           otherwise provided, shall be:

3           (A) Fined not more than \$5,000 per violation for a  
4           first violation or a violation beyond five years  
5           of the last violation; provided that, after  
6           written or verbal notification from the  
7           department, an additional \$1,000 per day per  
8           violation may be assessed for each day in which  
9           the violation persists;

10          (B) Fined not more than \$10,000 per violation for a  
11          second violation within five years of the last  
12          violation; provided that, after written or verbal  
13          notification from the department, an additional  
14          \$2,000 per day per violation may be assessed for  
15          each day in which the violation persists;

16          (C) Fined not more than \$20,000 per violation for a  
17          third or subsequent violation within five years  
18          of the last violation; provided that, after  
19          written or verbal notification from the  
20          department, an additional \$4,000 per day per



1 violation may be assessed for each day in which  
2 the violation persists; and

3 (D) Liable for administrative costs and expenses  
4 incurred by the department and for payment for  
5 damages, including but not limited to natural  
6 resource damages.

7 In addition to the fines, administrative costs, and  
8 damages provided for hereinabove, for damage to or  
9 theft of natural resources, the board may also set,  
10 charge, and collect a fine that, in its discretion, is  
11 appropriate considering the value of the natural  
12 resource that is damaged or the subject of the theft.

13 In arriving at an appropriate fine, the board may  
14 consider the market value of the natural resource  
15 damaged or taken and any other factor it deems  
16 appropriate, such as the loss of the natural resource  
17 to its natural habitat and environment and the cost of  
18 restoration or replacement. The remedies provided for  
19 in this paragraph are cumulative and in addition to  
20 any other remedies allowed by law.



1 No person shall be sanctioned pursuant to this section  
2 for the exercise of native Hawaiian gathering rights  
3 and traditional cultural practices as authorized by  
4 law or as permitted by the department pursuant to  
5 article XII, section 7, of the Hawaii state  
6 constitution;

7 (16) Issue revenue bonds, subject to the approval of the  
8 legislature. All revenue bonds shall be issued  
9 pursuant to part III of chapter 39, except as provided  
10 in this chapter. All revenue bonds shall be issued in  
11 the name of the department and not in the name of the  
12 State. The final maturity date of the revenue bonds  
13 may be any date not exceeding thirty years from the  
14 date of issuance;

15 (17) Pledge or assign all or any part of the receipts and  
16 revenues of the department. The revenue bonds shall  
17 be payable from and secured solely by the revenue  
18 derived by the department from the industrial park or  
19 parks for which the bonds are issued;

20 (18) Reimburse the state general fund for debt service on  
21 general obligation bonds or reimbursable general



1 obligation bonds issued by the State for purposes of  
2 this chapter;

3 (19) Notwithstanding part II of chapter 205A to the  
4 contrary, plan, design, construct, operate, and  
5 maintain any lands or facilities under the  
6 jurisdiction of the division of boating and ocean  
7 recreation of the department without the need to  
8 obtain a special management area minor permit or  
9 special management area use permit; and

10 (20) Do any and all things necessary to carry out its  
11 purposes and exercise the powers granted in this  
12 chapter."

13 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
14 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval  
16 and shall be repealed on June 30, 2026; provided that  
17 section 171-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, shall be reenacted in  
18 the form in which it read on the day prior to the effective date  
19 of this Act.



**Report Title:**

BLNR; Public Lands; Rental Reduction or Waiver

**Description:**

Authorizes the board of land and natural resources to approve rental reductions or waivers for leases on public lands that require substantial demolition or infrastructure improvement costs for the lessee to utilize the premises. Sunsets 6/30/2026. (HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

