
SENATE RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF
AHU'ENA HEIAU AND AFFIRMING ITS UNPARALLELED ROLE IN THE
SPIRITUAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, Ahu'ena Heiau is located at Kamakahonu,
2 traditionally known as the "eye of the turtle", within the
3 ahupua'a of Lanihau in Kailua-Kona, on the island of Hawai'i, and
4 is among the most historically and culturally significant sites
5 in the Hawaiian Islands; and
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7 WHEREAS, Ahu'ena Heiau served as the religious temple of
8 Kamehameha the Great, following his conquest of the Hawaiian
9 Islands and return to Hawai'i Island in 1812, and functioned as
10 the center of political and spiritual governance during the
11 final years of his reign; and
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13 WHEREAS, during Kamehameha the Great's golden years, his
14 most trusted advisors convened nightly at Ahu'ena Heiau, where
15 matters of governance, loyalty, agriculture, and the welfare of
16 chiefs and commoners were deliberated, and where his heir,
17 Liholiho, who would become Kamehameha II, was instructed in the
18 responsibilities of leadership; and
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20 WHEREAS, Ahu'ena Heiau was the site of several pivotal
21 moments in Hawaiian history, including the death of Kamehameha I
22 on May 8, 1819; the abolition of the kapu system later that year
23 by Kamehameha II, which averted civil war and forever
24 transformed Hawaiian governance and society; and the grant of
25 permission for the first Christian missionaries from New England
26 to come ashore on April 4, 1820; and
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28 WHEREAS, Kamakahonu was also home to Governor John Adams
29 Kuakini, a residence of King Kalākaua, and a place of refuge for
30 Prince William Pitt Leleiohoku II, further underscoring the
31 site's central role in the political and royal history of the
32 Hawaiian Kingdom; and
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1 WHEREAS, constructed before his establishment as ruler of a
2 united Hawaii in 1812, Kamehameha the Great restored and
3 maintained Ahu'ena Heiau until his death in 1819, as documented
4 by John Papa I'i who described Ahu'ena Heiau as a Hale o Lono
5 where religious ceremony, governance, and instruction of future
6 rulers took place; and
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8 WHEREAS, Kamakahonu was designated a National Historic
9 Landmark on December 29, 1962, and was placed on the Hawai'i
10 Register of Historic Places on July 17, 1993, in recognition of
11 its exceptional national and state significance; and
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13 WHEREAS, more than one hundred fifty years after the
14 historic events that defined Ahu'ena Heiau, an accurate
15 archaeological restoration began in 1975 through a collaboration
16 between the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, community members,
17 cultural practitioners, and archaeologists; and
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19 WHEREAS, reconstruction of Ahu'ena Heiau began in 1975 and
20 was guided by archaeological research and historical
21 documentation, including the 1816 sketches of Louis Choris, with
22 design contributions by Herb Kawainui Kāne and fieldwork led by
23 distinguished scholars and practitioners, including Dr.
24 Yoshihiko H. Sinoto, Dr. Kenneth P. Emory, Patrick V. Kirch, and
25 many dedicated community members; and
26

27 WHEREAS, the restoration effort relied upon extraordinary
28 community support, including the donation of materials, labor,
29 and cultural knowledge, the processing of approximately two
30 hundred fifty thousand tī leaves for thatching, and the careful
31 reconstruction of traditional structures using historically
32 accurate methods; and
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34 WHEREAS, restoration of Ahu'ena Heiau and the adjacent Hale
35 Nana Mahina'ai was completed in March 1977, returning the site to
36 its appearance and dignity as it stood during the time of
37 Kamehameha the Great; and
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1 WHEREAS, Ahu'ena Heiau, Inc., a federally recognized
2 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in 1993, was
3 established to guide the long-term preservation, maintenance,
4 and cultural stewardship of the site and to promote appreciation
5 and understanding of Hawaiian history; and
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7 WHEREAS, the stewardship of Ahu'ena Heiau, Inc., is guided
8 by cultural protocol and 'ike kupuna, with ongoing cultural
9 restoration supported by the Royal Order of Kamehameha and its
10 Ali'i 'Aimoku Ali'i and by the continued care of dedicated
11 directors, officers, and cultural practitioners; and
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13 WHEREAS, the land upon which Ahu'ena Heiau stands has passed
14 through generations of ali'i, private ownership, and stewardship,
15 and is currently owned by HKK Hawai'i, LLC, which continues to
16 support the upkeep and maintenance of this sacred and historic
17 site; and
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19 WHEREAS, the fiftieth anniversary of the restoration of
20 Ahu'ena Heiau provides an important opportunity to honor the
21 vision, scholarship, community advocacy, and cultural commitment
22 that returned this national treasure to the people of Hawai'i and
23 ensured its preservation for future generations; now, therefore,
24

25 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
26 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
27 that this body recognizes the fiftieth anniversary of the
28 restoration of Ahu'ena Heiau and affirms its unparalleled role in
29 the spiritual, political, and cultural history of the State; and
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body expresses its deepest
32 appreciation to the kūpuna; cultural practitioners;
33 archaeologists; historians; community members; Ahu'ena Heiau,
34 Inc.; and all those whose dedication and stewardship have
35 preserved Ahu'ena Heiau as a living place of history, learning,
36 and reverence; and
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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
39 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
40 Directors of Bishop Museum, Chairperson of the Board of



- 1 Directors of Ahu'ena Heiau, Inc., and General Manager of the
- 2 Courtyard by Marriott King Kamehameha Kona Beach Hotel.

