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Inside this newsletter:

- Budget and bill priorities advancing through the Legislature
- House Water and Land Committee legislative highlights

COVID-19 Information & Resources

- ⇒ Call: 2-1-1 (open 7 a.m. – 10 p.m.)
- ⇒ Email: info211@auw.org
- ⇒ Visit: hawaiiicovid19.com or coronavirus.gov

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID A. TARNAS

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February/March 2022

Aloha!

The 2022 legislative session opened on January 19, and the process for introduction and consideration of legislation is now underway. This year, I was the first primary introducer of 25 bills, and the co-sponsor of dozens more bills on a range of topics. These legislative proposals are now being considered through committee hearings and public testimony.

In this newsletter, I share details about a selection of bills I introduced, and others currently being considered by the Legislature. You can learn more about these measures and all the bills being considered at the Legislature through the State Capitol website, capitol.hawaii.gov. The Capitol website allows you to track bills, watch hearings streaming online, and offer written or live virtual testimony in committee hearings.



Introducing bills for consideration this session.



Please contact me any time at reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov and 808-586-8510 with your ideas, opinions about proposed legislation, or any other matter related to State government.

I am always grateful to hear from you with your input on legislation and any other State policy matters as I continue to work diligently to serve our community. It is an honor and privilege to serve as your State Representative.

Mahalo,

You can **stay up-to-date** about the legislative session, state projects, events, and opportunities with my email newsletter.

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Water and Land Committee Priorities

The House Committee on Water and Land reviews legislation on a wide range of issues, including any policy matter involving water, land, forests, watersheds, wildlife, the coastal zone, and marine issues. As Chair of the Water and Land Committee, I am responsible for making decisions as to which bills pass through this committee. Below are some of the priority bills that I have moved through the Water and Land Committee this session for consideration by the next subject matter committee.

Underlined bills indicate those for which I was a primary introducer.



Abundant Marine Ecosystems

HB 1653 increases the penalties for violations of aquatic resource rules and laws.

HB 1930 funds the deployment, replacement, and maintenance of fish aggregation devices.

Trails and Forestry

HB 1656 increases support to the State Na Ala Hele program for the protection and expansion of public trail access statewide.

HB 1769 provides additional funds to DLNR to study and combat rapid ‘ōhi‘a death.

HB 2202 establishes the ‘ōhi‘a lehua as the state endemic tree.

HB 2446 funds 28 additional staff positions within the state parks system.

HB 1766 authorizes increased spending to support state parks.

Supporting Local Agriculture

HB 1668 requires the State to update the classification of agricultural lands using current soil productivity data.

HB 1768 exempts instream use of water for traditional and customary kalo farming from the requirement of obtaining a water license.

HB 2199 provides funds for DLNR to restore and restock loko i‘a (fishponds).

HB 1657 requires the Division of Forestry and Wildlife to submit a funded action plan when withdrawing lands from pasture leases for reforestation purposes.

HB 1659 allows state land leases for pasture use offered under the DLNR to be amended, extended, negotiated, and appraised under the same terms used for pasture leases offered by the Department of Agriculture.

HB 1660 requires DLNR to revise its land classifications to include agricultural multi-use lands, and funds an agricultural multi-use lands specialist at DLNR.

Combatting Alien Pest Species

HB 1518 funds State work to control little fire ants.

HB 1714 funds the State program to mitigate and control the spread of the two-lined spittle bug and recovery of pasture lands damaged by the invasive pest.

HB 2200 funds the continuation and expansion of the Department of Agriculture Ports-of-Entry Biosecurity Program.

HB 1721 addresses feral animal management by requiring interagency collaboration and funding a specialist position.

Land Use Policy Reform

HB 2024 establishes an alternative management framework for Mauna Kea.

HB 2332 allows easements on public lands to be exempted from the formal subdivision process and approval requirements.

HB 2417 requires DLNR to review and implement the recommendations of the House Investigative Committee (HIC21) which studied the management of the Special Land and Development Fund.

HB 1670 creates a committee to resolve district boundary disputes brought before the land use commission.

HB 1929 requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct a study to refine rural district policies and make recommendations to facilitate reclassification of lands from the agricultural district to the rural district.

HB 1979 requires the development of a habitat conservation plan for activities with a high likelihood of resulting in an incidental take of a threatened or endangered species.

HB 1931 funds a position to support landscape-scale mosquito control.

House Legislative Priorities



Over a thousand new legislative proposals were introduced in the House of Representatives this session, addressing a wide variety of topics. Usually, a few hundred bills will pass each year. Below, I highlight several of the priority bills I am supporting this session. Underlined bills indicate those for which I was a primary introducer.

We are also reviewing and revising the Governor's \$16.9 billion State Executive Budget. As our state continues to recover from the public health crisis and economic impacts of COVID-19, we are now able to restore funding for some of the programs and services which were reduced during the pandemic, including investment in public infrastructure, support for sustainable economic revitalization, and essential public services benefitting working families, kūpuna, and youth.

Supporting Working Families

One of the top priority bills that we are considering in the State House would increase the minimum wage and provide more tax relief to working families. I was a primary introducer of [HB 2510](#), which addresses the findings of a report conducted by the Aloha United Way that found that 47% of Hawaii's families were financially distressed and simply could not make it here economically. The bill increases the state's minimum wage incrementally, increases the refundable food excise tax credit, and makes the state earned income tax credit refundable and permanent.

Protecting Community Health

[HB 1570](#) bans the sale of flavored tobacco and synthetic nicotine products, including e-liquids for vaping, to individuals under 21.

[HB 1689](#) strengthens the reporting and inspection of shipping cargo to prevent illegal import of fireworks.

[HB 1695](#) increases the fines for fireworks-related violations.

Mālama Kūpuna

[HB 1754](#) provides funds to restore dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

[HB 1822](#) extends the renewal period for driver's licenses from two years to four years for licensees who are 70 or older but younger than 80 years of age.

[HB 1824](#) appropriates funds to the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, which identifies, investigates, and resolves complaints of conditions that may adversely affect the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, adult residential care homes, assisted living facilities, and other long-term care settings.

Increasing Funding for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

Since the demographic group that has been hardest hit and most priced out of housing is Native Hawaiians, I was a primary introducer of [HB 2511](#), which appropriates \$600 million to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to enable beneficiaries of the Hawaiian Homelands Trust to acquire their own homes.

Expanding Affordable Housing

[HB 1836](#) establishes expedited county approvals of district boundary amendments for affordable housing projects.

[HB 1840](#) authorizes counties to determine certain district boundary amendments for lands 15-50 acres in size, when the amendment is necessary for affordable housing development.

[HB 1837](#) requires each county to reduce zoning and regulatory barriers to affordable housing development.

[HB 1751](#) authorizes counties to allow up to one dwelling per quarter-acre in rural districts as long as the project is consistent with the county general plan and community development plan.

[HB 1796](#) provides funds and extends the sunset date for the Ohana zones pilot program to reduce homelessness by placing individuals into permanent housing, expanding housing, and preserving existing housing.

[HB 2084](#) allows landowners and lessees of important agricultural lands to apply to the counties to develop farm cluster housing on the lands for rental to farmers and farm employees who work on the farm.

[HB 1748](#) increases funding to the rental housing revolving fund.

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Participating in the 2022 Legislative Session

The 2022 Legislative Session and all committee hearings are **fully remotely accessible**. This means you can **watch committee hearings** and **testify** via Zoom videoconference on the bills and resolutions being considered in legislative hearings, using any computer or mobile device connected to the internet.

Your input and participation helps the Legislature do our jobs better! I encourage you to learn more in this newsletter, on the State Capitol webpage at capitol.hawaii.gov, or by contacting my office any time.

Additional support and assistance with participating in the Legislative Session are available from the State Capitol's Public Access Room, which is available at lrb.hawaii.gov/par, by email at par@capitol.hawaii.gov, or by phone at (808) 587-0478.

**Questions? Concerns? Ideas?
I'm here to listen!**

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