

COMMITTEE ON BENEFICIARY ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT (BAE)

April 1, 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=9wEO8dV1sAI&t=1581s>

MINUTES

TRUSTEES PRESENT

Brickwood Galuteria, Chair
Kaleihikina Akaka, Vice Chair
Dan Ahuna
Keli'i Akina
Luana Alapa (9:20am arrival)
Kaiali'i Kahele (9:58am departure)
Carmen Hulu Lindsey
Keoni Souza
John Waihe'e, IV (10:08am arrival)

BAE STAFF

Lei-Ann Stender Durant
Mark Watanabe
Momi Ka'aihue
Nathan Takeuchi

BOT STAFF

Carina Lee
Kanani Iaea

ADMINISTRATION

Summer Sylva, Interim CEO
Sean Kekina, COO
Bill Brennan
Carla Hostetter
Deja Ostrowski
Hailama Farden
Kyle Saucier
Leinā'ala Ley

BOARD COUNSEL

Kapono Kiakona

GENERAL COUNSEL

Everett Ohta

I. CALL TO ORDER

The April 1, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment was called to order at 9 a.m.

(Time Stamp: 3:29/1:16:25)

Roll Call

Quorum established (7-0)

Present: *Trustees Ahuna, Akaka, Akina, Kahele, Lindsey, Souza, Chair Galuteria*

Not Present for roll call: *Trustees Alapa and Waihe'e IV*

(Time Stamp: 4:06/1:16:25)

**Note: Trustee Kahele excused from meeting at 9:58 a.m.*

II. NEW BUSINESS

Public Testimony – Given for New Business Items A. and B.

The Unity Party (Pikachu Billionaire) – Supported all items on the Agenda, recognized the Trustees for all their hard work, and thanked the Board for all the work they do.

(Time Stamp: 6:38/1:16:25)

**Note: There was no discussion, deliberation, or decision-making on the following*

A. Administrative Update – 2026 Legislative Session and Rapid Response Approval (RRA) Testimony Submittal Updates – No deliberation or decision-making.

(Time Stamp: 7:47/1:16:25)

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā'ala Ley

RRA Update

Staff reported that two RRA testimony submissions were made during the past week and distributed through the 48-hour notice and included on the meeting matrixes.

1. SR 84 - Halawa Facility Rehabilitation

- Testimony was submitted in support of a resolution encouraging that, if Halawa Correctional Facility is upgraded, consideration be given to operating it as a rehabilitative facility rather than focusing solely on incarceration.
- The position was consistent with prior OHA advocacy regarding the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on Native Hawaiians and support for cultural diversion courts and other rehabilitation-focused approaches.
- The resolution is listed on Matrix 6 for further Board discussion and approval.

2. HR 189 / HCR 199 - Return of Federal Surplus Lands

- Testimony supported the intent of the resolution, which requests the return of surplus federally held lands under existing federal law.
- OHA recommended removing language by directing the Public Land Trust (PLT) Working Group to conduct a fair market value assessment of federally held lands.
- Staff explained that such an assessment falls outside the scope of the PLT Working Group's mandate, which focuses on state-held lands, and noted that Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) previously estimated the cost of conducting such an assessment at approximately \$2 million, a cost for which the Working Group has no funding.
- The requested amendment would remove references to the PLT Working Group from the resolution.
- Staff noted that one of the resolutions is listed on **Matrix 3** for discussion and indicated that the items could be flagged when the Board reaches the appropriate matrix for further discussion.

Action: No Board action was required. The report was provided for informational purposes only. Staff will identify the resolutions during the matrix discussions should Trustees wish to discuss them further.

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

B. Administrative Update – 2026 Federal and County Level Legislative Proposals Affecting Native Hawaiians – No deliberation or decision-making
(Time Stamp: 10:36/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

Pikachu Billionaire: urged DLNR to defer rulemaking until the conclusion of the legislative session and allow the Legislature to act on the issue before proceeding.

Presentation – Chief Advocate Leinā‘ala Ley

Staff provided two advocacy updates regarding activities outside the legislative session:

1. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

- Staff testified at a Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WestPac) meeting in opposition to reopening the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument to commercial fishing.
- The testimony was consistent with prior Board of Trustees positions and OHA's role as co-trustee of Papahānaumokuākea.

2. HB2101 – Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

- Staff testified at a Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) public hearing regarding a proposed aquarium collection rulemaking package.
- Staff expressed concern that the proposed rulemaking was inconsistent with OHA's legislative package bill, **HB2101**, which remains active during the

current legislative session.

Trustees confirmed that the advocacy positions presented were consistent with previously adopted OHA positions.

Chair Galuteria reminded Trustees that ten matrixes were on the agenda, noted that no motion would be made on **Matrix 1**, and advised that discussion and voting would occur on agenda items associated with **Matrixes 2 through 10**.

Action: Informational update only; no Board action taken.

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

1. 2026 OHA State Legislative Bill & Measures Package - Matrix 1

(Time Stamp: 12:34/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā‘ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 12:57/1:16:25)

**Note: There was no motion or vote on Matrix 1*

Staff reported on the status of OHA's 2026 legislative package measures and noted that no motion or vote would be taken on **Matrix 1**.

OHA's six package bills:

- **HB2101 - Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection** remains active under its original bill number and is scheduled for its final hearing before the Senate Committees on Energy, Commerce and Consumer Protection and Judiciary. OHA submitted written testimony in support. If approved, the measure will advance to conference committee.
- **HB2104 – Relating to Island Burial Councils** also remains active and is awaiting scheduling for its final hearing before the Senate Committee on Water and Land.
- **HB2102 - Relating to Historic Preservation** no longer remains active under its original bill number; however, its substantive language was incorporated into **HB1710 - Relating to Historic Preservation**. Staff explained that **HB1710** is an appropriate legislative vehicle for the language, allowing the proposal to continue moving through the legislative process.

During Trustee discussion, staff clarified that while only **HB2101 – Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection** and **HB 2104 – Relating to Island Burial**

- **Councils** remain alive under their original numbers, three OHA package proposals continue to advance substantively due to the incorporation of **HB 2102 – Relating to Historic Preservation** language into **HB 1710**.

Trustees acknowledged that legislative concepts are frequently consolidated into other measures as the session progresses. Staff further noted that the subject matter of **HB 1710** aligns closely with the intent of **HB 2102**, making the transfer of language appropriate.

Action: *Informational update only. No motion was made and no vote was taken.*

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

2. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Naming OHA - Matrix 2 (Time Stamp: 15:49/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation - Chief Advocate, Leinā‘ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 16:15/1:16:25)

Staff highlighted several bills and resolutions for trustee awareness and potential position updates:

Informational Items

- Staff reported continued advocacy for parity in public election financing between OHA trustee elections and the Lieutenant Governor's race.
- Amendments to the bill would increase funding available for OHA elections but would still not place OHA on equal footing with the Lieutenant Governor's race.
- OHA will continue submitting testimony supporting its preferred amendments.

HCR19 – Relating to Surplus Military Lands

- Staff noted prior testimony had been submitted before a board-approved position was established.
- Discussion focused on the availability of a reliable inventory of federally held lands.
- Staff clarified that the Public Land Trust Working Group addresses state-held lands only and does not include federally held lands.
- The resolution concerns federal lands that may be surplus to defense needs and potentially subject to return to the State under Public Law 88-233.
- Examples discussed included lands near the Hale Koa Hotel and recreational use

military lands such as Bellows.

Trustees discussed whether lands used for non-defense purposes should be evaluated for surplus status and possible return to the State.

Recommended Position Changes

HB 2046 - Relating to the Ola Hawai'i Commission

- Staff recommended changing OHA's position from *Support* to *Support with Amendments*.
- The recommendation was made to provide flexibility for OHA to support amendments being advanced by community stakeholders.

HB 2584 - Relating to the Public Land Trust

- Staff reported OHA's continued support for a temporary two-year increase in annual Public Land Trust funding. Trustees were advised that OHA was seeking appropriation.
- Staff reported OHA's continued support for a temporary two-year increase in annual Public Land Trust funding.
- Trustees were advised that OHA is seeking appropriation of approximately **\$55 million** currently held in the State's carryover trust account, representing revenues previously identified by state agencies as owed to OHA.
- Staff further reported that language previously opposed by the Attorney General had been removed from the measure. The revised bill now specifies a funding amount rather than referencing a percentage entitlement, which staff stated simplifies administration while maintaining the bill's intended purpose.

SCR 117 – Nominating John D. Waihe'e, III, for Induction into the Aloha Order of Merit

- Staff informed trustees of a scheduled hearing before the Hawaiian Affairs Committee on **SCR117**, which nominates former Governor John D. Waihe'e, III, for induction into the Aloha Order of Merit. OHA intends to submit testimony in support.

Trustees discussed the history, purpose, and significance of the Aloha Order of Merit.

Motion made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve OHA staff positions for bills and measures naming OHA as presented in **Matrix 2**, except for: **HB 2046 - Relating to the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Commission** by changing OHA's position from *Support* to *Support with Amendments*. **HB 2584 – Relating to the Public Land Trust** by changing OHA's position from *Support* to *Support with Amendments*
(Time Stamp: 25:55/1:19:25)

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried by unanimous vote (9 – 0)

(Time Stamp: 26:26/1:19:25)

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

3. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting the Public Land Trust - Matrix 3

(Time Stamp: 26:55/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā‘la Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 27:11/1:16:25)

Legislative Affairs Update and Matrix Revisions

- Staff reported that two highlighted table changes were administrative corrections rather than substantive policy changes. The first correction pertained to testimony clarifying that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) is not a state agency; and, therefore, would not be subject to proposed legislation limiting state government leases between governmental entities to no more than one dollar per year.
- The second correction addressed a staff error in which a bill was initially flagged for potential impacts on public, crown, and government lands; upon further review, staff determined the bill did not affect those lands. Staff noted that both corrections were made to maintain consistency with positions previously discussed and approved by the Board.
- Staff also provided an update on a significant measure concerning the establishment of a community development district within the Hawai‘i Community Development Authority (HCDA) to oversee redevelopment of the Banyan Drive area.
- Staff reiterated OHA’s previously approved position seeking a voting seat on the district board due to the area's significant concentration of crown and government lands. OHA also continued to support community requests for a lineal descendant seat to ensure cultural, historical, and community interests are represented in district decisions. Staff reported that one committee version of the bill included a lineal descendant seat; however, no committee had yet added OHA as a voting member of the district board.

Motion made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve OHA staff legislative positions as presented in **Matrix 3** relating to the Public Land Trust except for:

SB2596 - Relating to Government Leases by changing OHA's position from Monitor to Comment.

(Time Stamp: 30:08/1:16:25)

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried by unanimous vote (9 – 0)

(Time Stamp: 30:35/1:16:25)

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

4. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting Natural Resources and Customary Practices – Matrix 4

(Time Stamp: 30:59/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā'ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 31:24/1:16:25)

Legislative Affairs Update

- Staff highlighted a new measure supporting the Native Hawaiian Intellectual Property Working Group's request for additional resources and an extension of its timeline. Staff explained that additional time is considered important to allow the working group to complete its work, regardless of whether additional resources are ultimately provided. Staff indicated Support for the measure and emphasized its importance to advancing the group's efforts.
- Staff also reported a previously published position change regarding a measure establishing an income tax credit for individuals using natural methods to manage coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB). The measure had originally been Support due to provisions related to niu (coconut) as a cultural resource. However, because the bill was amended to focus solely on an income tax credit, staff recommended changing OHA's position to Monitor. Staff noted OHA has generally supported approaches that place responsibility for CRB management with state agencies rather than individual landowners.

- Staff next discussed a measure relating to trespassing. OHA had previously opposed the bill because of concerns regarding impacts on Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, access rights, and legal hunting activities. Staff reported that the House Agriculture Committee had incorporated OHA's recommendations by limiting the forfeiture penalty to second offenses. As amended, staff concluded the bill would not adversely affect lawful hunting on private lands or Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practitioners.
-

While concerns remain regarding the severity of penalties for trespass and hunting violations on private lands, staff recommended changing OHA's position from Oppose to Comment.

Motion made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve staff positions on bills and measures affecting Natural Resources and Native Hawaiian Traditional and Customary Practices as presented in **Matrix 4**, except for:

SB2128 – Relating to Trespass by changing OHA's position from

Oppose to Comment.

(Time Stamp: 34:03/1:16:25)

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried by unanimous vote (9 – 0)

(Time Stamp: 34:32/1:16:25)

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

5. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting Native Hawaiian Housing - Matrix 5

(Time Stamp: 35:01/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā'ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 35:14/1:16:25)

Legislative Affairs Update

- Staff highlighted **SB 2552 – Relating to the Individual Housing Account Program** - a measure supported by OHA that would allow individuals to establish and contribute to housing savings accounts for future home down payments. Staff noted that the proposal closely resembles OHA's 2018 legislative package
- measure and reflects OHA's longstanding support for programs that assist families in saving toward homeownership. Staff further emphasized the importance of down payment assistance and housing
- savings initiatives and expressed support for broader state investment in such programs in addition to OHA trust-funded efforts. Staff reported that the measure was scheduled for a hearing during the week and
- could advance to conference if it successfully cleared committee review.

Motion made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve staff position recommendations for bills and measures affecting Native Hawaiian housing as presented in

Matrix 5.

(Time Stamp: 36:10/1:16:25)

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried by unanimous vote (9 – 0)

(Time Stamp: 36:28/1:16:25)

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

6. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting Native Hawaiian Health - Matrix 6

(Time Stamp: 36:56/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā‘ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 37:04/1:16:25)

Legislative Update

- Staff highlighted **HB 1769 – Relating to Correctional Facilities** - a priority measure requiring the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to incrementally return individuals housed in private out-of-state prisons. An action alert had been issued,

and the bill was reported to be proceeding to conference committee.

- Staff also presented **HB 1875 - Relating to Healthcare - Matrix 6**
The measure would expand healthcare privacy protections by explicitly extending HIPAA-related protections to members of the māhū community and individuals who have received gender-affirming healthcare services. Staff noted the bill is consistent with prior OHA positions and recommended Support.

Motion made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve the staff position recommendations for bills and measures affecting Native Hawaiian health as presented in **Matrix 6**, except for:
HB 1875 - Relating to Healthcare by changing OHA's position from Monitor to Support.
(Time Stamp: 38:27/1:16:25)

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried (8 – 0)

Yes – Trustees Ahuna, Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Lindsey, Souza, Waihe'e IV, Chair Galuteria

(Time Stamp: 38:46/1:16:25)

Excused – Trustee Kahele

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

7. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting Native Hawaiian Education - Matrix 7

(Time Stamp: 39:26/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā'ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 39:43/1:16:25)

Recommended Changes to Matrix 7

1. HB1893 – Relating to Education

Charter School Teachers Incentives Program

- Staff recommended changing the position to Support with Amendments.

OHA staff met with the Charter School Commission, which requested support for the same amendments.

- The recommendation aligns OHA's position with that of the Charter School Commission.
-

2. HR171/HCR181/SR153 – Requesting the Department of Education to Convene a Shared-Decision Making Committee to Develop an Action Plan to Establish a K-12 Kaiapuni School in Kapolei

- Staff initially recommended Support.
- After further consultation with stakeholders, staff determined that while there is support for establishing a Kaiapuni school in Kapolei, concerns exist regarding the proposed shared decision-making committee as the preferred mechanism.
- Staff recommended changing the position from Support to Comment, noting that other methods for establishing a Kaiapuni school may be preferable and emphasizing DOE's responsibility to provide access to Hawaiian immersion education.

Motion was made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve staff recommendations for bills and measures affecting Native Hawaiian education as presented in **Matrix 7**, except for: **HR171/HCR181 – Requesting the Department of Education to Convene a Shared-Decision Making Committee to Develop an Action Plan to Establish a K-12 Kaiapuni School in Kapolei** by changing OHA's position from Support to Comment.

Discussion

- Trustees sought clarification regarding the intent of **HR171/ HCR181**.
- Staff explained that the issue centers on the process for establishing a Kaiapuni school rather than funding, emphasizing DOE's obligation to provide Hawaiian immersion education.

Trustee Ahuna commented on previous experiences with the Kaiapuni program demand exceeding available capacity and supported the cautious approach reflected in the recommendation.

(Time Stamp: 43:11/1:16:25)

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

Roll Call

Motion carried by unanimous vote (9 - 0)

(Time Stamp: 44:20/1:16:25)

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

8. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting Native Hawaiian Economic Stability - Matrix 8

(Time Stamp: 44:46/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā‘ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 45:00/1:16:25)

Requested Change

- Staff reported a requested table change for **Matrix 8, HB2172 – Relating to Employment of Retirants** - which establishes a five-year pilot program authorizing the Department of Education (DOE) to rehire retired teachers for hard-to-staff positions. Staff recommended changing OHA's position from Support to Monitor due to conference committee prioritization and because the measure had not yet appeared on a Ways and Means agenda.

During discussion, **Trustee Lindsey** questioned why an education-related bill was included under the Economic Stability Matrix. Staff acknowledged the placement appeared to be an error and stated that staff would review the matter and provide clarification. **Chair Galuteria** requested that **Trustee Lindsey** be notified of the outcome.

Motion was made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve OHA staff positions for bills and measures affecting Native Hawaiian economic stability as presented in **Matrix 8**, except for:

HB 2172 – Relating to Employment Retirants by changing OHA's position from Support to Monitor.

(Time Stamp: 46:18/1:16:25)

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried by unanimous vote (9 – 0)

(Time Stamp: 46:49/1:16:25)

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

9. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Bills & Measures Affecting Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 6E (iwi kūpuna and historic preservation) – Matrix 9

(Time Stamp: 47:13/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā‘ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski

(Time Stamp: 47:34/1:16:25)

Recommended Position Change

- Staff reported a recommended change to **HB 1710 – Relating to Historic Preservation**, which now contains OHA package bill language.
- Staff recommended changing OHA's position on the measure from Comment to Support to advance the proposed language.
- Staff also noted two new resolutions:
HCR177/HR167 and **HCR167/HR177**– Urging the counties to establish, strengthen, or expand historic preservation functions within county government to complement and support statewide historic preservation efforts. These resolutions urge counties to strengthen their historic preservation capacity in response to recent changes to historic review responsibilities under HRS Chapter 6E that have delegated certain duties from the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) to county governments.
- Staff explained that counties are being encouraged to invest in qualified historic preservation professionals, citing Maui County's existing model, which includes archaeological expertise within its Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources.

Motion made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve OHA staff's recommended positions on bills and measures affecting HRS Chapter 6E, iwi kūpuna, and historic preservation as presented in **Matrix 9**, except for:

HB 1710 – Relating to Historic Preservation by changing OHA's position from Comment to Support.

(Time Stamp: 48:06/1:16:25)

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried (8 – 1)

Abstained: *Trustee Akina*

(Time Stamp: 49:57/1:16:25)

II. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

C. OHA Positions on 2026 Legislative Bills

10. 2026 Legislature: OHA Position on Governor's Messages for State Board and Commissions Confirmation - Matrix 10

(Time Stamp: 50:27/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Presentation – Chief Advocate, Leinā‘ala Ley, and Public Policy Manager, Deja Ostrowski: (50:49/1:16:25)

Agenda Item: OHA Staff Recommendations on Confirmations to State Boards and Commissions (Matrix 10)

- Staff presented recommendations for support of several nominees to state boards and commissions. Newest recommended support nominations included:
 - **Lennea Bryant** for Kāne‘ohe Bay Regional Council, citing her background as a Native Hawaiian attorney, has held leadership positions in Hawaiian Civic Club organizations, is active at neighborhood board meetings, and is involved in marine resource issues.
 - **Martina Kamaka**, based on her involvement in Native Hawaiian health initiatives.
 - **Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala** (as recommended by staff) served on the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC)
 - **Noe Noe Wong Wilson** for the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority.
 - **Ku‘uleialoha Santos**, gubernatorial nominee for the Land Use Commission, citing her family's connection to the Hanapēpē salt beds.

(Time Stamp: 50:49/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Staff confirmed there was no public testimony on the item.

Motion made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve staff recommendations (from Monitor to Support) on confirmations to state boards and commissions as presented in **Matrix 10**.
(Time Stamp: 52:59/1:16:25)

Discussion

During discussion, trustees requested additional information regarding several nominees currently designated as "monitors" and suggested consideration of additional support recommendations.

- Staff explained that support recommendations were based on available information demonstrating alignment with OHA priorities and service to the Native Hawaiian community.
- Staff also noted resource limitations in preparing support testimony.

Trustees proposed changing the following nominees from Monitor to Support:

- Melvin Kahele, Gubernatorial Nominee, Land Use Commission
- Philip Fernandez, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Paul Horner, Gubernatorial Nominee, Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority
- Joseph Pickard, Gubernatorial Nominee, Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council
- Elena Bryant, Gubernatorial Nominee, Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council
- Gilbert Kualīʻi, Gubernatorial Nominee, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Kuʻuleialoha Santos, Gubernatorial Nominee, Land Use Commission

Discussion (continued)

- The importance of Native Hawaiian representation and perspectives on state boards, particularly the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority.
- Whether OHA should proactively develop and submit future nominee recommendations to the Governor, even when not statutorily required.
- A recommendation that staff track board and commission term expirations and provide advance notice to the Board.
- Staff recommendations to potentially oppose certain nominees whose records were viewed as inconsistent with Native Hawaiian interests, including Nancy Carr Smith.

*[**Motion** made by **Chair Galuteria** to approve staff recommendations (from Monitor to Support) on confirmations to state boards and commissions as presented in **Matrix 10**, except to add:*

*#23 - GM 766,
#12 - GM 766
#17 - GM 650
#11 - GM 741
#20 - GM742*

(Time Stamp: 52:59/1:16:25)]

There being no further discussion, **Trustee Galuteria** called for the vote.

**Note: Trustee Kahele has been excused from the meeting.*

Roll Call

Motion carried (8 – 1)

Yes: *Trustees Ahuna, Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Lindsey, Souza, Waihe'e, Chair Galuteria*

Excused: *Trustee Kahele*

(Time Stamp: 1:08/1:16:25)

III. COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

(Time Stamp: 1:09:04/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

'Ohana Unity Party – Pikachu Billionaire

(Time Stamp: 1:09:26/1:16:25)

The testifier expressed appreciation to the trustees, committee members, and staff for their work and support. The testimony focused on concerns regarding civic participation, election processes, public engagement, and policy implementation affecting the Native Hawaiian community.

Key points raised

- Concerns regarding barriers to participation in public office and allegations related to election processes
- Comments regarding OHA funding and revenue issues, including references to Public Land Trust revenues
- Observations about low levels of public participation in government processes, including testimony submission and civic engagement
- Remarks regarding legislative measures discussed during the session and concerns about the advancement of certain proposals through the legislative process
- Comments on bipartisan challenges in advancing legislation, regardless of political affiliation
- Disclosure that the testifier had previously applied for a position with OHA's Washington, D.C. office and views the position as important for advocating for Native Hawaiian interests at the federal level
- Discussion of efforts to secure funding and support for community projects, including work associated with the Ke'ehi Homestead Association and the Nānākuli Cemetery
- A request for continued support, creativity, and collaboration from OHA trustees in pursuing funding opportunities and community initiatives

- Encouragement for increased community engagement focused on policy development and implementation

The testifier thanked the trustees for their service and hard work and expressed hope for greater public involvement and engagement in the future. The testimony concluded with well wishes and an expression of aloha.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Time Stamp: 1:11:53/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

- **Chair Galuteria** announced that trustees and staff were invited to support beneficiary services and community engagement efforts related to activities at the Wailua Courthouse. Initial operating information was provided for weekend assistance efforts.
- Staff subsequently clarified that, in coordination with a community partner, operations would **not** open during the announced weekend period and would instead begin on Monday. Staff indicated that operating hours had not yet been finalized and would be aligned with partner operations.
- **Trustee Lindsey** sought clarification regarding staff participation on Sunday. Staff confirmed that operations would not be open on that Sunday and that staff would not be required to work that day. The trustee noted concerns about scheduling work on Easter Sunday, and the earlier announcement was acknowledged as premature.
- **Trustee Akaka** asked to be included in future planning discussions regarding activities occurring on O‘ahu, noting that they had not been informed in advance. Staff acknowledged the concern, advised that an initial planning meeting was taking place that day, and committed to providing updates to all trustees as planning progresses.
- **The Chair** and members agreed that when activities are being planned on a particular island, the respective island trustee should be consulted and included in related discussions.
- **Chair Galuteria** indicated they had no further comments.

V. ADJOURNMENT

(Time Stamp: 1:14:15/1:16:25)

Motion made by **Trustee Lindsey** to adjourn the April 1, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment.

(Time Stamp: 1:14:15/1:16:25)

Public Testimony

None

Discussion

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

Roll Call

Motion carried (8 - 0)

Yes: *Trustees Ahuna, Akaka, Akina, Alapa, Lindsey, Souza, Waihe'e IV, and Chair Galuteria)*

Excused: *Trustee Kahele*

(Time Stamp: 1:15:00/1:16:25)

The meeting of the April 1, 2026 Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lei-Ann Stender Durant, Trustee Aide
BAE Committee Secretary



Brickwood Galuteria, Trustee At-Large
BAE Committee Chair

Date Approved: August 26, 2026