

LEGISLATIVE BIENNIUM GENERAL FUND BUDGET REQUEST FOR 2024
KAHO`OLAWA ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
February 2024

1. Request additional funding to add four new positions for KIRC.

Background: In 2017 legislative request, the KIRC initially submitted a request for general funding for 19 temporary positions. Act 49 SLH 2017 authorized 15 temporary KIRC positions, which were the currently filled positions. Vacant positions were not funded.

The Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialists support all KIRC field programs by operating and maintaining KIRC field assets, equipment, vehicles, and machinery as well as acts or assists as Field Team Leaders for KIRC volunteer work groups on Kaho`olawe. The positions also serve as KIRC boat crew and field escorts as needed. The positions are based at the KIRC Office on Maui and involve extensive fieldwork on Kaho`olawe requiring extended overnight stays.

In addition to protecting, restoring, and managing the resources of Kaho`olawe Island, the KIRC is also responsible for protecting the aquatic resources of the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve which includes the surrounding two miles of ocean. The Ocean Resource Specialists support this effort through the objective measurement, documentation, and restoration of Kaho`olawe aquatic resources. With current climate changes and effects of more severe weather conditions, a renewed effort is now being undertaken by the Ocean program on coastal reclamation, rehabilitation, and protection.

Request: Add half-year general funds to support new KIRC field personnel in LNR 908/KIRC for two (2) Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist (KIR III and KIR II) and one (1) Ocean Resource Specialist II (\$72,500, FY25). Add half-year general funds to support new KIRC administrative personnel in LNR908/KIRC for one (1) Project Specialist III/IV (\$32,000, FY25)

Justification: Due to the vacancy of the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist II and III positions in 2016, the KIRC was not able to include these positions with those authorized in Act 49 SLH 2017. These positions are necessary to support necessary safety and logistic functions as well as on-island restoration efforts and sustainability field projects while on Kaho`olawe and act as boat crew while on KIRC vessels.

The KIRC has observed a long-term increase in unpredictability and severity of weather and ocean conditions in the waters surrounding Maui and Kaho`olawe most likely due to climate changes and global warming. Increased weather severity has resulted in an intensified need for additional manpower to operate the KIRC ocean vessel safely and effectively and to assist with handling cargo, operating lines, and equipment and as safety lookouts as staff have been encountering rougher weather conditions and increase boat traffic between Kaho`olawe and Maui. The KIRC requests funding to establish two (2) positions, Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist III (KIR III) and Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist II (KIR II) to support boating operations, logistical and field support as necessary.

The increasing impact of coastal erosion and severe weather along the shorelines of Kaho`olawe has increased the staff's focus on coastline stabilization and coastal wetland restoration efforts. These additional efforts need additional field support including additional staffing. The KIRC is requesting funding to establish one (1) Ocean Resource Specialist II to support on-island coastal management, restoration, and protection.

As part of the KIRC's financial sustainability, the KIRC regularly seeks additional federal government and private funding to help supplement the current general fund allotment. The KIRC has been expanding the number and complexity of its grant opportunities and requires dedicated staffing to ensure project expenditures, budgets and reimbursements are correctly billed and recovered from the grantor. The KIRC is requesting funding to establish one (1) position, Program Specialist III/IV to support management of grant applications, budgets, expenses, and reimbursements.

This request is for half-year funding in FY25. We will have to request for full-year funding in the new biennium starting in FY26 as follows:

Position	FY25	FY26
Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist III	\$25,000	\$50,000
Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist II	\$22,500	\$45,000
Ocean Resource Specialist II	\$25,000	\$50,000
Project Specialist III/IV	\$32,000	\$64,000
Total	\$104,500	\$209,000

2. Request Capital Improvement Funding for Phase II of the KIRC Kīhei Education/Operation Center

Background: Act 119, SLH 2015, Item D-14 as amended by Act 124, SLH 2016 and corrected by Act 49, SLH 2017 authorized \$500,000 in general obligation bonds for the planning and design of an education center, exhibit area/visitor center and administration building for the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) in Kīhei, Maui.

This new facility will be located on an 8.261-acre property controlled by the KIRC, situated on South Kīhei Road. The new office/information center facility will replace currently leased office space to house KIRC's full-time Maui-based employees. Another portion of the new facility will be devoted to the KIRC's historic and interactive exhibits about Kaho`olawe, with a community center, archive, kitchen, café, retail spaces, visitor center and workshops/classrooms.

During 2018, the KIRC finalized the conceptual drawings for this new facility and completed all the entitlement work needed to take this project to the next phase. The work completed included: reaffirming the existing Environmental Assessment, completing new shoreline assessment and traffic studies, and making an application for a Special Management Area permit from the Maui Planning Commission.

The next phase of the project is to develop the detailed drawings and plans necessary to build this project. This includes final construction drawings and specifications, planning and development of

exhibits and archive storage, final planning, design for office layout, and final design of the building infrastructure (HVAC, network).

Additionally, this request includes construction efforts to expand the current boathouse to include a larger concrete pad and two additional covered wings for additional boat storage.

Request: Request \$4,250,000 in general obligation bond funds to complete final designs and planning for KIRC Education and Operations Center

Justification: The KIRC is looking beyond the pandemic and the Maui wildfires. The present conditions provide an appropriate opportunity to begin the final design and eventual construction of the Center as it would be ready to welcome the return of visitors to Maui and to expand a new visitor destination in the South Kihei corridor. The influx of funding to start construction would help revitalize jobs on Maui and the rising of the new Center will become a beacon of hope to the community.

The supplemental appropriation of \$4,250,000 is necessary to continue this project that will create a new facility in South Maui and will help create a new revenue generating destination in South Maui while at the same time creating a central base for all the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission's restoration efforts. It will create a unique center to document, research and educate the community on the environmental resiliency of Kaho`olawe and other areas across the state impacted by the effects of environmental damage, habitat degradation and climate change. The next phase of the project is to complete construction design and planning, develop a community-based thematic vision for the center and to expand the current boathouse facility to house and maintain multiple ocean vessels.

When completed, the KIRC Operations/Education Center will become the central location for all operations and support for the long-term management and restoration of Kaho`olawe. The Kihei Operation/Education Center is necessary to consolidate all the KIRC's operations to a single State-owned facility that will eliminate the need for leased office space in Wailuku, provide the KIRC with revenue generating opportunities unavailable on Kaho`olawe and provide a community outreach site to increase the public awareness on the efforts to restore Kaho'olawe. If the project is deferred, the KIRC operations will continue to be scattered across Maui, the KIRC will have to continue leasing office space in Wailuku and it will not be able to develop revenue generating opportunities that could lead to financial self-sustainability.

CIP Request	Amount	Description of Work
Planning	\$350,000	Update community planning documents and SMA permits
Design	\$3,000,000	Complete design process and construction drawings. Develop museum exhibition designs.
Construction	\$900,000	Expand current boathouse to include additional workspace and boat storage capabilities.
Total	\$4,250,000	