

JAN 28 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the royal mausoleum,
2 also known as Mauna ‘Ala in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, is the sacred resting
3 place of the ali‘i of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties,
4 among other high chiefs of Hawai‘i. This wahi pana holds deep
5 cultural, historical, and spiritual significance for Native
6 Hawaiians and the people of Hawai‘i. Mauna ‘Ala embodies the
7 mana of the ali‘i and the cultural practice of mālama iwi kūpuna,
8 expressing the enduring respect for the ancestors who shaped
9 Hawai‘i's history and identity.

10 Since its transfer to the department of land and natural
11 resources in 1967, Mauna ‘Ala has been maintained by the State.
12 However, the legislature finds that concerns have arisen from
13 Native Hawaiian organizations, the Ali‘i trusts, and cultural
14 descendants about ensuring that all management decisions uphold
15 traditional protocols, respect genealogical ties, and preserve
16 the sanctity of the site.



1 The legislature believes that a permanent body dedicated
2 exclusively to the protection and management of Mauna 'Ala will
3 provide the necessary cultural guidance, policy continuity, and
4 community oversight to safeguard the site for future
5 generations.

6 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish the
7 royal mausoleum commission under the department of land and
8 natural resources to ensure the respectful stewardship,
9 preservation, and appropriate management of the royal mausoleum,
10 or Mauna 'Ala, in accordance with Hawaiian cultural traditions
11 and values.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 6E, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
13 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
14 read as follows:

15 "§6E- Royal mausoleum commission. (a) There is
16 established a permanent commission to be known as the royal
17 mausoleum commission, placed within the department for
18 administrative purposes. The commission shall exercise
19 policy-making authority independent of the department, except
20 for budgetary, fiscal, and personnel administration purposes,
21 regarding the royal mausoleum, also known as Mauna 'Ala. For the



1 purposes of this section, "commission" means the royal mausoleum
2 commission established under this section.

3 (b) The commission shall consist of the following voting
4 members:

5 (1) One member chosen from the organizations listed in
6 paragraphs (4) through (9) and appointed by the
7 governor to serve as chairperson of the commission;

8 (2) One member appointed by the president of the senate
9 with direction from the senate standing committee with
10 primary jurisdiction over Hawaiian affairs;

11 (3) One member appointed by the speaker of the house of
12 representatives with direction from the house of
13 representatives standing committee with primary
14 jurisdiction over Hawaiian affairs;

15 (4) Five representatives of the ali'i trusts that have
16 founders interred at Mauna 'Ala; one each from
17 Kamehameha Schools, the Lili'uokalani Trust, the
18 Queen's Health Systems, the Kapi'olani Medical Center,
19 and the Lunalilo Trust;

20 (5) Four representatives of the royal societies; one each
21 from the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, 'Ahahui



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1 Ka'ahumanu, Hale O Na Ali'i O Hawai'i 'Ahahui Po'o, and
2 the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors
3 Māmakakaua;

4 (6) One representative from the Association of Hawaiian
5 Civic Clubs;

6 (7) One representative from an island burial council;

7 (8) Two lineal descendants of those interred at Mauna 'Ala
8 that are representative of the Kamehameha dynasty and
9 the Kalakaua dynasty, or kahu family members whose
10 genealogy is connected to those interred at Mauna 'Ala;
11 and

12 (9) One representative from the Daughters of Hawai'i;

13 Members of the commission shall serve four-year terms and
14 may be reappointed thereafter to the commission. Initial
15 appointments shall be staggered, with half of the members
16 serving two-year terms to ensure continuity. Members shall
17 serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for their
18 actual and necessary expenses, including travel expenses,
19 incurred in the performance of their duties, subject to
20 legislative appropriation.

21 (c) The commission shall:



- 1 (1) Develop and implement a comprehensive management plan
2 for the protection, maintenance, and interpretation of
3 Mauna 'Ala, including all crypts, vaults, chapel,
4 structures, and the surrounding grounds;
- 5 (2) In consultation with Native Hawaiian organizations,
6 the ali'i trusts, lineal descendants, and kahu
7 families, establish protocols governing:
- 8 (A) Access by visitors, researchers, and
9 practitioners;
- 10 (B) Ceremonial and ritual practices;
- 11 (C) Curation and interment of remains; and
- 12 (D) Selection of the official kahu or curator of
13 Mauna 'Ala to ensure continuity of traditional
14 practice;
- 15 (3) Advise and collaborate with the department and other
16 agencies regarding conservation, security,
17 infrastructure, and visitor management;
- 18 (4) Accept, receive, and expend gifts, grants, and
19 appropriations for purposes consistent with this
20 section;



1 (5) Engage the public, Native Hawaiian organizations, and
2 the ali'i trusts in education, outreach, and
3 consultation regarding Mauna 'Ala; and

4 (6) Submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
5 including any proposed legislation, a summary of the
6 condition of the site and the activities of the
7 commission, and financial statements, to the
8 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the
9 convening of each regular session.

10 (d) The commission may employ an executive director and
11 other staff exempt from chapter 76, subject to legislative
12 appropriation. Any executive director employed under this
13 section shall report directly to the commission and coordinate
14 with the department to implement policies adopted by the
15 commission.

16 (e) The legislature shall appropriate sufficient funds to
17 support the operations of the commission, including maintenance
18 and cultural programming. The commission may also receive
19 private or federal funds to further its objectives.

20 (f) The commission may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
21 necessary to carry out the purposes of this section, including



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1 rules relating to access, ceremonies, maintenance, and the
2 respectful treatment of human remains and artifacts.

3 (g) If any provision of this section, or the application
4 thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the
5 invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of
6 the section that can be given effect without the invalid
7 provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this
8 section are severable."

9 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

10 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

11 INTRODUCED BY:

A large, bold, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. K. N.', is written over a horizontal line.

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Report Title:

DLNR; Mauna 'Ala; Royal Mausoleum Commission; Rules; Reports

Description:

Establishes a Royal Mausoleum Commission within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to develop and implement policy for the preservation, operation, and outreach of Mauna 'Ala. Allows the Royal Mausoleum Commission to make rules as necessary, employ staff, and receive private or federal funds. Requires the Royal Mausoleum Commission to report annually to the Legislature. Requires the Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to support the Royal Mausoleum Commission.

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

