October 31, 2026

Chair Kaialiʻi Kahele and Members of the Board of Trustees
Office of Hawaiian Affairs
560 N. Nimitz Highway, Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96817

NOVEMBER 2, 2026 2PM MEETING AGENDA ITEM: ITEM A1. Receive and take action on the Joint BAE-BF Committees' recommendation of a candidate for appointment to the permanent position of Office of Hawaiian Affairs Administrator / CEO.

RE: Letter of Support for Todd Kala Apo – Administrator / Chief Executive Officer

Aloha Chair Kahele and Trustees,

I write to share my confidence in Todd Kala Apo as a candidate for Administrator/CEO.

I have known Todd for more than 40 years. He was a year ahead of me at Kamehameha Schools, where we served together in student government. He became like a big brother to me, offering guidance, encouragement, and steady mentorship. He later married my classmate Jamie Paet, and our families have grown up together. Over the years, our paths have remained entwined beyond family and friendship. We have worked together, volunteered together, and contemplated the state of Hawaiʻi and Hawaiians together. I have seen him in nearly every circumstance, at life's highest peaks and deepest valleys. I know Todd about as well as you can know a person.

Todd is steady. Where others panic, he is calm and deliberate, with a gift for cutting through noise to the heart of a complex problem. He is a man of his word. If Todd says he will do something, consider it done. His service is not reserved for the spotlight. He gives his time quietly, helping friends, family, and community without seeking credit, and he will sit and listen when someone is going through a hard time.

I have witnessed Todd being criticized for past positions and the entities he has represented, some of it by leaders I admire and often stand with. Todd and I can disagree. We have argued nearly every side of an issue over forty years. But we have never disagreed about our love for Hawaiʻi, or about the right of her people to have agency over their own future. That shared foundation is why I trust him to bring his gifts to bear towards the future we need.

Chair Kahele was right when he told Todd at the October 22 meeting that the Board is divided and that whoever becomes CEO will inherit that division. I agree with the Chair, and I appreciate his candor. Our lāhui is not a monolith either. Todd has spent four decades working across disagreement while always striving to maintain the relationship.

Vision and policy are the kuleana of the Trustees. The CEO's role is to manage operations, safeguard assets, and carry out the Board's direction. I am confident that when the Board gives direction, Todd will bring his full intellect and work ethic to it, and will tell you plainly when he sees a problem.

Supporting Todd does not diminish the other qualified candidates who sought this critical role. I want to acknowledge everyone who stepped forward—doing so requires tremendous energy, courage, and aloha for our people. I am particularly impressed by the caliber of the finalists and recognize all that Summer Sylva and Kaulana Park offer. Each finalist has given the Board their time and trust in hopes that this process will be honored and completed.

I have every confidence that if given the chance, Todd will serve OHA and the Board well. Mahalo nui loa for your service and for the care you bring to this kuleana.

Me ka ʻoiaʻiʻo,

Albert "Alapaki" Nahale-a
Hilo, Hawaiʻi
alapaki.nahalea@gmail.com

TESTIMONY TO THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Re: Selection of OHA Chief Executive Officer — Support for Summer Sylva

Aloha e nā Kahu Waiwai, Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs,

I submit this testimony in support of Summer Sylva as the next Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. But my testimony is about something considerably larger than one candidate or one appointment.

OHA stands at a fork in the road.

One path leads toward an institution that understands itself as a steward and protector of Hawaiian lands, resources, cultural inheritance, and the unfinished business of Hawaiian self-governance.

The other leads toward an institution increasingly defined by its investment portfolio, real estate development opportunities, political relationships, and the accumulation and management of wealth.

These are not necessarily mutually exclusive activities. Responsible investment is an important fiduciary obligation. But investment is a means to an end. It must never become the institution's purpose.

The assets entrusted to OHA are not simply another investment portfolio. They are inseparable from the history of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the taking of Crown and Government lands, and the continuing obligations owed to the Hawaiian people. OHA's trust responsibilities must be exercised with that history firmly in view.

The question is not simply how much wealth OHA can generate. It is what OHA exists to protect, whom it serves, and what future it is helping our people build.

Consider what confronts us today.

Military leases affecting tens of thousands of acres of Hawaiian lands are approaching critical decisions. The environmental, cultural, and economic consequences will extend for generations. Will OHA stand firmly for accountability, restoration, and the protection of these lands, or become another participant negotiating the terms of their continued occupation?

At Kakaʻako Makai, will the measure of success be the highest potential development return, or the greatest enduring benefit to our lāhui, consistent with the trust's obligations?

At Mauna ʻAla, will the State and its institutions recognize and respect the independent cultural authority and kuleana of the families entrusted with caring for our aliʻi and iwi kūpuna, or continue treating these matters primarily as questions of government administration?

These are not isolated issues. They are expressions of the same fundamental question: **Are our institutions protecting the inheritance of our people, or merely managing the assets that remain?**

I do not oppose economic development. I spent much of my professional life in business leadership and organizational turnarounds. I understand financial performance, capital investment, and the responsibilities of management.

But I also understand that an organization can become financially sophisticated while losing sight of its mission.

A profitable transaction is not necessarily a successful act of stewardship.

The next CEO must understand the distinction.

Summer Sylva brings experience in Native Hawaiian legal advocacy, federal policy, cultural resource protection, and institutional leadership. More importantly, her professional background reflects an understanding that OHA's responsibilities extend beyond financial management to the protection of rights, resources, and the ability of our people to determine their own future.

My support is not a request for unquestioning confidence in any individual. Every CEO must be accountable to measurable performance, sound financial management, transparency, and the beneficiaries.

But those measures must include more than investment returns and development milestones. They must include lands protected, rights defended, resources restored, beneficiaries meaningfully served, and progress toward genuine Hawaiian self-determination.

OHA was never intended to become an end unto itself.

Its ultimate measure of success should be whether the Hawaiian people are stronger, more secure in their inheritance, and better positioned to exercise self-governance because OHA existed.

Trustees, this appointment is an opportunity to declare what kind of institution OHA intends to become.

I urge you to choose stewardship over speculation, kuleana over institutional convenience, and the long-term interests of the lāhui over the attraction of short-term financial achievement.

I support Summer Sylva. More importantly, I support an OHA that remembers why it exists.

The assets are not the mission. The people, the ʻāina, and the future of our lāhui are.

Me ka ʻoiaʻiʻo,

James J.K.C. Maioho

Dear Chair Kahele and Board Members,

RE: Support for the Selection of Todd Apo as Administrator/CEO of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)

I am writing to express my strong support for the selection of Todd Apo as the Administrator/CEO of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). Having known Mr. Apo personally and professionally for over 30 years, I am confident he possesses the necessary skills to effectively collaborate with the Board of Trustees, OHA staff, local communities, and legislative bodies at the federal, state, and county levels.

Mr. Apo's extensive background across all levels of government is particularly valuable given the multi-layered, cross-jurisdictional nature of OHA's programs. Combined with his strong leadership abilities, his experience has enabled him to navigate complex negotiations, build consensus among diverse groups, and resolve challenging issues. His accomplishments as a businessman, attorney, and community advocate provide him with the ideal foundation to lead an organization as complex as OHA.

Beyond his professional credentials, Mr. Apo is defined by his strong work ethic, humility, and dedication to the underserved. He regularly works with nonprofits, mentors youth through sports, and supports Native Hawaiian organizations. These values stem from his upbringing: his parents served as teachers, coaches, and dorm advisors at the Kamehameha Schools, and his family roots in Lahaina instilled in him a deep commitment to community service.

With his unique combination of grounded values, strong leadership, and business acumen, Mr. Apo has the insight and fortitude required to move OHA forward. He is a thoughtful listener who takes decisive, positive action.

I strongly urge the Board to select Mr. Apo as the next CEO/Administrator of OHA. He is the right leader to unify and advance the organization for the benefit of the Lāhui.

Sincerely,

Karen Piltz

Practical Solutions, LLC

Testimony in Strong Support of Todd Kala Apo as OHA Administrator and Chief Executive Officer

OHA Board of Trustees | November 2, 2026

Submitted by: Mr. Hanalei Aipoalani, Beneficiary

Contact email: haipoalani@gmail.com

Submission email: botmeetings@oha.org

Email subject: Testimony – Board Meeting – CEO Selection

Aloha Chair Kahele and Members of the Board of Trustees:

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Todd Kala Apo's selection as Administrator and Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Based on my experience during his public service and the breadth of experience he has gained since then, I believe Todd is the best candidate to lead OHA at this important time.

Todd's service as a Honolulu City Councilmember, Council Chair, Vice Chair, and Budget Committee Chair gave him substantial responsibility for public resources, legislative priorities, and community needs. Representing West Oʻahu required an understanding of communities whose needs too often exceed the resources available to meet them. His responsibilities demanded the ability to bring competing interests together, evaluate difficult choices, and move decisions toward implementation. These are essential abilities for OHA's next chief executive.

Under Todd's leadership, I had the opportunity to serve on the City's CDBG/HOME Grant Selection Committee. Through that experience, I participated in a process through which the City made substantial investments in nonprofit organizations and City departments providing direct services and resources to communities with high concentrations of Native Hawaiians.

Those investments addressed tangible community needs. They included support for the Fire Department's need for apparatus to serve Native Hawaiian communities. For the families who depend on those services, such investments mean access to essential resources and the capacity to respond when help is needed most.

That experience informs my support for Todd today. Leadership must connect public resources with the people those resources are intended to serve. It requires attention to both the organizations delivering assistance and the families relying on them. The City's investments during his leadership demonstrated the importance of supporting community organizations and public agencies working toward that shared purpose.

As Council Chair, Todd also carried responsibilities beyond the needs of his own district. Leading a legislative body requires working with colleagues who hold different priorities, maintaining productive relationships with the administration, and helping people find a workable path forward. His council and budget experience provides a strong foundation for working with OHA's Trustees, supporting staff, and translating Board policy into effective programs and responsible expenditures.

His subsequent service has broadened that foundation. At Hawai‘i Community Foundation, his responsibilities included community partnerships, government relations, and initiatives involving affordable housing and sustainability. As CEO of ‘Iole in North Kohala, he worked in a nonprofit setting connecting land stewardship, community partnerships, education, and resilience. His résumé also lists service with the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, Nā Kupa‘a o Kūhiō, Bishop Museum, and numerous organizations supporting children and families. This record reflects sustained involvement in community and Native Hawaiian interests.

I also value Todd’s stated commitment to listening, transparency, and explaining the reasons behind decisions. Those commitments matter at OHA, where beneficiaries deserve meaningful opportunities to be heard and clear explanations of how decisions advance their well-being. I believe his experience bringing together government, nonprofit, business, and community interests would help him build the relationships necessary to carry that responsibility forward.

His real estate and financial background adds another useful dimension, particularly as OHA considers the future of Kaka‘ako Makai and its other assets. Those skills can help the agency evaluate proposals, understand financial obligations, and negotiate agreements that protect long-term beneficiary interests. The measure of success must remain the benefit delivered to Native Hawaiian families.

OHA’s own leadership profile calls for responsible stewardship, transparent communication, strong partnerships, and measurable community outcomes. Todd’s combination of public leadership, nonprofit service, financial oversight, and organizational experience aligns closely with those expectations.

At this point in time, I believe Todd offers the judgment, experience, and ability to bring people together that OHA needs. I respectfully urge the Board to select Todd Kala Apo as its next Administrator and Chief Executive Officer.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Me ke aloha,

Mr. Hanalei Aipoalani, Beneficiary