COMMITTEE ON BENEFICIARY ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT (BAE)

April 29, 2026
9 a.m.
(via Interactive Conference Technology)

To view this meeting's recording, please click on the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCicX-yZxo0&t=1152s (Part 1)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGOMuZU_qj8&t=1796s (Part 2)

MINUTES

TRUSTEES PRESENT
Brickwood Galuteria, Chair
Kaleihikina Akaka, Vice Chair
Keli'i Akina
Luana Alapa
Carmen Hulu Lindsey
Keoni Souza
John Waihe'e, IV

TRUSTEES EXCUSED
Dan Ahuna
Kaiali'i Kahele

BAE STAFF
Lei-Ann Stender Durant
Mark Watanabe
Melissa Wennihan (Kokua)
Momi Ka'aihue (Temporary)
Nathan Takeuchi
Richelle Kim (Kokua)

BOT STAFF
Kanani Iaea
Pōhai Ryan
Pōhailani Kealoha
Remy Keli'iho'omalu
Morgan Kaui Robello

ADMINISTRATION
K. Sean Kekina, COO
Bill Brennan
Deja Ostrowski
Hailama Farden
Kyle Saucier
Leinā'ala Ley

BOARD COUNSEL
Kapono Kiakona

GENERAL COUNSEL
Everett Ohta

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Galuteria called the April 29, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment to order at 9:07 a.m.

Chair Galuteria welcomed everyone to the day's meeting and shared that this standing

committee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs is responsible for advancing the interests of Native Hawaiian beneficiaries through policy oversight, legislative review, and targeted advocacy. Our scope includes critical areas such as health, housing, education, economic development, environmental protections, and stewardship of culturally significant lands and waters. Our committee recommends positions on legislative measures, reviews programs, and approves nominations.

Chair Galuteria and acknowledged his trustee aide, Lei-Ann Stender Durant, serving as the Committee Recording Secretary and his temporary secretary, Momi Kaʻaihue, serving as the Committee Technology and Information Specialist.

Chair Galuteria called for the roll call to confirm attendance:

Roll Call
Seven members are present constituting a quorum
Present: *Trustees Ahuna, Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsey, Souza, Chair Galuteria*
Excused: *Trustees Ahuna and Kahele*
(Time Stamp: 13:00/55:25)

Chief Operating Officer, K. Sean Kekina, introduced administrative staff that was present at the meeting (see page 1).

Due to technical difficulties,* ***Chair Galuteria* *called a recess to allow time to resolve the sound and video issues.*
(Time Stamp: 15:04/55.25)

****Chair Galuteria*** *resumes the meeting at 9:15 a.m.)*
(Time Stamp: 17:18/55.25)

Discussion
Due to legislative deadlines, **Chair Galuteria** asks the committee members for unanimous consent to take Agenda Item IV. Executive Session, Item A. out of order. Hearing no objection, Chair Galuteria announces that the item will be taken out of order and discussed pursuant to HRS § 92-5(a)(4) to receive updated information, consult with its legal counsel, and take any necessary action regarding the Committeeʻs powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities with respect to Public Land Trust bills identified in "2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting the Public Land Trust – Matrix 3."
(Time Stamp: 17:42/55:25)

Public Testimony
None

Motion (**Chair Galuteria**): Approve moving into Executive Session.
(Time Stamp: 19:05/55:25)

Discussion
There being no discussion, **Chair Galuteria** called for the vote.
(Time Stamp: 19:11/55:25)

Roll Call
Motion carried (7 – 0)
Yes: *Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Lindsey, Souza, Waihe'e IV, Chair Galuteria*
Excused: *Trustees Akina and Kahele*
(Time Stamp: 19:16/55:25)

The BAE Committee entered into Executive Session.
(Time Stamp: 19:44/55:25)

The BAE Committee back in Public Session at approximately 10:18 a.m.
(Time Stamp: 2:36/55.25)

Executive Session Report
Chair Galuteria reported that the committee members received updated information, consulted with legal counsel, and took necessary action regarding the committee's powers, duties, privileges, immunities and liabilities with respect to the Public Land Trust bills identified in the 2026 legislature, specifically OHA bills on bills and measures affecting the Public Land Trust – Matrix 3.
(Time Stamp: 2:52/33:10)

Motion (**Chair Galuteria**): Accept the amendments to propose CDI on SB903 relating to Hawaiian Affairs with additional language requests as to HRS Chapter 10H and spending limitations.
(Time Stamp: 3:30/33:10)

Discussion
There being no discussion, **Chair Galuteria** called for the vote.

Roll Call
Motion carried (6 – 0)
Yes: *Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Souza, Waihe'e IV, Chair Galuteria*
Kanalua: *Trustee Lindsey*
Excused: *Trustees Ahuna and Kahele*
(Time Stamp: 3:50/33:10)

**Chair Galuteria returned to the Agenda starting with the Approval of Minutes*.*

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 4. 2026

Public Testimony
None

Motion (**Chair Galuteria**): Approve the February 4, 2026 minutes of the meeting of the Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment. (Time Stamp: 4:44/33:10)

Discussion
There being no discussion, Chair Galuteria called for the vote.

Roll Call
Motion carried (7 – 0)
Yes: *Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Lindsey, Souza, Waihe'e IV, Chair Galuteria*
Excused: *Trustees Ahuna and Kahele*
(Time Stamp: 4:55/33:10)

III. NEW BUSINESS

***A. Presentation - Sybil Lopez, Mokupuni Community Development Corporation (MCDC) taken out of order.*

B. Administration Update – 2026 Legislative Session and Rapid Response Approval Testimony Submittal Updates – *No deliberation or decision-making.*
(Time Stamp: 5:53/33:10)

Public Testimony
None

Presentation
No updates available.
(Time Stamp: 6:14/33:10)

C. **Administration Update** – 22026 Federl and County Level Legislative Proposals Affecting Native Hawaiians – *No deliberation or decision-making.*
(Time Stamp: 6:23/33:10)

Public Testimony
None

Presentation
Advocacy proceeded with the city charter testimony that was approved by the Board. There was no other business to present or discuss.
(Time Stamp: 6:39/33:10)

D. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

1. 2026 OHA State Legislative Bills – Matrix 1
(Time Stamp: 7:33/33:10)

- **HB2104** Relating to Hawaiian Burial Council. Continued moving through the process
- **HB2101** Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection. No conferees appointed so bill will most likely die.

***No motion, discussion, deliberation, or vote takenfor Matrix 1.*

- **HB1710** Relating to Historic Preservation (Matrix 9). Included historic preservation language to better protect iwi kūpuuna by identifying high risk areas such as sand dunes, lavat tubes, and karsts will probably not move out of conference committee. Advocacy will continue to work with State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) and the relevant committee chairs prior to the 2027 legislative session to see if this can be pushed through the session.
(Time Stamp: 7:42/33:10)

Public Testimony
No public Testimony on Matrices 1 – 8 and 10.

***Note: Chair Galuteria reported that there are no changes or updates on Matrices 2 – 8 and Matrix 10; therefore, he address all matrices as a group. No discussion, deliberation or votes taken on Matrixes 1 – 8 and 10.*

A. Presentation – Molokaʻi Kona Low Storm Disaster; Impacts on Hawaiian Homestead Communities – Sybil Lopez, Mokupuni Community Development Corporation (MCDC)

Public Testimony
None

Remarks

Molokaʻi Trustee, Luana Alapa, shared some remarks:

- Reported participating, along with the **Chief Operating Officer (COO), K.Sean Kekina** in presenting two funding checks to organizations supporting recovery efforts on Molokaʻi.
- Received updates on ongoing needs, including transportation of fuel and supplies, and noted that the scale of damage remains extensive with recovery expected to continue for months or years.
- Expressed support for providing additional funding assistance to Molokaʻi, recognizing that current funds may be quickly exhausted due to continuing community needs.
- Concern was raised regarding health impacts from mold exposure, especially among kūpuna, and the need for resources such as air purifiers.
- Emphasized that OHA is listening to community concerns and is committed to exploring ways to provide further support.
- Appreciation was extended to participants for sharing their experiences and needs with the Board.
  (Time Stamp: 12:11/33:10)

Presentation - **Sybil Lopez** and **Kainoa Lei McDonald** spoke on the Molokaʻi Homestead Community Recovery following the Kona Storm.

- Kainoa McDonald introduced herself as a member of the Wailuku Community Development organization, a Hawaiian Homes Commission beneficiary, council member serving Maui and Lānaʻi homesteads, Chair of the Waiʻale Homestead Organization, and Chair of the Association of Hawaiians for Homestead Lands representing Native Hawaiian beneficiaries and waitlisted applicants.
- Sybil Lopez provided an overview of the Molokaʻi Community Development Corporation (MCDC), a nonprofit organization supporting Hawaiian homestead beneficiaries through community development, planning, self-determination, and stewardship initiatives. She described MCD''s partnerships with local homestead associations and community organizations.
- The presenters reported on the impacts of the recent Kona low storm on Molokaʻi homestead communities. They noted significant flooding, power and water outages, damage to critical infrastructure, and isolation of several communities due to debris and impassable roads. The most severely affected areas included Kapaʻakea and neighboring homestead communities. More than 180 homestead households experienced impacts, particularly older homes and multi-generational family residences.
- The presenters outlined preparedness and response efforts, including coordination with Maui Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), activation of community leaders, real-time communication with emergency management agencies, establishment of emergency supply hubs, debris removal, tree trimming, mold remediation, temporary roof repairs, temporary housing assistance, and community resource centers.

- They emphasized the cultural and emotional impacts on Native Hawaiian families living on homestead lands and highlighted ongoing assessments and case management efforts.
- The presenters also discussed long-term recovery needs, including infrastructure improvements, increased disaster resilience, and access to recovery resources.
- The presenters requested continued collaboration with Trustee Alapa and OHA staff, as well as financial support and resources to assist affected homestead communities in their recovery and rebuilding efforts.
  (Time Stamp: 13:14/33:10)

Board Response
Trustee Alapa thanked the presenters for their testimony, community leadership, and recovery efforts, and acknowledged the importance of continued support for Molokaʻi's affected homestead communities.
(Time Stamp: 13:35/33:10)

Chair Galuteria invited Kai and Sybil to continue their presentation.
(Time Stamp: 14:21/33:10)

Presentation (continued)
(Time Stamp: 15:08/33:10)

- Kaiona McDonald introduced herself as a council member, chair of a homestead association, and chair of the Association of Hawaiians for Homestead Lands, which advocates for approximately 29,000 applicants on the Hawaiian Home Lands waitlist. Kainoa further explained that collaboration with Sybil was strengthened following the recent Kona storm response efforts.
- Sybil provided an overview of the Molokaʻi Community Development Corporation (MCDC), a nonprofit organization serving Native Hawaiian beneficiaries under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. She described MCDC's partnerships with homestead associations statewide and highlighted Molokaʻi's Hawaiian Home Lands community, including approximately 25,769 acres of trust lands, 840 leases, and more than 2,100 individuals awaiting homestead awards.
- The presenters described MCDC's coordination with community organizations, including Molokaʻi Cares, to assess and respond to impacts from the recent Kona storm. Preparedness efforts included communication with Maui Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), community leader activation, real-time emergency monitoring, and shelter-in-place guidance.
- The storm caused flooding, infrastructure failures, power and water outages, and significant impacts to Hawaiian homestead communities. Kapualei and neighboring areas were identified as among the most severely affected, while approximately 180 homestead households in Hoʻolehua experienced substantial impacts, particularly among aging homes and multigenerational families.

- Response efforts included establishment of emergency hubs, food distribution networks, damage assessments, debris removal, tree trimming, mold remediation, emergency roof repairs, temporary housing assistance, and coordination with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to address drainage and culvert concerns ahead of additional storm events.
- The presenters emphasized ongoing recovery challenges due to Molokaʻi's remote location, limited access to repair materials and services, and the need for continued case management to connect residents with available state and federal disaster assistance. They highlighted the cultural and emotional impacts on Native Hawaiian families and stressed the importance of long-term resilience and community self-sufficiency.

Request: The presenters requested continued collaboration with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and staff, as well as financial support and resources to assist storm recovery, housing repair, and long-term community resilience efforts for Molokaʻi homestead communities.
(Time Stamp: 26:56/33:10)

Trustee Response
Chair Galuteria acknowledged and thanked the presenters for an in-depth presentation.

Trustee Alapa thanked the presenters for their participation and expressed support for efforts to secure additional funding, emphasizing the importance of the program to the livelihood of the people of Molokaʻi. **Trustee Alapa** stated hope that fellow trustees would support and help facilitate additional funding based on the presentation received.

The presenter thanked the Board and noted an upcoming presentation on Maui, indicating plans to meet with Trustee Lindsey and provide future updates.
The item concluded with expressions of appreciation and aloha.
(Time Stamp: 27:14/33:10)

V. COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

(Time Stamp: 29:24/33:10)

- **Trustee Akaka** shared that OHA did distribute a check to Key Project, and the visit provided an excellent opportunity for her to speak with administrators and employees and learn more about the Project in terms of what they have done through the decades – especially on that side of the island. She also had the opportunity to learn of their continued efforts cooking for the community during the severe weather and flooding.
- **Trustee Akaka** added that there seemed to be a constant challenge when it came time to address these issues with other trustees.
- **Trustee Akaka** asked for help in keeping the island trustees abreast of what is happening on their respective islands and is asking for consultation and coordination when it comes to coordination regarding continued efforts in provided help for those in need. She also

requested that when pertinent information goes to administration, that they inform the Board members, so they are kept abreast of issues.
(Time Stamp: 30:38/33:10)

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None
(Time Stamp: 31:28/33:10)

VII. ADJOURNMENT

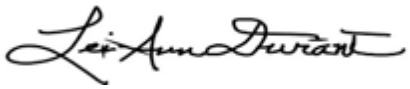
Motion (**Chair Galuteria**): Adjourn the April 29, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment.

Discussion
There being no discussion, **Chair Galuteria** called for the vote.

Roll Call
(Time Stamp: 31:51/33:10)
Motion carried (8 – 0)
Yes: *Trustees Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Kahele, Lindsey, Souza, Waihe'e IV, Chair Galuteria*
Excused: *Trustee Ahuna*

Chair Galuteria adjourned the meeting. The time: 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lei-Ann Stender Durant, Trustee Aide
Committee Recording Secretary



Brickwood Galuteria, Trustee At-Large
Committee Chair

Approved: 09/09/2026