



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

July 8, 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 July 8, 2026, the following bill was signed into law:

H.B. NO. 2218, H.D. 2, S.D. 2,
C.D. 1

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND
NATURAL RESOURCES.
ACT 203

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Green M.D." in a cursive style.

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

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that providing explicit authority to the board of land and natural resources to enter into community co-management agreements honors the Native Hawaiian concepts of malama aina and ahupuaa-based management, promoting more effective stewardship of public trust resources for present and future generations.

The legislature further finds that grassroots communities across the State, including Haena, Pupukea, Moomomi, Kipahulu, Hookena, Kaupulehu, and Kealahou, have spent decades collaborating with government agencies to care for wahi pana and surrounding resources. These efforts would be more effective and sustainable if supported by long-term community co-management agreements.

Although community-government partnerships exist through curatorships, revocable permits, and concession agreements, the lack of statutory authority and a formalized process limits their effectiveness. For example, the Hui Makaa'inana o Makana



1 has worked since 1998 to steward Haena state park and perpetuate
2 ike kupuna. The board of land and natural resources approved
3 entering into a concession agreement, yet has not secured a
4 long-term co-management agreement with the Hui. Other aina-
5 based organizations face similar challenges.

6 Community-based co-management has also been successful in
7 fisheries through the community-based subsistence fishing area
8 framework. Communities in Haena, Milolii, Kipahulu, and
9 Kealahakua have established community-based subsistence fishing
10 areas, and additional communities are organizing, all of which
11 would benefit from long-term co-management agreements.

12 The legislature further finds that the State alone cannot
13 sustainably manage the State's public trust resources and that
14 place-based Native Hawaiian and local communities provide
15 essential stewardship, capacity, and local knowledge.

16 Article XI, section 1, and article XII, section 7, of the Hawaii
17 State Constitution support co-management agreements as a means
18 of restoring and protecting biocultural public trust resources
19 for future generations, including for subsistence, cultural, and
20 religious purposes.

21 The purpose of this Act is to:



- 1 (1) Authorize the board of land and natural resources to
2 enter into community co-management agreements;
3 (2) Establish qualifications for eligible community
4 co-managers; and
5 (3) Authorize the disposition of public lands by a
6 community co-management agreement.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 171, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and
9 to read as follows:

10 "PART . COMMUNITY CO-MANAGEMENT

11 **§171-A Findings and purpose.** The legislature finds that
12 providing specific authority to the board of land and natural
13 resources to enter into community co-management agreements with
14 community-based organizations honors the traditional Native
15 Hawaiian concept of malama aina and place-based practices for
16 natural and cultural resource management, promoting more
17 effective protection of the State's public trust resources for
18 the benefit of present and future generations.

19 **§171-B Definitions.** Notwithstanding any other definition
20 to the contrary provided in this chapter, as used in this part:



1 "Aina education" means learning pathways that are guided
2 and grounded in geographic place, aina and kai, and Native
3 Hawaiian values, language, culture, and history.

4 "Community-based organization" means a nonprofit
5 corporation incorporated in the State that has a mission,
6 capacity, and commitment to malama aina; care for natural and
7 cultural resources; and engage in community-driven planning,
8 management, and projects that benefit public trust resources.

9 "Community co-management unit" means the location and
10 boundaries of the land subject to a community co-management
11 agreement.

12 "Land" means all interests therein and natural resources
13 including water, streams, shorelines out to a mile or the
14 fringing reef, ocean minerals, and all things connected with
15 land, unless otherwise expressly provided.

16 **§171-C Community co-management agreements.** (a) The board
17 may enter into community co-management agreements, by direct
18 negotiation and without recourse to public auction, with
19 qualified community-based organizations to implement this part.



1 (b) Community co-management agreements shall be used
2 solely and exclusively for one or more of the following
3 purposes:

4 (1) Preservation and practice of all rights customarily
5 and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians for
6 subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes;

7 (2) Preservation, protection, and restoration of
8 archaeological, historical, and environmental
9 resources;

10 (3) Rehabilitation, revegetation, restoration, and
11 preservation of native species and habitats;

12 (4) Management of parking, visitor activities, and public
13 and recreational parks and facilities in conjunction
14 with malama aina-focused principles; or

15 (5) Aina education;

16 provided that no community co-management agreement shall
17 allocate the sharing of management functions and
18 responsibilities and the rights of entry and use for a given
19 community co-management unit under the jurisdiction of the
20 department for a period of time exceeding sixty-five years.



1 (c) The board shall consider the following when deciding
2 whether a community-based organization is qualified to enter
3 into a community co-management agreement:

4 (1) Nonprofit status and mission;

5 (2) A list and qualifications of board members and staff;

6 (3) A summary of past and current projects in the proposed
7 community co-management unit, including those in
8 partnership with community groups, and federal, state,
9 and county governments;

10 (4) A description of the location and boundaries of the
11 community co-management unit;

12 (5) Justification for the proposed community co-management
13 agreement;

14 (6) Other information deemed necessary for consideration;
15 and

16 (7) A co-management plan recommended by the department
17 containing a description of the:

18 (A) Specific place-based, mission-driven, and
19 community-led activities to be conducted in the
20 area that sustain community, natural, and
21 cultural resources;



- 1 (B) Demonstrated commitment to the use and knowledge
2 of customary and traditional Native Hawaiian
3 practices, understandings, and values as a core
4 component of the plan;
- 5 (C) Use of adaptive practices and responses to
6 changing conditions;
- 7 (D) Defined management functions, roles, and
8 responsibilities;
- 9 (E) Performance and accountability standards for
10 monitoring, evaluation, and revenue generation,
11 if any;
- 12 (F) Reporting processes and requirements;
- 13 (G) Parameters for equitable data collection,
14 sharing, and rights;
- 15 (H) Dispute resolution pathways;
- 16 (I) Methods of funding and enforcement; and
- 17 (J) Other information deemed necessary to support the
18 application.
- 19 (d) Every ten years, beginning from the effective date of
20 the community co-management agreement, the department shall
21 submit to the board for its review a report detailing the



1 community-based organization's progress on meeting the goals set
2 out in the co-management plan. The board may make any
3 applicable amendments to the co-management plan or terminate the
4 community co-management agreement.

5 (e) Notwithstanding subsection (d), a community-based
6 organization or the board, upon written notice, may terminate
7 the community co-management agreement, subject to the terms of
8 the community co-management agreement.

9 (f) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
10 to implement this part."

11 SECTION 3. Section 171-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
12 amended by adding two new definitions to be appropriately
13 inserted and to read as follows:

14 "Community co-management" means collaboration between the
15 department and one or more community-based organizations, under
16 a community co-management agreement, to allocate the sharing of
17 management functions and responsibilities and the rights of
18 entry and use for a given community co-management unit under the
19 jurisdiction of the department.



1 "Community co-management agreement" means a written
2 agreement between the board and a community-based organization
3 for community co-management pursuant to this chapter."

4 SECTION 4. Section 171-13, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended to read as follows:

6 **"§171-13 Disposition of public lands.** Except as otherwise
7 provided by law and subject to other provisions of this chapter,
8 the board may:

9 (1) Dispose of public land in fee simple, by lease, lease
10 with option to purchase, license, community
11 co-management agreement, or permit; and

12 (2) Grant easement by direct negotiation or otherwise for
13 particular purposes in perpetuity on such terms as may
14 be set by the board, subject to reverter to the State
15 upon termination or abandonment of the specific
16 purpose for which it was granted, provided the sale
17 price of such easement shall be determined pursuant to
18 section 171-17(b).

19 No person shall be eligible to purchase or lease public lands,
20 or to be granted a license, community co-management agreement,
21 permit, or easement covering public lands, who has had during



1 the five years preceding the date of disposition a previous
2 sale, lease, license, community co-management agreement, permit,
3 or easement covering public lands canceled for failure to
4 satisfy the terms and conditions thereof."

5 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



H.B. NO. 2218
H.D. 2
S.D. 2
C.D. 1

APPROVED this 8th day of July, 2026

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

HB No. 2218, HD 2, SD 2, 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 6, 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