
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE SAND ISLAND STATE RECREATION AREA.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Sand Island
2 state recreation area is one of few readily accessible urban
3 beach parks in Honolulu that provides a panoramic view from
4 Diamond Head to the Waianae mountains. The one hundred forty
5 acre park hosts a variety of historic and scenic resources while
6 also offering a unique combination of recreational facilities
7 and opportunities for land-based and ocean recreation, including
8 picnicking, camping, remote control car operations, BMX
9 bicycling, softball, beach activities, swimming, surfing,
10 fishing, and canoe paddling. The park is also adjacent to a
11 boat ramp maintained by the division of boating and ocean
12 recreation of the department of land and natural resources. The
13 division also offers parking and a wash-down area for ocean
14 recreation users, enabling ocean access for a variety of boats
15 including sailboats and jet skis. The University of Hawaii's
16 maritime training and education center also has its facilities



1 near the park, where the revered Hokule'a ocean voyaging canoe is
2 based.

3 The legislature also finds that the Sand Island state
4 recreation area comprises a developed section and an undeveloped
5 section, roughly splitting the park in half. The developed
6 section includes infrastructure, facilities, and utilities that
7 were built in the 1970s to support park day-use, camping, and
8 ocean recreation access. However, the infrastructure and
9 facilities have deteriorated over the years from age, heavy use
10 and misuse, and hostile environmental conditions caused by
11 saltwater exposure. The deterioration has been exacerbated by a
12 lack of sufficient operating and maintenance funds. Due to this
13 deterioration, the developed portion of the park is currently
14 underutilized in comparison to its capacity. Further, the park
15 is considered unsightly, due to its deteriorated state, and
16 unsafe, as a result of its heavy use by non-recreational
17 patrons.

18 The undeveloped section of the park abuts the Honolulu
19 wastewater treatment plant and contains abandoned military
20 berms, long-thorn kiawe, and illegally dumped rubbish and waste.
21 The historic military infrastructure that remains in this



1 portion of the park reflects the park's use during World War II
2 as an internment camp and prisoner-of-war detention facility.
3 Currently, this portion of the park is consistently occupied by
4 a fluctuating homeless population that inhabits the shoreline
5 area. This population and the prevalence of long-thorn kiawe
6 create management challenges and deter park users from using
7 this portion of the park for recreational purposes.

8 The legislature further finds that residents and visitors
9 are seeking additional outdoor recreation opportunities and
10 deserve and are attracted to safe and maintained park units,
11 especially those adjacent to the beach and ocean in Honolulu.
12 Public surveys conducted for the 2020-2021 statewide
13 comprehensive outdoor recreation plan identified the public's
14 desire for additional outdoor and ocean recreation access and
15 opportunities, well-maintained infrastructure and facilities,
16 and the protection of cultural and historic resources. Sand
17 Island state recreation area has the potential to be developed
18 into a "people's park" to meet these needs. The undeveloped
19 portion of the park also provides opportunities for open grass
20 fields that can accommodate a variety of sports and games,



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1 walking and biking paths, and additional space for picnics and
2 family gatherings.

3 The legislature additionally finds that Native Hawaiian
4 arts and cultural traditions are unique to Hawai'i and have been
5 a major marketing tool for Hawaii's tourism industry.
6 Unfortunately, Native Hawaiians have been the "unseen" of the
7 Hawai'i art scene. The vast majority of "Hawaiian art" is
8 imported or produced by non-Hawaiians employing Hawaiian themes
9 or motifs, with much of the artwork promoting misconceptions of
10 the Hawaiian community. Moreover, there are precious few
11 organizations that represent, support, or promote Native
12 Hawaiian art and artists. Little data existed about the Native
13 Hawaiian arts community prior to 2005, and much of the
14 information regarding the difficulties Native Hawaiian artists
15 faced was anecdotal.

16 This changed in 2005 to 2006 when the PA'I Foundation, with
17 funding from the office of Hawaiian affairs and Ford Foundation,
18 conducted a needs assessment survey among the Hawaiian arts
19 community. The survey was distributed through the mail, online,
20 at arts events, conferences, and community gatherings. The
21 foundation further conducted personal interviews with kupuna



1 (elders) and other artists who were not comfortable with or had
2 no access to computers or the Internet. Over two hundred
3 artists and cultural practitioners participated. The results
4 demonstrated a need for the creation of economic opportunities
5 for artists.

6 The results of the survey indicated that:

- 7 (1) 75.8 per cent of the hālau interviewed do not have
8 nonprofit status or a related nonprofit;
- 9 (2) 85.7 per cent of responding hālau receive \$0 from
10 grants;
- 11 (3) 18.4 per cent have a dedicated space for teaching;
- 12 (4) 63.3 per cent use multipurpose centers, such as school
13 cafeterias, for teaching;
- 14 (5) 42.9 per cent teach on cement flooring;
- 15 (6) 90.4 per cent of hula practitioners interviewed would
16 like to see a statewide organization dedicated to
17 supporting Native Hawaiian culture and arts;
- 18 (7) 75.9 per cent of hula practitioners see the need for a
19 Native Hawaiian cultural center;



- 1 (8) 89.6 per cent of artists would like an art hālau where
2 they could access studio space, materials, equipment
3 or tools, intellectual exchange, and other knowledge;
- 4 (9) There were insufficient venues for exhibiting and
5 selling;
- 6 (10) Less than half had shown their works in museums,
7 galleries, or festivals;
- 8 (11) Ninety per cent of the artists surveyed reported that
9 a Native Hawaiian arts market would help them to
10 promote their art; and
- 11 (12) Ninety-three per cent would be interested in
12 participating in such a market.

13 The data provided the groundwork for much of the PA'I
14 Foundation's programming initiatives to support Native Hawaiian
15 arts and cultural practitioners. In partnership with other
16 Native Hawaiian arts organizations, Ke'ehi canoe clubs, hālau
17 hula, individual artists, and cultural practitioners, the
18 legislature is seeking support to set aside a portion of the
19 Sand Island state recreation area to create a Native Hawaiian
20 arts and cultural center to serve the needs of the Native
21 Hawaiian arts community. The proposed facility could include



1 canoe sheds and storage areas to house the canoes, paddles, life
2 vests, and necessary equipment for the canoe clubs at Ke'ehi; a
3 viewing stand for canoe officials to judge and officiate canoe
4 races as well as national and international events like the
5 world sprints; bathroom facilities and showers for participants
6 and community use; a large open stadium facility for concerts
7 and cultural events; classroom spaces; an art studio; outside
8 facilities for carving and other cultural practices; a
9 commercial kitchen for the teaching of traditional food
10 preparation; and a garden space for growing traditional foods
11 and other traditional practices.

12 The legislature is cognizant that, due to the park's
13 proximity to the ocean, any future development must factor in
14 managed retreat and development that is resilient to the future
15 impacts of sea level rise. Future development must also
16 acknowledge and transparently honor the historical mistreatment
17 of the host culture and the area's role in World War II, both of
18 which are unfortunate mistakes of the past.

19 The legislature further finds that the legislature
20 appropriated \$5,000,000 during the regular session of 2019 for
21 park improvements, including the removal and clean-up of remnant



1 debris from World War II. As of 2022, \$3,000,000 had been
2 expended to improve park infrastructure, including improvements
3 to the park's aging and failing sewage system. The remaining
4 \$2,000,000 was to be used to clear and clean unsafe debris and
5 materials from the park's shoreline.

6 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of
7 land and natural resources to prepare a master plan for the Sand
8 Island state recreation area.

9 SECTION 2. The department of land and natural resources
10 shall prepare a master plan for the Sand Island state recreation
11 area that develops the concept of a "people's park". The plan
12 shall:

- 13 (1) Incorporate community and stakeholder participation
14 and address improvements for developed and undeveloped
15 portions of the state recreation area;
- 16 (2) Incorporate a Native Hawaiian arts and cultural center
17 for community uses;
- 18 (3) Assess current and future environmental conditions
19 such as climate change and sea level rise;
- 20 (4) Propose improvements to existing facilities and
21 infrastructure;



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Report Title:

DLNR; Sand Island State Recreation Area; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the department of land and natural resources to prepare a master plan for the Sand Island state recreation area.

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