

**Chair Carmen “Hulu” Lindsey speech/remarks at 2022 National Caucus of Native American State Legislators – 11:00 a.m. to noon Nov. 30**

***Engaging Native Hawaiians: Building Awareness on Native Hawaiian Issues***

(with Tyler Gomes, DHHL; Moderator Sen. Lynn DeCoite)

Aloha mai kākou...and mahalo nui for the invitation to speak here this morning... As Indigenous leaders we must work together toward common goals in what we Hawaiians call a spirit of lōkahi...of unity...so it is a privilege and an honor to have this opportunity to share with you today a little about the work we are currently undertaking on behalf of our people.

I am Hulu Lindsey...I am the Chair of the Board of Trustees for the office of Hawaiian affairs...or OHA as we refer to it...OHA was created in 1978 at the Hawai‘i Constitutional Convention to address historical injustices and challenges facing the Native Hawaiian community... Mind you, this was almost 20 years since being admitted to the United States as the 50<sup>th</sup> state in 1959...The convention delegates envisioned an agency that provided a form of self-determination for native Hawaiians and advocate for their overall wellbeing.

OHA was established through Article XII of the Hawai‘i State Constitution...and Chapter 10 of the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes outlines OHA’s duties and purposes...to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians...to serve as the principle public agency responsible for the performance, development and coordination of programs and activities for Native Hawaiians...to assess the policies and practices

of other agencies...and to conduct advocacy efforts, including the promotion and protection of the rights of Native Hawaiians.

OHA is governed by a nine-member board of trustees, which includes five trustees representing particular islands along with four at-large trustees who represent beneficiaries from across the state...The principles of self-determinative governance and native control of native lands have always been key in serving our people and it is our vision at OHA to ho'oulu lāhui aloha – or to raise a beloved lāhui.

I have served as the Maui Island trustee at OHA since 2012...I am a former properties administrator for Maui Land and Pineapple Company...as well as the former administrator for the County of Maui's Land Use and Codes Division...I own a real estate company and have been a licensed real estate agent for more than 40 years...so my skill set is primarily in 'āina...in land use...and we are certainly using this skill set as we move our agency forward...I was elected board chair in December of 2020, and these past two years have been very eventful to say the least.

This past legislative session was a monumental one for the Native Hawaiian people...The State Legislature's historic \$600 million dollar appropriation to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands was welcome news...Though long in coming, these funds provide the Native Hawaiian community an opportunity to begin to heal from the injustices of the past...Injustices Hawaiians have suffered in their own homeland inflicted by their own state and federal government and

these funds have the potential to make a significant impact in the lives of our people...Support for the housing needs of Native Hawaiians through the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands is a key component of OHA's strategic plan...and we stand ready to assist DHHL in a spirit of lōkahi and alignment to complement housing programs for all Hawaiians and address the critical housing needs of our people.

This legislative session also saw the collaborative support of both the State House and Senate for a Public Land Trust bill...signed into law by Gov. David Ige as Act 226 that raised annual payments to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs from \$15.1 million to \$21.5 million dollars, provided an additional sum of \$64 million, and outlined plans for a working group to continue discussion on the crucial issue of the Public Land Trust...The Public Land Trust bill is not a bill for OHA, it is a bill for all Hawaiians...This bill represents important progress that we hope leads to increased dialogue and a better understanding of the state's constitutional obligation to the Native Hawaiian people and strategies to fulfill it.

The Public Land Trust comprises some 1.4 million acres of land conveyed to the State of Hawai'i from the federal government in 1959 when Hawai'i transitioned from being a United States territory to a state...These lands were formerly known as "ceded lands" and are what remain of the crown and government lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom that were seized in the aftermath of the illegal overthrow in 1893.

OHA was established specifically to manage all income and proceeds from that pro rata portion of the Public Land Trust revenue for Native Hawaiians...In 1980, Act 273 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes established OHA's pro rata share of Public Land Trust revenues at 20 percent...The betterment of the conditions of Native Hawaiians is one of the five expressed purposes of the Public Land Trust revenues as stated in the 1959 Admission Act.

The State of Hawai'i utilizes these lands for public schools and universities, harbors, parks and other public purposes. In 2006, in the absence of an accurate accounting of Public Land Trust revenues, the legislature enacted Act 178 which set the interim income and proceeds amount to be conveyed to OHA at \$15.1 million per year, which increased to \$21.5 million per year last session – again as an interim amount...An accurate accounting of the Public Land Trust lands and its revenues will be key to the success of the Act 226 established working group that is slated to take on this issue next year...The State of Hawai'i has a constitutional obligation and duty to the Indigenous people of Hawai'i to convey a pro rata share of incomes and proceeds from this land trust..This fiduciary and trust responsibility includes the federal government as well as the state and to every OHA trustee as well...Historically, the state has grossly underfunded OHA with Public Land Trust revenues...our latest study estimated that 20 percent of the state's Public Land Trust revenue was \$78.9 million per year, while OHA has been receiving only \$15.1 million per year which translates to just 3.8 percent of total revenue – and our goal is to permanently rectify this issue as we seek a fair and pono resolution of this matter.

In 2012, the State of Hawai'i transferred approximately 30 acres of land in urban Honolulu to OHA...The land, valued at \$200 million dollars, was offered to OHA in lieu of more than 30 years of unpaid pro rata share of income and proceeds from the Public Land Trust owed to Native Hawaiians...The 30 acres are comprised of 10 separate parcels of land located on a peninsula in the heart of Honolulu known as Kaka'ako Makai...Since receiving this settlement of Public Land Trust obligations, OHA has reached out to Native Hawaiians across our pae 'āina through a series of visioning meetings to discuss ideas for development of this land.

OHA's vision has constantly been to utilize these lands in a way that balances commerce and culture, and to ensure that the land would be developed in such a way that not only generates revenue for the betterment of Native Hawaiians, but also creates a Hawaiian sense of place...Recently we worked with renowned Kumu Cy Bridges to propose a new name for the area – Hakuone...Hakuone means a "small land division cultivated for a chief"...The name metaphorically represents OHA on behalf our the lāhui...Additionally, the word "haku" means to "compose, create or put in order," and the word "one" means sand but poetically refers to land...So it will be our job and our focus in this upcoming year to continue to haku these many elements together to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians.

From my very first speech after being elected chair of this board it has been my focus to develop these lands at Hakuone...We are considering and assessing opportunities for multiple uses and benefits for OHA, our people and the public...The development of these land assets has the exponential potential to

greatly increase our Native Hawaiian trust fund by optimizing highest and best use of these lands as a compelling urban neighborhood in Honolulu producing comparable and competitive values for our property...We anticipate the release of a master plan for the area by the end of this year.

Advancing development of these lands required a strong strategic effort that included our beneficiaries, our community, strategic consultants and the general public...The key however, will be the State Legislature's support of our plans and their recognition of the contributions of our lands to make a better Hawai'i for our beneficiaries, the community and the business sector...It is my dream that the lands at Hakuone serve as an economic engine for our people for generations to come, and this work will be our focus in the upcoming year.

So, that is a little bit about the history of our agency – where we have come from, what we celebrated earlier this year, and where we will be going in this upcoming year...Thank you again for this opportunity to share our goals, objectives, challenges and dreams with all of you today...Aloha nō.

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