

NEWS RELEASE



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OHA TRUSTEES VOTE TO SUPPORT AKAKA BILL & APPROVE REDUCED FY 2010 AND 2011 BUDGETS

HONOLULU – The Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board of Trustees voted yesterday to support the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2009, also known as the Akaka Bill, named for its sponsor U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka.

The Trustees also voted to urge Hawai‘i’s Congressional Delegation to support three amendments to the current version of H.R. 2314 and S. 1011. OHA recommends:

1. Changing the definition of “Native Hawaiian” to include the 1778 definition to support a broader and more inclusive definition of “Native Hawaiian.”
2. Deleting all references to “Commission.” American Indians and Alaska Natives apparently have not been required to form such a commission and the role of the “commission” will be duplicative of what Native Hawaiians will be required to do themselves.
3. Reviewing sections of the bill that seek to address any claims of the Native Hawaiian people to determine necessary amendments. OHA stands ready to assist in the review.

In a separate vote, the Trustees also approved reduced budgets for the next two fiscal years beginning July 1.

For fiscal year 2010, the Trustees approved an operating budget of \$39.6 million. The budget reflects nearly \$2.5 million in cuts including a 20 percent reduction by the state Legislature in general fund appropriations and a lower value of OHA's investment portfolio.

The Trustees also approved a fiscal year 2011 budget of \$39.5 million after \$1.7 million in cuts.

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