

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



GOV. MSG. NO. 1272

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

June 26, 2026

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate,
and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on June 26, 2026, the following bill was signed into law:

H.B. NO. 2475, H.D. 1, S.D. 1,
C.D. 1

RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS.
ACT 170

Mahalo,

Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that ‘ōkolehao is a
2 traditional Hawaiian distilled spirit with deep historical and
3 cultural significance. ‘Ōkolehao traces its origins to the early
4 contact period in Hawai‘i and was historically produced from
5 fermented kī (Cordyline fruticose) root, commonly known as ti
6 plant or ti-leaf, a plant of profound cultural importance used
7 for food, medicine, ceremony, and material culture in Native
8 Hawaiian society. The legislature further finds that ‘ōkolehao
9 was widely recognized in the nineteenth and early twentieth
10 centuries as a distinctive spirit of Hawai‘i, celebrated
11 internationally and produced exclusively in the islands. Over
12 time, however, the absence of clear standards and labeling
13 protections has allowed the ‘ōkolehao name to be misused,
14 undermining consumer confidence and diluting the cultural
15 integrity and economic potential of this historic Hawaiian
16 product.



1 The legislature also finds that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax
2 and Trade Bureau of the United States Department of the Treasury
3 regulates the labeling of distilled spirits in interstate
4 commerce, including standards of identity that define the class
5 and type designations used on distilled spirits labels. The
6 Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau has been asked to
7 establish a federal standard of identity for 'ōkolehao to clarify
8 minimum production requirements and prevent consumer confusion
9 in domestic and foreign markets. The legislature believes that
10 the establishment of a state-level standard and labeling
11 requirements will support and complement ongoing efforts to
12 define 'ōkolehao as a distinctive product of Hawai'i.

13 The legislature additionally finds that successful global
14 distilled spirits industries have established clear and scalable
15 standards of identity that balance authenticity with market
16 viability. These frameworks commonly require a minimum
17 threshold of fifty-one per cent of the primary agricultural
18 ingredient, while allowing for premium tiers that meet one
19 hundred per cent composition standards.

20 The legislature further finds that whiskey in the United
21 States is required to have a base of no less than fifty-one per



1 cent grain, and tequila requires no less than fifty-one per cent
2 blue agave, with one hundred per cent agave products recognized
3 as a premium tier. These models have supported the growth of
4 globally recognized industries while preserving authenticity and
5 consumer trust.

6 The legislature also finds that aligning Hawai'i's standard
7 of identity for 'ōkolehao with a similar minimum threshold will
8 support consistency with ongoing federal efforts, reduce
9 regulatory confusion, and enable the development of a scalable,
10 locally rooted industry that benefits Hawai'i farmers,
11 manufacturers, and communities.

12 The legislature additionally finds that other regionally
13 distinctive food and beverage products, such as tequila,
14 bourbon, and champagne, have demonstrated that clear standards,
15 authentic branding, and place-based visitor experiences can
16 drive strong economic outcomes for local communities by
17 supporting agricultural production, creating jobs, and
18 attracting higher-spending visitors.

19 The legislature further finds that Kentucky's distilling
20 industry has become a major driver of Kentucky's economy, with
21 reports estimating billions of dollars in annual economic output



1 and millions of visitor experiences related to distillery
2 tourism. The legislature notes that Napa Valley's visitor
3 economy demonstrates how a distinctive, place-based beverage
4 identity can position a rural region as an international
5 destination, supporting billions of dollars in visitor spending,
6 generating local tax revenue, and sustaining thousands of jobs.

7 Establishing similar protections for 'ōkolehao will help
8 restore its rightful place in the State's cultural and
9 agricultural landscape while creating an authentic visitor
10 experience that strengthens the State's brand as a destination
11 rooted in culture, place, and local production.

12 The legislature recognizes that kī cultivation and 'ōkolehao
13 distillation present opportunities to support Hawai'i farmers,
14 promote value-added agriculture, and strengthen rural economies,
15 while ensuring that consumers receive a product that is
16 truthfully labeled and rooted in Hawai'i.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to protect 'ōkolehao
18 as a distinctive product of Hawai'i by establishing labeling
19 requirements for 'ōkolehao products.



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 486, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding a new section to part V to be appropriately
3 designated and to read as follows:

4 "§486- Okolehao; labeling requirements. (a) No label
5 on a consumer package that contains or includes a distilled
6 spirit shall use:

7 (1) The words "ōkolehao", "okolehao", "Hawaiian

8 'ōkolehao", or any variation of these terms; or

9 (2) Hawaiian imagery, place names, or motifs that would
10 mislead a reasonable person into believing the
11 consumer package contains or includes a distilled
12 spirit that contains or includes 'ōkolehao,

13 unless the distilled spirit meets the definition of 'ōkolehao.

14 (b) Any nonconsumer package of 'ōkolehao introduced into
15 intrastate or interstate commerce shall bear a label clearly
16 stating that the product is "Hawai'i-distilled 'ōkolehao made
17 with Hawai'i-grown kī".

18 (c) The department may establish and administer a
19 voluntary certification mark program to verify compliance with
20 this section.



1 (d) The department may bring an action for injunctive
2 relief to compel compliance with this section.

3 (e) Any person who violates this section shall be subject
4 to penalties under section 486-32.

5 (f) For the purposes of this section:

6 "'Ōkolehao" means a distilled spirit that:

7 (1) Is distilled from a fermented mash, at least fifty-one
8 per cent of the fermentable sugars of which is derived
9 from kī root (Cordyline fruticosa), also known as the
10 ti plant or ti-leaf; provided that one hundred per
11 cent of the kī root used is grown in the State;

12 (2) Is distilled and bottled in the State;

13 (3) Is distilled at less than ninety-five per cent alcohol
14 by volume (one hundred ninety degrees proof);

15 (4) Is bottled at no less than forty per cent alcohol by
16 volume (eighty degrees proof);

17 (5) May contain flavoring or coloring materials, including
18 those added through barrel aging; provided that the
19 flavoring or coloring materials comply with federal
20 standards; and



1 (6) Is distilled from agricultural products, at least
2 fifty-one per cent of which were cultivated and
3 harvested within the State."

4 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
5 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
6 begun before its effective date.

7 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



H.B. NO. 2475
H.D. 1
S.D. 1
C.D. 1

APPROVED this 26th day of June , 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Iwao' or similar, written in a cursive style.

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

HB No. 2475, HD 1, SD 1, CD 1

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 6, 2026
Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026.



Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker
House of Representatives

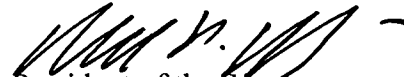


Brian L. Takeshita
Chief Clerk
House of Representatives


THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I

Date: May 1, 2026
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i, Regular Session of 2026.



President of the Senate



Clerk of the Senate