



KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA
KAHO'OLawe ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
KŌMIKINA MĀLAMA KAHO'OLawe

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DRAFT PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 3, 2026

1:00 pm

In person at 1151 Punchbowl St, Room 132

Honolulu, HI

Meeting recording located at

KIRC YouTube live channel

COMMISSION MEMBERS

PRESENT: Faith Kahale Saito, Acting Chair; J. Kalama Chock (attended remotely); Ryan Kanaka'ole; Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala; Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.; Justin Keoni Souza (attended remotely)

EXCUSED: Saumalu Mataafa

KIRC STAFF: Michael Nāho'opi'i, Executive Director (ED); Danica Patel, Deputy Attorney General (DAG) (attended remotely); Terri Gavagan, Commission Coordinator (CC); Janece Beauchamp Administrative Assistant III (AA III); Dean Tokishi, Ocean Resources Program Manager (ORPM) (attended remotely); Paul Higashino (Natural Resources Program (NRPM) (attended remotely); Carmela Noneza (GIS Specialist) (attended remotely); Ross Kamimoto, Volunteer Coordinator (VC) (attended remotely); Lei Brown, Cultural Resources Project Coordinator (CRPC) (attended remotely); Lopaka White, Operations Manager (OM) (attended remotely)

PUBLIC: Davianna McGregor, Protect Kaho'lawe 'Ohana (PKO); Kylee Mar, PKO (attended remotely); Richelle Kim (attended remotely)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 pm by Acting Chair Saito. Roll call was conducted, and quorum was established with six Commissioners.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of February 10, 2026 Regular Commission Meeting

Commissioner Pang stated that there was an error in the draft meeting minutes regarding his attendance. He did not think he attended the meeting and requested staff to double check the recording to clarify this. Staff stated that this would be researched and corrections made to the draft minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to approve the minutes of February 10, 2026 as amended. Commissioner Kanaka'ole seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved by the majority of Commissioners via roll call: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka'ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-abstained; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

III. OPEN FORUM

Dr. McGregor stated that the PKO would be submitting drafting a resolution regarding former Commissioner Palikapu Dedman upon his passing which it hoped the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) would adopt at its next meeting to honor his contributions to the Commission. She noted that prior to his service on the Commission he was a PKO mo'olono and was part of the negotiation team that met with the US Navy from 1980-1990 under the terms of the consent decree. He also helped to establish the foundation of the Kaho'olawe Ocean Management Plan. She asked if she need to speak to the lua project in Hakioawa. Staff responded there was no need as it was not ready to be presented to the Commission.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Review and Approve Fiscal Year (FY 27) Budget

ED Nāho'opi'i noted that there was a correction in the budget summary of the budget memo. The total FY27 operating budget was \$3,356,952. The first table in the memo illustrated that there the FY27 budget was almost 12% less than the FY26 budget. The major change was there was less general fund carryover. He referred to the pie chart in the memo which broke down the funding by source. He explained that the governor had established a 5% hard restriction and a 5% contingency restriction for all state programs in FY27.

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the current allotment for payroll of \$1.1 million is slightly less than what the actual payroll was. According to DLNR Fiscal, the KIRC will receive a little more than \$40,000 to make up for the discrepancy. Staff would also be requesting the release of the 5% contingency restriction after the second quarter. Commissioner Kanaka'ole asked if B&F (Budget & Finance) said they would honor it. ED Nāho'opi'i responded that they said they would.

ED Nāho'opi'i noted that there were some funds that were carried over to FY27. These included funds from DOFAW vacancy savings offered to the KIRC, KIRC vacancy savings and a carryover of unspent general funds as staff was able to prepay FY26 expenses due to additional funding from other agencies.

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that a couple of grant project would be finished this year, resulting in reimbursements being placed in the Trust Fund. Most of the grants are Maui County projects, including a water study for future water development on Kaho'olawe. The largest grant is a line item in the Maui County budget to help restore the Nāulu Cloud Rain Bridge Grant.

ED Nāho'opi'i also noted the following highlights to the FY27 budget:

- The Department of Health (DOH) 6 project includes a Natural Resources Specialist II (NRS II) to be hired for the project's duration.

- Funding for the Deputy Director (DD) position as Administrative Office (AO) Hatakeyama transitions out of the KIRC and AA III Beauchamp transitions into the AO position. The funds may not be needed, depending on the timing of the transition.
- Special funds from Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL) have been given to the KIRC for coastal restoration. Plans for this funding include the purchasing of an off-road telehandler with a bucket to help with coastal restoration at the Kīhei Boat House. Additionally, the Ocean Program will be using about \$40,000 for coastal restoration plants and materials as well as aerial surveys of Kaho'olawe. The Restoration Program will be using \$20,000 to purchase plants to support coastal restoration projects.

Commissioner Pang asked how aerials were being done. ED Nāho'opi'i responded they had been done via helicopter with IMLS 6 funding.

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the Administration Program's budget includes the salaries for the ED, AO, AA III, GIS positions as well as office overhead and the Maui County Greens Grant.

ED Nāho'opi'i noted that there was an error in the Commission Program's section of FY27 funding impact on programs. The anticipated meetings are for FY27.

ED Nāho'opi'i stated that the Reserve Operation's budget included: the general funds for Operations staff, Maui vehicles and the Kihei Boathouse as well the contracts for base camp management and communications. It also contains reimbursable trust funds for the Maui County Sustainability Grant and part of the Maui County Naulu Cloud Bridge Grant (Base Camp management portion).

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the Restoration Program's budget included: the general funds for the Restoration Program's staff salaries as well as salaries for grant funded NRS positions, Maui County Sustainability Grant funding for plants.

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the Ocean Program's budget included: the general funds for the Ocean Program staff's salaries as well as outplanting of native coastal seedlings in Kealaikahiki Work area funded by Department of the Interior, Coastal Habitat Conservation Grant and OCCL special funds for outplanting support, scuba equipment and maintenance and helicopter surveys.

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the Culture Program's budget included the CRPC's salary, materials and supplies.

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the cash balance of the Trust Fund at the end of FY26 was approximately \$634,000. ED Nāho'opi'i clarified that federal grant funding is placed in a special account by DLNR Fiscal and staff works with DLNR Fiscal to transfer the funds to the KIRC Trust Fund. A check was just received from Maui County for \$35,000. He explained Maui County's reimbursement process.

Commissioner Pang asked about the interest earned by the Trust Fund. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded the rate varies but it was usually 2-3%. Staff later clarified that the Trust Fund earned \$2200 in FY26.

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to:
A. Approve a \$2,437,713 general and special fund appropriation budget, as detailed, to fund KIRC staff positions and program expenses as approved in the State Administration’s budget.
B. Approve the expenditure of approximately \$919,239 from the Kaho‘olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund to fund reimbursable grants projects and non-reimbursable operations.
The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kanaka‘ole.

Discussion: There were no public comments

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka‘ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

B. Review and approve KIRC Legislative Positions for 2027 Session

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the KIRC would be requesting \$4.25 million in CIP funding to conduct the next step in the Kaho‘olawe Restoration and Resilience Center project in Kihei. He noted there was a correction to the accompanying document. In the sentence right above the gray textbox, the passage “to include a larger concrete pad and two additional covered wings for additional boat storage” should be deleted. If the original project which included expansion of the boathouse for another boat was done, it would have required another SMA major permit from Maui County. This would take a long time, given all the rebuilding being done on Maui. The NOAA funds would need to be expended by 2027. He decided to step away from the original project and informed NOAA of his decision. He noted that the NOAA boat has recently been decommissioned.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the KIRC would also be requesting \$1 million in CIP funds to repair road damages on Kaho‘olawe from the kona low storms. He elaborated that the main road four feet of erosion. DLNR Engineering suggested that the KIRC make this request because the KIRC was on DLNR list for FEMA reimbursements. The KIRC has a contract with AECOM with late funding from DLNR State Parks to go Kaho‘olawe and examine the road and make recommendations on how to repair the road with existing materials on island. If this CIP request was granted, they would recommend what program could be used to repair the road.

Commissioner Pang asked if the road could be diverted or whether it was unfeasible given the erosion area and clearance issues. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that there was a temporary bypass that goes along the hardpan, but the staff would

like the road to stay in the lane because of the drainage issue. The current bypass has low visibility during the early morning.

Dr. McGregor asked if there was an archaeological review or an environmental assessment done for the road work. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that CRPC Brown did flag areas of archaeological concern.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated the KIRC would be requesting funds for a project specialist to assist with the increased number of grant projects the KIRC has been awarded. This person would help executive management to provide required documentation to the granting agencies and coordinate with field staff to execute the project’s deliverables.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the KIRC would be requesting funding for additional field staff to help with existing environmental challenges due to the unpredictability and severity of weather and ocean conditions around Kaho‘olawe. Specifically, the KIRC would be requesting two Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Specialists (KIR III and KIR II) and one Ocean Resource Specialist II (ORS II).

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to approve KIRC Legislative Positions for 2027 Session as presented. Commissioner Chock seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka‘ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

C. Approve Proposed Calendar Year (CY) 2027 Access Dates and Activities for the Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO)

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reviewed the background and summary of Authorized Activities, Stewardship Agreement Authorized Activities and KIRC Approved and Authorized Activities. He explained that the requested activities from the PKO are categorized into the three categories and the requested dates for these activities were all included in the Commission packet memos. He noted that there were no changes regarding authorized and approved activities and that the Commission could authorize the Executive Director to administratively approve requested date changes.

MOTION: Commissioner Keala moved pursuant to HAR §13-261-13 and Section 8 of the Palapala ‘Aelike Kahu‘āina, approve the proposed access dates and activities for the 2027 calendar year requested by the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO) as KIRC approved and authorized activities and to authorize the Executive Director to

make administrative changes. Commissioner Chock seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka‘ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

D. Assign no more than two Commissioners to the Cultural Working Group (CWG) and Assign the CWG to Develop Permitted Funerary Practices on Kaho‘olawe

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that there were two parts to this motion. The first was to reestablish the Kaho‘olawe Cultural Working Group by appointing no more than two Commissioners and to task the CWG to develop and recommend for Commission approval a funerary practices policy for the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve (Reserve).

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the CWG was established to assist and advise the KIRC CRPC with projects related to protecting Native Hawaiian cultural resources and revitalization of traditional practices with the Reserve. He noted that the CWG may consist of cultural practitioners, lineal descendants and no more than two Commissioners due to Chapter 92 HRS. Staff recommended the reestablishment of this group due to the range of funerary-related activities and burial considerations on Kaho‘olawe being faced by staff.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i introduced CRPC Amy Leiokeko‘olani Brown who authored most of the accompanying memo. CRPC Brown stated that she was looking forward to working with the other members of the CWG. She explained that three main areas that the CWG will address:

- 1) Modern funerary practices associated with Kaho‘olawe including ash-scattering, commemorative ceremonies, celebration-of-life activities, and other contemporary forms of honoring kupuna and loved ones connected to the island. The goal was to develop an unified understanding of appropriate procedures, communication pathways, and cultural expectations for these practices.
- 2) Reinterment matters—Situations may arise from legacy archaeological work, previous discoveries, or older documentation requiring clarification or updated treatment. The CWG would establish a clear process for reviewing, assessing, and responding to such cases in a culturally respectful and coordinated way.
- 3) Unanticipated discoveries—Natural processes such as erosion, landslides, flooding, and high surf may expose iwi or cultural materials. The CWG would develop a standard approach for unanticipated discoveries, including steps for communication, documentation, and collaboration with stewardship partner Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, including cultural protocols for safety, and

appropriate protective measures or temporary mitigations until a BTP (burial treatment protocol) can be delivered to the Commission.

Overall, the CWG aims to create a shared framework that draws from traditional stewardship practices, legacy protocols of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, and their cultural expertise in coordination with the KIRC. The intent is to ensure clear communication, consistency, cultural integrity, and respectful treatment of all funerary and burial-related matters within the Reserve.

Commissioner Pang asked, given the current trend of museums and other repositories working with the Native Hawaiian community to repatriate cultural patrimony, if the CWG could anticipate this and provide some type of protocol such as who represents Kaho‘olawe, how it is received, and what steps would be taken to preserve those items for the future. CRPC Brown responded these would fall under reinterment matters which do not have to be only iwi kupuna but also other cultural patrimony. It would allow the CWG to coordinate best practices and protocols that would be preferred by the stewardship partner and the KIRC. ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that the developed policies would be presented to the Commission at a future date.

Acting Chair Saito and Commissioner Keala both volunteered to serve on the CWG.

MOTION: Commissioner Keala moved to reestablish the Kaho‘olawe Culture Working Group (CWG) by appointing Acting Chair Saito and Commissioner Keala to the CWG and task the CWG to develop and recommend for Commission approval a Funerary Practices Policy for the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve. Commissioner Souza seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Pang asked how progress would be reported to the Commission. The Commission determined that there would be a Cultural Program Update provided at each Commission meeting. Commissioner Keala stated he hoped to have a draft of the funerary practices policy by the next Commission meeting. CRPC Brown clarified that it would be a draft of a burial treatment protocol for the current iwi kupuna matters in Hakioawa which would become a reference appendix within a larger policy. ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that parts of the policy could be presented to the KICR—it did not need to be presented in its entirety all at once.

Dr. McGregor asked if more non-KIRC people could be in the working group. ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that once the CWG meets, its members could decide as to how many people could be in working group.

DAG Patel reminded the Commission to allow for public discussion prior to the making of a motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka'ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

E. Assign no more than two Commissioners to the I Ola Kanaloa Working Group

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that the I Ola Kanaloa was the last strategic planning document for Kaho'olawe. This plan's period was from 2014 through 2026. A new strategic plan for the island was now needed. There was a recommended work process for the next plan included in the memo.

Commissioners Pang and Chock volunteered to be on the working group. Commissioner Souza also volunteered. ED Nāho'opi'i explained that only two Commissioners could serve on a working group. He elaborated that Commissioner Souza could serve on the working group as a representative of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA); he would consult with DAG Patel regarding this.

Acting Chair Saito asked for any further public testimony.

Dr. McGregor asked if there was a budget for this working group. ED Nāho'opi'i responded that a plan would need to be developed first before a budget could be developed. The working group would then determine if additional funding would be needed.

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to:
(1) Establish the I Ola Kanaloa Working Group (IOKWG) by appointing Commissioner Pang and Commissioner Chock;
(2) Task the IOKWG to review the I Ola Kanaloa Strategic Plan and make recommendations for an updated strategic plan for Commission approval. Commissioner Souza seconded the motion.

Discussion: There was no further discussion.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka'ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

F. Approve Recommendation and Direct Staff to Submit Recommendation for New Chairperson to the Governor

Commissioner Pang asked if Acting Chair Saito was interested in serving as the new KIRC Chair. Acting Chair Saito would accept the nomination.

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to recommend Acting Chair Saito to the Governor as the new KIRC Chairperson. Commissioner Souza seconded the recommendation.

Discussion: Acting Chair Saito asked for any public comments. Dr. McGregor commented that she kako'o the nomination of Acting Chair Saito to serve as the KIRC Chair.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka'ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

G. Nominate and Vote on Vice Chairperson

Commissioner Souza nominated Commissioner Chock to be Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Chock accepted the nomination.

MOTION: Commissioner Souza moved Commissioner Chock be Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Chock seconded the motion.

Discussion: Dr. McGregor kako'o Commissioner Chock serve as Vice Chair.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka'ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

H. Adopt Resolution for Michelle Miki'ala Pescaia-In Recognition Of Her Contributions Toward the Healing of Kanaloa, Kaho'olawe

ED Nāho'opi'i read the following resolution into the record:

WHEREAS, the term of Michelle "Miki'ala" Pescaia as a Commissioner and the representative of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO) on the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) will come to an end on June 30, 2026, after six noteworthy years; and

WHEREAS, Commission Pescaia graduated from the Kamehameha Schools Kapālama and received her Bachelors degree in Hawaiian Language from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM); and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Pescaia is a cultural practitioner from Moloka'i and an Interpretive Park Ranger for the U.S. National Parks Service at the Kalaupapa Historic Park for over sixteen years and currently is the Chief of Interpretation, Education and Volunteers at Kalaupapa National Historic Park working with educators to build educational and interpretive deliverables focused on Kalaupapa and Molokai with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Education; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Pescaia's relationship with Kaho'olawe stems from her grandmother, Auntie Harriet Ne who mentored the founding members of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana from Moloka'i and shared her knowledge of the cultural sites on Kaho'olawe used by her family and others from Moloka'i, Commissioner Pescaia participated in her first huaka'i (access) and Makahiki ceremonies on Kaho'olawe in 1991 where she continues to bring her family, students and community members to help restore Kaho'olawe; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Pescaia was first appointed to the KIRC on March 23, 2020, by the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor of the State of Hawai'i to serve for a term expiring on June 30, 2021. On February 22, 2021, she was reappointed to a full four-year term expiring on June 30, 2025, and lastly served one additional year as a holdout appointment before deciding to step down from KIRC; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Pescaia was appointed to serve as Chairperson of the KIRC on March 7, 2024 by the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor of the State of Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Pescaia while serving as the KIRC Chairperson, provided strong guidance overseeing the Commission's agenda and leading the Commission's meetings, ensuring important decisions were thoroughly evaluated, discussed and voted on; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Pescaia provided valuable and constructive insight while supporting interviews for new KIRC hires and was instrumental in shaping and reconstituting the KIRC's cultural program; and

WHEREAS, with the completion of Commissioner Pescaia's term of service, the KIRC will lose a visionary commissioner and Hawaiian cultural practitioner with deep knowledge and expertise; and

WHEREAS, though Commissioner Pescaia will leave her seat on the KIRC, it is clear that her work on Kaho'olawe is not over and that she will continue as an advisor and supporter of the rebirth, healing and restoration of Kaho'olawe for years to come; and

NOW THEREFORE, on this day, the third day of September in the year 2026, on the island of O'ahu,

BE IT RESOLVED by the KIRC that a significant record of achievement has been accomplished by Miki'ala Pescaia in the areas of leadership, Hawaiian cultural practices and community engagement for the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve, all in the spirit of healing Kaho'olawe; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, through the leadership of Miki'ala Pescaia, Kaho'olawe will be restored as a rich cultural and environmental resource for Hawai'i's people, and through her actions and support, Kaho'olawe has become a model of native Hawaiian stewardship and management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Miki‘ala Pescaia has served the KIRC with dignity and dedication; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to Hawai‘i’s congressional delegation, the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, the Mayor of the County of Maui, and the Chairperson and Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

MOTION: Commissioner Keala moved to adopt the resolution as read into the record. Commissioner Souza seconded the motion.

Discussion: Acting Chair Saito asked for any public comments. There were none.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka‘ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye

I. Adopt Resolution for Dawn Chang-In Recognition Of Her Contributions Toward the Healing of Kanaloa, Kaho‘olawe

ED Nāho‘opi‘i read the following resolution into the record:

WHEREAS, the term of Dawn N.S. Chang as a Commissioner and Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources on the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) came to an end on July 1, 2026, after three and half noteworthy years; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Chang graduated from St. Andrew’s Priory and received her Bachelors degree in Sociology, Masters degree in Social Work and Juris Doctorate from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM); and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Chang is a former social worker with the Queen Lili‘uokalani Children Center where she was a community organizer in Waimanalo and counseled Native Hawaiian children and families. She clerked for the Honorable Juge Walter Heen and served for fourteen years as a Deputy Attorney General in the Land/Transportation Division where she provided counsel during the State of Hawai‘i and the U.S. Navy negotiations regarding the return of Kaho‘olawe and the initial beginnings of the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Chang was a principle of Ku‘iwalu, a women-owned, Native Hawaiian business enterprise that assisted public and private sector clients in engaging with communities, in particular Native Hawaiian communities, to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state and local regulations and served as a State Land Use Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Chang was appointed as Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources on January 1, 2023, by the Honorable Governor Josh Green, M.D. and confirmed by the Senate on April 6, 2023, and in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statute Chapter 6K also appointed to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission; and

WHEREAS, through Commissioner Chang’s backing as DLNR Chairperson, she was instrumental in ensuring the KIRC was at the forefront of the department’s 2023 legislative agenda which resulted in the inclusion in newly elected Governor Green’s Governor’s Message No. 1 adding permanent funding for two new KIRC positions and an annual additional \$400,000 in operating funds; and

WHEREAS, during legislative hearings, Commissioner Chang made sure that the KIRC received fair and equitable time with governmental leaders to promote the case for State support for Kaho‘olawe; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Chang provided support and guidance as the KIRC worked with the other DLNR divisions as an attached agency; and

WHEREAS, with the retirement of Commissioner Chang, effective July 1, 2026, the KIRC will lose a visionary commissioner and a supporter of the Hawaiian people with deep knowledge and expertise; and

WHEREAS, though Commissioner Chang will leave her seat on the KIRC, it is clear that her work on Kaho‘olawe is not over and that she will continue as an advisor and supporter of the rebirth, healing and restoration of Kaho‘olawe for years to come; and

NOW THEREFORE, on this day, the third day of September in the year 2026, on the island of O‘ahu,

BE IT RESOLVED by the KIRC that a significant record of achievement has been accomplished by Dawn N.S. Chang in the areas of leadership, legislative support and community engagement for the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve, all in the spirit of healing Kaho‘olawe; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, through the leadership of Dawn N.S. Chang, Kaho‘olawe will be restored as a rich cultural and environmental resource for Hawai‘i’s people, and through her actions and support, Kaho‘olawe has become a model of native Hawaiian stewardship and management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Dawn N. S. Chang has served the KIRC with dignity and dedication; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to Hawai‘i’s congressional delegation, the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, the Mayor of the County of Maui, and the Chairperson and Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

MOTION: Commissioner Souza moved to adopt this resolution as read into the record. Commissioner Kanaka'ole seconded the motion.

Discussion: Dr. McGregor stated she was in complete agreement with this resolution.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present: Acting Chair Saito-aye; Commissioner Chock-aye; Commissioner Kanaka'ole-aye; Commissioner Keala-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Executive Director's Report

1. Status Update on Budget, Finance and Funding: Review Expenditure Report and Budget Variances

ED Nāho'opi'i reported that there were budget variances for the following reasons:

- Less travel by the Commission staff than anticipated
- Reduction in electricity costs due to the replacement of the office's air conditioning system
- Delay in transferring Ocean Resource Specialist II to Logistic Specialist
- Delay in start of the Department of Health (DOH) grant
- Delay in hiring grant funded Natural Resource Specialist II (NRS II)

2. Status Update on Plans, Policies and Procedures: Review Long Range Schedule

ED Nāho'opi'i referred the Commission to the long-range schedule included in the Commission packet and added that there was an additional access the week before Christmas for the mua project.

3. Status Update on Administration, Staffing and Personnel: Commissioner Status Update; KIRC Staff Status Update

ED Nāho'opi'i reported former Chair Pescaia's term expired on June 30, 2025, but served as a holdover until the end of the 2026 legislative session. Commissioner Keala was appointed and confirmed for a four-year term from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2030.

ED Nāho'opi'i reported that the new NRS II, Lilia Davis, will start on September 17, 2026. Her position was funded by the DOH 6 grant project.

ED Nāho'opi'i also reported that staff was currently getting the authorization to create two new NRS III positions which will be funded by the Maui County Nāulu Cloud Bridge Grant.

4. Status Update on Public Information, Outreach and Government Relations: Legislative Update; Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee

on Military Leased Lands; Maui Council Committee on Agriculture, Diversification, Environment and Public Transportation (ADEPT)

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated there was a separate legislative matrix included in the Commission packet which he would review later in the meeting

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported state budget as approved by the legislature did not include any changes for the KIRC. There was a reduction in general fund allotments for all state agencies based upon their last five-year general fund balances. The KIRC’s reduction was not as significant as other agencies’ due to the KIRC’s spending of all general funds.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the KIRC hosted OHA’s Committee on Military Leased Lands and the OHA Chair, Kai Kahele, overnight on Kaho‘olawe on August 10-11, 2026. Additionally, PKO representatives also participated.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported working with the Maui County ADEPT Committee for potential funding.

5. Status Update on Capital Improvements, Reserve Operations and Logistics: Update on Base Camp Capital Improvement Project; Update on Kīhei Boathouse Expansion; New Honokanai‘a Water Catchment Project

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that staff made the decision to reduce the scope of work at the Kīhei Boat House to just expanding wings on the boathouse due to the requirement of an SMA (Minor) permit which would not have been feasible due to the time limit for the NOAA funding. NOAA’s sanctuary staff were notified of this decision. Additionally, staff learned that NOAA’s boat was decommissioned.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the Honokanai‘a Communication Tower was damaged during the kona low storms and needed to be rebuilt. This was also on the list of damaged assets being submitted for reimbursement to FEMA.

Commissioner Kanaka‘ole was excused at 2:30 pm.

VI. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES

A. Status Update on Current Administration Projects

1. Mental Health and Wellness Support for Maui Recovery Program (MHSMR)

GIS Specialist Noneza explained that the MHSMR was a project funded by Hawai‘i Community Foundation-Maui Recovery Funders Collaborative Mental Health & Community Wellbeing. The amount of the grant was \$78,415. She reported that the planning stage was completed which included:

- The scheduling of four healing accesses
- Confirmation of a licensed grief counselor and cultural practitioners to provide support during these accesses
- Development and printing of Kilo Planners
- Design of custom Lokahi Program t-shirt artwork

- Identification of needed additional supplies such as journals, coloring pencils, etc.; procurement was on-going

2. Kaho‘olawe Green Building and Resilient Design Initiative (Green Building)

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that this grant project will allow the KIRC to install a photovoltaic (PV) solar energy system on an existing facility to strengthen energy resilience, sustainability and responsible stewardship. This includes a water study.

Dr. McGregor asked what a water study was. Staff responded that it would allow for consultants to examine the conditions on Kaho‘olawe and provide recommendations on how to improve water collection and distribution. The water study will be put on for RFP (request for proposal). Staff also explained that the last water catchment was built in 2002 and the consultants would be examining the materials used and provide suggestions for possible modern materials.

B. Status Update on Current Restoration Projects

1. Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa Partnership Project (Kanaloa Working Group Project)

RPM Higashino reported that there was wind damage in Olinda from recent storms. He also reported that the Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa plants located in Kahanu Gardens, Hana were doing well.

2. Restoration of Kamōhio Watershed Phase I (DOH 6)

RPM Higashino reported the DOH 6 project was starting. Staff was starting to remove alien plants, lay out erosion control and install irrigation lines. Planting should start in October.

3. Keāliālalo Wetlands Restoration Project (Maui County Sustainability)

RPM Higashino reported that over 28 inches of rain was received on Kaho‘olawe within one week during March. The normal yearly amount of rain on Kaho‘olawe was approximately 20 inches. Lua ‘O Keāliālalo (Keāliālalo) was filled 30-40 meters beyond its regular boundaries. Water was up to four feet high in the center of Keāliālalo. During heavy rainfall, Triops (dinosaur shrimp) appeared and native insects such as the damsel fly and dragon flies. KIRC staff was referring to the Triops as Kekupanaka‘ō‘ilinokeiniolopua. The most significant sighting was of the ae‘o (Hawaiian stilt) for the first time on Kaho‘olawe. Staff spotted two during March and April. The birds were chasing staff away. Work was delayed in the crater as staff interpreted their behavior as consistent with nesting. When staff returned in May they spotted there were two or three more fledglings that had hatched. Staff also sighted ‘alae ke‘oke‘o (the Hawaiian coot) for the first time on Kaho‘olawe during March and April.

Commissioner Pang stated it was exciting news about the sightings of ‘alae ke‘oke‘o and ae‘o.

Acting Chair Saito asked for the number of ‘alae ke‘oke‘o sighted. RPM Higashino responded staff saw a total of five ae‘o and one ‘alae ke‘oke‘o.

4. Restoring The Nāulu Cloud Bridge (Maui County)

RPM Higashino reported that staff was awaiting a notice to proceed with this grant. This grant provided funding for 10,000 plants and two additional restoration personnel. He explained that this grant would focus on the upper Wailuna area, the areas west of Pu'u 'O Moaulaiki and the Naval Gunfire Area.

C. Status Update on Current Ocean Program Grant Projects

1. Developing a Digital Application for the Collection of Kilo 'Ike Pili (IMLS 6)

ORPM Tokishi reported that this grant project was completed. Staff was awaiting payment of the last billing amount. He summarized that a total of 18 aerial surveys were conducted, \$31,000 paid for PKO accesses and that the data base was shared with the PKO in July.

Dr. McGregor asked what the status of the database was and how it could be accessed. ORPM Tokishi responded that the final updated database was provided to Maggie Pulver who was the main point of contact with the PKO. Dr. McGregor asked what the nature of the database was. ORPM Tokishi responded that it contained major sightings on and around Kaho'olawe such as runoff, apex predators along with the location of the sighting and abundance.

2. County of Maui Greens Grant Program (Greens Grant)

ORPM Tokishi reported that this grant was completed and that staff was awaiting full reimbursement. He was informed that \$35,000 was received yesterday.

3. Shoreline Revegetation to Protect Kaho'olawe Coastal Habitat (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grant)

ORPM Tokishi explained that this funding was for coastal planting in Kealaikahiki 'Ili. Staff secured a contract with Native Nursery to provide plants.

Acting Chair Saito thanked the KIRC staff for all their work in supporting Kaho'olawe.

VIII. NEXT MEETING AND FOLLOW UPS

No follow ups were discussed, and future meeting date was given.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm.