

RES26-236

Testimony

MISC. COMM. 429

*ZONING & PLANNING (ZON)

***ZONING & PLANNING (ZON) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Oct 22, 2026 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 25

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jacob Wiencek	jacob.m.wiencek@pm.me	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 18, 2026 @ 06:33 PM
Testimony: Aloha Councilmembers, Balancing land use and national security requirements is a timeless challenge we face in Hawaii. Bellows is a beautiful area that is no longer an active military site. I believe the Council is right to ask for the land to be returned so it can be used more fully by the city. I support this resolution and urge the committee to support its passage!		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Dylan Armstrong	dylan.p.armstrong@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 19, 2026 @ 06:15 AM
Testimony: Strong support, and I commend the leadership of the Council for thinking to introduce and consider this matter. Mahalo.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jocelyn Brody	josiebrody@gmail.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 19, 2026 @ 02:15 PM
Testimony: I wish to highly support the return of the land at Bellows to the community. When they're not using land in Hawaii, legally and ethically the military should return it to the community, especially given our need for housing, agricultural land, and the general need for Hawaiians to be able to steward their land as much as possible. It is unfair for the military to hoard land away from the people of these islands, and they should return it as soon as possible. Thank you for your time, Josie		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kealii Pang	launahele@yahoo.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 19, 2026 @ 03:47 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Mary Kok	mekok29@gmail.com	96749
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 20, 2026 @ 05:57 AM
Testimony: The lands occupied by the US Airforce in Waimanalo should be returned to the Hawaiian people. It has been long enough that these lands have been taken and should be be used by the Hawaiian people instead of the military .These lands also have significant cultural value to the Hawaiian people and could be enjoyed by all people.		
Name: Brandon Makaawaawa	Email: brandon@nohgov.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Nation of Hawai'i	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 20, 2026 @ 06:44 AM
Testimony: Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Honolulu City Council. I am here on behalf of the Nation of Hawai'i in strong support of Resolution 26-236. For over 20 years, the Nation of Hawai'i has maintained a relationship with Bellows Air Force Station, carrying the sacred kuleana of stewarding the iwi kūpuna of our people resting on these lands, along with other important cultural responsibilities. Today, we ask that this relationship evolve beyond caring for our ancestors to caring for the ancestral lands themselves. At Hunananiho, we envision restoring the natural and cultural abundance of this 'āina, building upon the ahupua'a restoration work already underway in our village along Puha Stream, which flows from mauka to makai, entering the ocean at Hunananiho. An essential part of our kuleana is also ensuring our community has access to these lands to learn from, care for, and reconnect with the 'āina. We already practice this through our monthly 'Āina Days, opening our mauka lands every last Saturday for community participation, cultural learning, and hands-on stewardship. We envision extending that same opportunity to Hunananiho, reconnecting our people with the land, waters, and cultural practices of our ancestors. We respectfully urge the Council to adopt this resolution and support the return of these lands in meaningful consultation with the Native Hawaiian community. Mahalo Nui Loa,		

Brandon Maka'awa'awa
Vice President
Nation of Hawai'i

Name:

Stephanie Chou

Email:

stephbchou@gmail.com

Zip:

96819

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Oct 20, 2026 @ 08:16 AM

Testimony:

My name is Stephanie Chou, and I'm writing in support of this resolution. It is both unnecessary and unfair to limit Native Hawaiian access to this area on the basis of providing military families a private place for recreation. In addition, I'd argue it increases local resentment against military personnel, and it contributes to a sense of insularity among military families. This resolution will encourage members of the military to venture outside their bubble and learn to communicate with, respect, and value Hawaii's local people, history, and culture. Maintaining a separate space only draws sharper divisions between these groups.

Name:

Joe Wilson

Email:

qwavesjoe@yahoo.com

Zip:

96712-8715

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Oct 20, 2026 @ 09:25 AM

Testimony:

I write to express strong support for this resolution introduced by Chair Waters and Councilmember Kia'aina to return the lands used by the U.S. military at Bellows, Waimānalo to the People of Hawai'i.

Name:

Hilina Kane

Email:

hilinaik@hawaii.edu

Zip:

96740

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Oct 20, 2026 @ 01:43 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Committee on Zoning and Planning,

My name is Hilina'i Kane, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of Resolution 26-236, urging the return of lands utilized by Bellows Air Force Station in Waimānalo.

I do not support the continued military occupation and control of lands and beaches that are no longer needed for their original military purposes. These lands hold deep cultural, historical, and environmental significance to the people of Hawai'i, particularly the Native Hawaiian families and communities of Waimānalo.

If these lands are no longer being utilized for their intended military purposes, I believe they should be returned to benefit the people and community rather than remain under military control.

However, I want to emphasize that **returning these lands is only the first step. We must ensure that these lands remain genuinely accessible to the people of Hawai'i and are protected from privatization and commercial development that could restrict community access.**

The people of Waimānalo, especially kūpuna, Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, and families who have maintained generational connections to this 'āina, deserve a meaningful voice in determining its future. Their knowledge, history, and relationship with the land should guide decisions surrounding its stewardship and preservation.

Our beaches and 'āina are more than recreational spaces. They are places where our families gather, where cultural practices are passed down, and where future generations develop their connection to Hawai'i.

I believe the return of these lands should prioritize environmental restoration, cultural preservation, public access, and community-led stewardship. We must also ensure that the people most connected to these lands are not excluded from decisions affecting their future.

I respectfully urge the committee to support Resolution 26-236 and advocate not only for the return of these lands, but also for a transparent, community-centered process that protects them for generations to come.

Our 'āina should continue to serve our people, our culture, and our future generations.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Me ka mahalo,

Hilina'i Kane

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kuikēokalani Kamakea-Ohelo	kuike.farmaloha@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 20, 2026 @ 02:02 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Karin OMahony	k7omahony@aol.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 20, 2026 @ 03:33 PM

Testimony:

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of this move to return and restore this Waimanalo land to the people of Hawaii.

Please adopt resolution 26-236, and support all steps to return the land now occupied by Bellows Air Force Base to the people of Hawaii. It is currently used for recreational purposes, and the people of Hawaii are excluded unless they have a hospitality job at Bellows or a military ID.

Mahalo

Name:

Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala

Email:

kbbutalo@gmail.com

Zip:

96822

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Oct 20, 2026 @ 09:29 PM

Testimony:

Aloha mai kākou,

I wish to fervently express my support for RES26-236 that calls for the return of military lands in Waimānalo to the people of Hawai'i. Given that the U.S. Armed Forces have recently and irreparably tarnished once pristine ecosystems with PFAS "forever chemicals" and other toxins, leaked jet fuel into a major aquifer, jeopardized the health of the people of Hawai'i including members of the armed forces, destroyed countless archaeological sites, refused to provide substantive environmental and cultural impact statements, overstated their contributions to Hawai'i's economy, depreciated the value of Hawai'i's lands, and consistently failed to uphold the terms of the leases they hold to public lands that by law are required to be employed, according to the Admissions Act, "for the support of the public schools and other public educational institutions, for the betterment of the conditions of native Hawaiians ...for the development of farm and home ownership on as widespread a basis as possible for the making of public improvements, and for the provision of lands for public use," I believe the U.S. Armed Forces to be in a criminal violation of a breach of trust. Nowhere in the Admissions Act does it allow for the pollution of Hawai'i by PFAS or the destruction of our homelands by a ravenous occupying military.

Rather than resorting to the continued endangerment of our public lands and our communities by carelessly pursuing further tenancy from the U.S. Armed Forces, we urge all of our civic and elected leaders who have a hand in this decision-making process, to take this opportunity to reimagine a brighter future that does not to seek push us out of our own home - whether that be by economic pressure or resource pollution.

I therefore call upon the members of this governing body to rebuke all military title and occupation of lands in Waimānalo. A breach of trust cannot be rewarded with a lease renewal nor continued exploitation of our local communities. I demand that all negotiations are also halted until the People and the State of Hawai'i are in a position to meaningfully exercise accountability over the U.S. Armed Forces - and the impacts they have on our home. These lands belong to the People by

virtue of the Public Trust; the U.S. Armed Forces must be a good tenant in order to be a resident, however temporary.

Mahalo piha,

Kaipu

Name: BRANDON GAINFORTH	Email: novetrix@yahoo.com	Zip: 49424
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 21, 2026 @ 06:21 AM

Testimony:

My name is Brandon Gainforth, and I am a 35-year-old American Citizen, a very lucky spouse to a Honolulu local boy, and therefore, intensely fortunate addition to a native Hawaiian family Although I am a 35-year resident of the mainland, more specifically, various cities across Michigan, I have had the fortune of visiting the beautiful shores of O'ahu on numerous occasions, and to spend countless nights in friendship and unity with my newfound family as they recounted to me the history of the Hawai'ian peoples and their trials and tribulations -- a topic about which I was woefully ignorant through most of my life. Having been blessed with the opportunity to walk the beaches, meet many wonderful people, and have my heart broken by the juxtaposition of beautiful, endless seas and skies as a backdrop against a sea of blue tarps from Home Depot as many, many homeless attempt to live with dignity on their home land.

A home land that has been rendered far too expensive for your average Hawai'ian family for many reasons, but including the very reason that is the purpose of this Resolution, and that is the gradual recompense to the Hawai'ian peoples of their land that, through annexation, unlawful occupation, and otherwise unacceptable greed and arrogance, was taken by the United States from those whose families stretch generations before any man who spoke for the United States in any form were even aware of this land's existence.

President Bill Clinton's Apology Resolution, was a start, and it can be acknowledged that some bits of land have been returned over time, but it is time for the United States Government to fulfill its role in reversing the wrongs committed upon the Hawai'ian people by the take-over of already-scarce land. The return of 1500 acres -- including so-called "recreational areas" maintained as military property, and thus no longer serve any military training or readiness purposes -- immediately, and at once, provides countless opportunities for the Hawai'ian people to grow their community, thrive in the natural beauty of their home, and at last be able to join land that, for over 100 years, was made available to them with an asterisk.

1,500 acres of land returned to the hands of those who once grew, hunted, farmed, lived, and raised families there long ago, would once again open opportunities for economic and moral prosperity and growth that would last a lifetime for untold generations of Hawai'ian families. New houses, land on which to farm, opportunities for family-owned-and-operated business to serve the local community, would all serve to provide housing and lives for more people. The

demand for safe dwelling could lower the cost of living across the island, and we would see far fewer blue tarps from Home Depot dotting the beaches, and more Hawai'ians, who are owed safety, stability, and their dignity, by the United States Government, may sleep well in their beds. With happier citizens and lowered despair, comes lowered crime rates, as has been proven countless times across the world.

The US Government should not hold this land in perpetuity on the "what if we need it?" asterisk. This land should be returned to the Hawai'ian people to use as they see fit, and recompence should be owed to the Hawai'ian government for the betterment of all its people, should the US Government decide this land be needed once more. Not under the threat of annexation and eminent domain, but in fair and equitable agreement with the Hawai'ian government to ensure proper compensation to its people, the distribution of such additional funding to benefit all Hawai'ian citizens in an equitable manner.

The lease is up, and the people want their island home to belong to the island once more, and per President Bill Clinton's 1993 Apology Resolution, it is owed to the Hawai'ian people that they may look freely upon their homeland once more. Freely. No asterisk.

Name: Keoni DeFranco	Email: defranco.keoni@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Nation of Hawai'i	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 21, 2026 @ 06:46 AM

Name: PU'UHONUA DENNIS KANAHELE	Email: puuhonua13@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: NATION OF HAWAI'I	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 21, 2026 @ 07:05 AM

Name: Leinaala Ley	Email: leinaalal@oha.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: Office of Hawaiian Affairs	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 21, 2026 @ 07:46 AM

Name: Kauilani Kalama-Ohelo	Email: kohelo@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 21, 2026 @ 08:43 AM

Testimony:
Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and members of the Committee on Zoning and Planning,

I wish to testify on behalf of my Ohana in support of this resolution.

It is my hope that this culturally and historically significant 'āina is returned to the people of Hawai'i in consultation with the Native Hawaiian community.

Name:

Mahina Kaomea

Email:

mahina.kaomea@gmail.com

Zip:

96744

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Oct 21, 2026 @ 06:27 PM

Testimony:

Aloha kāua,

My name is Mahina Kaomea. I am Kanaka Maoli, born and raised here in Ko'olaupoko. I am writing in strong support of this measure I grew up going to Hunānāniho and Waimānalo beaches, but the opportunity to know and to grow pilina with Bellows was never available to me because I didn't have any family in the military. I finally went there as an adult, and was shocked to see the signs indicating safety risks to beachgoers because of military training that had happened at that very site. According to state law, it is required that all public lands no longer being actively used for training by the U.S. military are returned. I strongly support the end of live fire training at all military lands and the returning of these lands, which have incredible historical and cultural significance, to our people. I dream of a future in which my keiki and mo'opuna can be loved by these waters, and can have a relationship with them untempered by the danger and violence of military training. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

me ke aloha,

Mahina Kaomea

Name:

Pahonu Coleman

Email:

pahonuucolem@gmail.com

Zip:

96795

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Oct 21, 2026 @ 09:27 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Committee of ZONING & PLANNING:

I today urge the committee to consider and adopt this resolution. My generation is ready to see land reclaimed and taken care of now. I and we as people of Waimanalo have far long become detached from this special and important place today known as Bellows. The return of this place to its people and place is something that'll continue to move our community into the right direction.

Na'u,

Pahonu C.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lenei Naipo	leneinaipo@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 22, 2026 @ 01:53 AM
Testimony: As a kupa of Waimānalo and Native Hawaiian Rights third year law student, I strongly support the return of Bellows to the kupa of Waimānalo as the only just, pono, and legal pathway forward to begin to right the wrongs that the military continues to do to our 'Āina and Lāhui. Mahalo e Chair Kia'āina for taking on this important kuleana.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Esther Lafaele	lafaelee002@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 22, 2026 @ 06:55 AM
Testimony: Aloha, my name is Esther Lafaele, born and raised in Waimanalo. First, I want to mahalo the US Military for their service. And although, I do not have an issue with military presence in our community; I feel that as a community member and a Native Hawaiian, we have been neglected access to our land long enough. The only access is through knowing someone with military service. And while this isn't possible for many of us, it is sad that we are not able to enjoy and take part in the recreational activities on Bellows. There is no doubt, the military has done an outstanding job caring and maintaining the land, aside from the abuse and neglect for training purposes and disturbing the peace and livelihood within our community as well as our native birds that live amongst us. Moving on into the future, what does the future of the land look like? Don't say that you want to return it back to the people of Hawaii, the real question is, will it? Or will it become another Kauhale site or a dump? We need truth and transparency.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ikaika Rogerson	ikaika@kekulanuiowaimanalo.org	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ke Kula Nui O Waimanalo	Support	Oct 22, 2026 @ 07:48 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Keithlynn Kenani Gramberg	kenanigramberg@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 22, 2026 @ 08:28 AM
Testimony: RE: Resolution 26-236 — STRONG SUPPORT WITH REQUESTED AMENDMENTS TO PROTECT KĀNAKA MAOLI RIGHTS, ANCESTRAL CROWN LANDS, AND COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP Aloha mai kākou,		

My name is Kenani Gramberg, and I am a Kanaka 'Ōiwi of Waimānalo. I submit this testimony in strong support of Resolution 26-236, while respectfully urging the Honolulu City Council to strengthen its language to recognize the historical, ancestral, and unresolved political claims of Kānaka Maoli to the lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Before there was a United States military installation at Bellows, there was the Hawaiian Kingdom. Before there was a State of Hawai'i, there were our kūpuna. And before these lands were designated for military use, they were part of our ancestral homeland.

Resolution 26-236 acknowledges that lands within the ahupua'a of Waimānalo were designated as Crown Lands under the Hawaiian monarchy. It also recognizes the unlawful overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 and the subsequent transfer of Hawaiian public lands without the consent of the Native Hawaiian people.

These acknowledgments are significant.

But acknowledging historical injustice is only the beginning of correcting it.

In 1917, approximately 1,510 acres of Waimānalo lands were set aside for military purposes under Executive Order 2565. More than a century later, portions of these lands are used primarily for recreation, while Native Hawaiian families continue to struggle with land access, housing insecurity, and displacement from their ancestral communities.

How can lands taken from the Hawaiian Kingdom remain reserved for exclusive recreational privileges while the descendants of the original people struggle to remain on their own 'āina?

This is not simply a question of military land use. It is a question of justice, responsibility, and the future of our people.

The United States Congress acknowledged in Public Law 103-150, commonly known as the 1993 Apology Resolution, that Native Hawaiians never directly relinquished their claims to inherent sovereignty over their national lands through their monarchy or through a plebiscite or referendum.

That acknowledgment must mean something.

Returning these lands from federal control to State control, without addressing the rights and claims of Kānaka Maoli, risks repeating the very injustice this resolution seeks to recognize.

The Hawaiian Kingdom's Crown Lands were not ordinary surplus government property. Their historical character and the circumstances under which they came under United States control must remain central to any discussion of their disposition.

We must not confuse a transfer of government title with the restoration of justice.

As a Kanaka of Waimānalo, I respectfully request that the City Council strengthen Resolution 26-236 to:

Recognize the unresolved claims of Kānaka Maoli arising from the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and the subsequent transfer of Crown and Government Lands.

Require meaningful participation by Waimānalo Kānaka Maoli, including kūpuna, lineal descendants, cultural practitioners, and homestead beneficiaries, before any decisions are made concerning the future use or disposition of these lands.

Request a transparent accounting of the lands, including their historical Crown Land status, military use, current jurisdiction, and eligibility for return.

Protect the 'āina from further displacement and exploitation, including privatization, speculative development, or projects that would deny Native Hawaiians access to their ancestral lands.

Establish a community-led stewardship process that prioritizes cultural preservation, environmental restoration, traditional practices, and the needs of future generations.

Ensure that any land transfer does not extinguish, diminish, or prejudice unresolved Native Hawaiian land or sovereignty claims.

REQUEST FOR SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION 26-236

In addition to the recommendations outlined above, I respectfully request that Councilmember Esther Kia'āina, Council Chair Tommy Waters, and the members of this Committee consider incorporating the following language into Resolution 26-236 before its final adoption:

Proposed Amendment No. 1 — Native Hawaiian Participation and Stewardship

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council urges the United States government and all responsible agencies to ensure that any proposed return, transfer, or disposition of the Bellows Air Force Station lands includes meaningful consultation and participation by the Kānaka Maoli of Waimānalo, recognition of unresolved Native Hawaiian claims relating to former Crown and Government Lands, and consideration of mechanisms for Native Hawaiian-led stewardship; and"

Proposed Amendment No. 2 — Protection of Native Hawaiian Rights

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council urges all responsible agencies to ensure that any proposed transfer or disposition of these lands does not prejudice, diminish, or extinguish existing Native Hawaiian rights or unresolved claims relating to ancestral lands, cultural practices, or sovereignty; and"

I respectfully ask Councilmember Kia'āina and Council Chair Waters, as the introducers of Resolution 26-236, to consider these amendments so that the resolution not only acknowledges historical injustice but also advocates meaningful protections for the descendants of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

The return of 'āina must not become another process in which decisions are made for Kānaka Maoli without Kānaka Maoli.

These are not unreasonable requests. They are necessary safeguards if the stated purpose of this resolution is truly reconciliation.

Our kūpuna did not leave us only land. They left us kuleana.

Kuleana to protect the wai.

Kuleana to preserve our wahi pana.

Kuleana to care for our iwi kūpuna.

Kuleana to ensure that our mo'opuna inherit more than stories of the 'āina their ancestors once cared for.

For generations, decisions concerning Waimānalo lands have been made by government agencies and institutions while the people whose ancestral ties run deepest have been left fighting to be heard.

That pattern must end.

We do not want another government-controlled process that acknowledges Kānaka Maoli in its introduction but excludes us from determining the outcome.

We ask the City Council to stand behind the principles expressed in this resolution by advocating not only for the return of land, but for a process that respects Native Hawaiian rights, ancestral connections, and self-determination.

I support Resolution 26-236 because it opens an important door.

But I urge this Council not to stop at opening that door.

Take the next step toward meaningful restoration, accountability, and justice.

The 'āina remembers. Our kūpuna remember. And we, their descendants, have not forgotten.

E ola ka 'āina.

E ola nā kūpuna.

E ola nā mamo.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Isis Usborne	isis@hapahi.org	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action	Support	Oct 22, 2026 @ 08:45 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kimeona Kane	Kimeonakane@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 22, 2026 @ 08:48 AM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Kimeona Kane, lifelong resident of Waimānalo, living across the street from Marine Corps Base Training Area Bellows for the majority of my life.

This is a very important conversation for Waimānalo, and the rest of Hawai'i. I absolutely support this effort to push against the status quo that has become the US Military presence in communities. I recognize it can be complicated and complex, and we should continue to push towards a reduction of military presence in Waimānalo and a return of 'āina back to our beneficiaries.

Mahalo CM Kia'āina for hearing the community voices over many years of public service and having the courage to create a pathway that helps to address it.

I strongly support this effort.

Mahalo nui for your time and service,

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-236

*Urging the United States to Return the Lands Utilized by the U.S. Air Force Station at Bellows,
Waimnalo, to the People of Hawaii*

Honolulu City Council, Committee on Zoning & Planning

Thursday, October 22, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Kiaina, Vice Chair Waters, and members of the Committee,

My name is Kealii Pang. I am Native Hawaiian, a life member of the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu, and a retired federal biologist. I served 26 years at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. I **strongly support** Resolution 26-236.

Waimnalo's Crown Lands belong to the people of Hawaii

At the Mhele, Waimnalo lands were Crown Lands. After the 1893 overthrow, the Republic of Hawaii seized them. It ceded them to the United States without the consent of or compensation to the Native Hawaiian people. In 1993, Congress admitted the overthrow was illegal and committed to reconciliation. Returning Bellows turns those words into action.

Bellows no longer serves its military purpose

In 1917, Executive Order 2565 set aside Bellows "for military purposes." The last runways closed in 1958. Today the Air Force uses its 409 acres for cabins, campsites, and shops for service members, retirees, and civilian employees. Recreation is not training or readiness. Public Law 88-233 gives a process to return surplus federal land to the State. Recreation-only use should trigger a surplus review.

This call has broad support

Waimnalo residents asked for this land back in 2009. The Legislature asked for the return of unused Bellows land in 2021. In April 2026, OHA trustees named Bellows as an example of recreational military land to evaluate for return under Public Law 88-233.

Return the land clean

Bellows has hosted runways, a missile site, a landfill, and munitions storage. Waimnalo should not inherit fenced-off, contaminated ground. I ask the Committee to amend the resolution to urge full cleanup of contamination and unexploded ordnance at federal expense before transfer.

Let Waimnalo lead

I support the resolution's call for consultation with the Native Hawaiian community. Please name the Hawaiian Civic Club of Waimnalo as one of the Native Hawaiian community groups for consultation. Please also add the Club and the Waimnalo Neighborhood Board to the list of recipients. Waimnalo families, homesteaders, and farmers know this in a best.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka oiaio,

Kealii Pang, Ph.D.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-236

Urging the United States of America to Return the Lands Utilized by the
United States Air Force Station at Bellows, Waimānalo, Hawai‘i, to the People of Hawai‘i
Committee on Zoning and Planning · Thursday, October 22, 2026 · 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Kia‘āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Committee on Zoning and Planning,

My name is Kū‘ikeokalani Kamakea-‘Ōhelo. I was raised in Waimānalo, I live on a Hawaiian Home Lands homestead here, and I am raising my children here. I testify as a Waimānalo resident in strong support of Resolution 26-236, and I respectfully offer four amendments to make it stronger.

1. The land was taken for one purpose. That purpose has ended.

Most of what is now Bellows was Crown Land of the Hawaiian Kingdom, taken without the consent of the Hawaiian people or compensation to them. In 1917, Executive Order 2565 set it aside for one reason: “for military purposes.” The set-aside was never a gift. Its only justification was military need.

The last runways at Bellows closed in 1958. In 2009, the Air Force proposed building up to 48 new vacation cabins on the station. What the Air Force operates there today is primarily a recreation area: cabins, campsites, and commercial services for military personnel, retirees, and civilian employees. Recreation is valuable. It is not national defense. Waimānalo families may use that same shoreline only on weekends and holidays. During the week, it is reserved as a vacation site for others.

2. The City asked for this land back 66 years ago.

This is not a new idea. The Comprehensive Development Plan for Waimānalo Valley, adopted by the City and County of Honolulu as Ordinance No. 1801 on February 12, 1960, advocated the return of a substantial portion of Bellows Field to the State. A 1961 follow-up study for the Board of Land and Natural Resources warned that if Bellows was not returned, Waimānalo’s growth would be forced onto its agricultural lands. That is exactly what the community has lived with since. Resolution 26-236 renews a commitment this Council made before most of us were born.

3. The federal government has already conceded that not all of Bellows is needed.

In its 1996 Record of Decision on the Bellows development plan, the military itself concluded that 170 acres along the station’s southern boundary should be returned. The question is not whether any of Bellows is surplus. The military has answered that. The question is how much, and the Air Force has not re-examined it honestly in thirty years.

4. Congress already built the path home.

Public Law 88-233 provides that when federal lands in Hawai‘i like these are determined surplus, they go to the State of Hawai‘i. There they become part of the public land trust under Section 5(f) of the Admission Act, whose purposes include the betterment of Native Hawaiians and public use. The law works only if the federal government asks whether the land is still needed. This resolution

asks that question, and the people of Waimānalo deserve an answer.

5. This is not a request to end military training.

The resolution is narrow. It concerns the lands used by the Air Force station, not the Marine Corps training area. Waimānalo has lived alongside the military for more than a century and understands national security. The City already manages public camping at Bellows on weekends under license. Civilian stewardship of this shoreline is not hypothetical; it happens every weekend. What we cannot accept is that land taken for defense can be held forever for leisure.

6. Waimānalo needs this land.

Families in Waimānalo have waited decades on the Hawaiian Home Lands list. Our farmers are short of land. Our shoreline is under pressure from erosion and sea level rise and needs room to move. Our sands hold iwi kūpuna, and our cultural sites deserve care, not cabins. Returned land could serve all of these needs. Kept as a resort, it serves none of them.

Recommended amendments

- 1 Request a formal surplus review.** Ask the Department of the Air Force to conduct a parcel-by-parcel excess and surplus review of all lands it controls at Bellows, however each parcel came into federal hands, and to report the results publicly.
- 2 Require cleanup before transfer.** Bellows has hosted a landfill, a missile site, munitions storage, and warfare training. Under Section 120(h) of the federal Superfund law (CERCLA), the United States must warrant that necessary cleanup is complete before it deeds contaminated property. Waimānalo must not inherit the military's liability.
- 3 Keep the land in public trust.** Returned lands should go into the public land trust and never be sold. Their future use should be decided with the Waimānalo community, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, and the Native Hawaiian community.
- 4 Send it to the decision-makers.** Add the Secretary of the Air Force and the Secretary of Defense to the transmittal list. They make this decision, not regional commanders.

Waimānalo has waited more than a century, and this Council has stood with us on this question since 1960. Please pass Resolution 26-236.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kū'ikeokalani Kamakea-Ōhelo
Waimānalo, O'ahu

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-236

Honolulu City Council

Relating to the Return of Bellows Air Force Station Lands to the People of Hawai'i

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Keoni DeFranco, and I serve as Minister of the Interior for the Nation of Hawai'i at Pu'u'honua o Waimānalo, Managing Director at Purple Mai'a Foundation, and a board member of Waimānalo's Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation. I submit this testimony in **strong support of Resolution 26-236**, urging the United States to return the lands currently utilized by Bellows Air Force Station to the people of Hawai'i, in consultation with the Native Hawaiian community.

At Purple Mai'a Foundation, our mission is to educate and empower the next generation of culturally grounded, community-serving technology makers and problem solvers. We also co-operate Hālau Hekili, Hawai'i's first middle college, offering a dual-credit high school program and the Hawaiian Knowledge and Innovation (HIKI) Certificate in partnership with Kailua High School and Windward Community College, serving students from Waimānalo.

Through this work, we think deeply about how to create opportunities for our Waimānalo 'ōpio (youth) to remain in their community, pursue meaningful education and careers, and contribute to the restoration and well-being of their ancestral lands. The return of Bellows presents an extraordinary opportunity to connect education, 'Ōiwi innovation, ecological remediation, and community stewardship, creating pathways for our young people to participate directly in restoring the health and abundance of our 'āina.

I also serve on the Board of Directors of Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation, a Waimānalo-based non-profit that connects our 'ōpio with their 'āina, ocean, culture, and community through education and service. Through our educational programs and watershed restoration efforts, we engage young people in Native Hawaiian cultural practices, environmental stewardship, and hands-on learning that strengthens their relationships with place.

In May 2026, Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation began administering Papahana Hanauma, the educational program at Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve, in partnership with the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Parks and Recreation. Through this program, we integrate 'ike kūpuna and contemporary science to educate visitors about marine conservation, Hawaiian cultural practices, and our collective kuleana to mālama this wahi pana. Hanauma Bay also demonstrates how the City can bring together community organizations, scientific researchers, and dedicated conservation resources to support the long-term care of culturally and ecologically significant places.

At Pu'u'honua o Waimānalo, the Nation of Hawai'i has demonstrated how community-led stewardship can restore 'āina, revitalize traditional agricultural practices, and strengthen our collective responsibility to care for the land. Through our monthly Aloha 'Āina Days, we have

deeply engaged the community in mālama ‘āina, welcoming over 1,000 volunteers each month to participate in this work.

We have also developed strong relationships with scientists and researchers working at Bellows who focus on the care and restoration of its wetlands and the protection of niu (coconut), which are facing a severe threat from the invasive coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). Along the Bellows shoreline, this infestation is devastating culturally and ecologically significant coconut groves associated with one of our earliest Hawaiian settlements. In response, we have established a niu nursery at Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo with more than 150 nui seedlings representing over 30 distinct niu varieties sourced from Bellows, helping preserve this important diversity for future restoration efforts. Our intention is to replant uluniu (coconut groves) across Hūnānāniho once more.

The Nation of Hawai‘i also participates in the restoration of the Bellows wetlands and helped establish the iwi kūpuna vault on-site, engaging in monthly meetings with Bellows leadership regarding its care. These relationships and ongoing stewardship efforts position us to deepen our work at Bellows, including wetland restoration, niu replanting, native ecosystem recovery, cultural resource protection, community-based environmental monitoring and engaging with community to develop a long-term master plan.

Together, our work through Purple Mai‘a Foundation, Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation, and the Nation of Hawai‘i reflects a shared vision for Waimānalo to create opportunities for our young people to remain in their homeland while developing the knowledge, skills, and relationships necessary to care for our ‘āina across generations. We envision Waimānalo families, cultural practitioners, researchers, and ‘ōpio working together to restore Bellows to ‘āina momona, abundant and thriving lands that sustain our communities.

Bellows is home to Hūnānāniho, a place of profound historical and cultural significance, associated with one of the earliest landing places on O‘ahu in Hawaiian traditions. These lands carry generations of ancestral knowledge and historical significance that long predate the military's presence. Their restoration offers an opportunity not only to address the environmental legacy of military use, but to restore the relationships between our people, our cultural practices, and the abundance of our ancestral lands.

The lands of Bellows are part of the ancestral lands of Waimānalo and remain Crown Lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Following the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 and subsequent annexation by the United States, these lands were taken without the consent of the Hawaiian people and eventually set aside for military purposes in 1917. More than a century later, much of this land remains under federal control, despite no longer serving the military purposes for which it was originally reserved.

Today, the Bellows Air Force Station portion of these lands is primarily used for recreational purposes by military personnel, retirees, and civilian employees. Meanwhile, the people of Waimānalo, a community with deep ancestral connections to these lands, continue to face limited access to land for housing, agriculture, cultural practice, and community stewardship.

The return of Bellows represents an opportunity to advance a meaningful process of reconciliation. In the 1993 Apology Resolution, the United States acknowledged its role in the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and recognized that Native Hawaiians never directly relinquished their claims to sovereignty over their national lands. More than thirty years later, reconciliation must move beyond acknowledgment toward concrete actions that restore lands and resources to the Hawaiian people.

While I strongly support this resolution, I encourage the City Council to strengthen it by establishing a clear pathway for land return, Native Hawaiian governance, and long-term community stewardship. Specifically, I offer the following recommendations:

1. Establish a Native Hawaiian community co-management framework for Bellows.

As Bellows lands are considered for return from federal control to the State of Hawai'i, I encourage the development of a formal co-management agreement with the Waimānalo community, building upon HB 2218 (Act 203, 2026), which authorizes long-term community co-management agreements for state public lands.

I further encourage the City and County of Honolulu, through the proposed Office of 'Ōiwi Resources and Cultural Stewardship, to work in partnership with the State, Native Hawaiian organizations, cultural practitioners, lineal descendants, and Waimānalo community representatives to develop this framework.

Our existing partnership with the City through Papahāna Hānauma demonstrates how Native Hawaiian community organizations can lead place-based education and conservation programs on public lands. We encourage the City to build upon this experience in developing a more comprehensive community co-management framework for Bellows, one that establishes meaningful community decision-making authority, dedicated resources, and long-term protections for ecological restoration, cultural practices, public access, and stewardship of these ancestral lands.

The Nation of Hawai'i and our community partners offer our support to participate in this process. Co-management must serve as a pathway toward Native Hawaiian self-determination over the future of these lands.

2. Establish a formal federal land review and pathway toward return.

I encourage the City Council to request that the federal government initiate a formal review of the Bellows Air Force Station lands to determine whether their continued federal retention is necessary and whether they qualify for return under applicable federal law, including Public Law 88-233.

This process should include a transparent timeline, meaningful engagement with the Waimānalo community, and the identification of appropriate legal mechanisms for land transfer and

long-term Native Hawaiian stewardship. Any transfer process should also account for applicable Hawaiian Home Lands obligations and Native Hawaiian beneficiary interests.

3. Ensure environmental assessment, remediation, and restoration.

The return of Bellows must also address the environmental legacy of military use. I encourage the City Council to request comprehensive environmental assessments, identification and remediation of contamination where necessary, and long-term ecological monitoring.

The federal government should retain responsibility for contamination associated with its activities, including appropriate funding for cleanup and restoration. The Hawaiian people should not inherit the financial burden of remediating lands impacted by military use.

Environmental restoration should also create opportunities for community-led stewardship, including the restoration of native ecosystems, wetlands, watersheds, coastal resources, niu groves, and culturally significant places.

These efforts should include paid internships, workforce development programs, environmental monitoring and stewardship training and 'Ōiwi technology development that enable Waimānalo 'ōpio to participate directly in caring for their ancestral lands while developing meaningful educational and career opportunities in their own community. Our existing work through Purple Mai'a Foundation, Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation, and the Nation of Hawai'i provides a foundation for building these opportunities.

4. Recognize this resolution as a first step toward broader land restoration.

While Resolution 26-236 focuses specifically on the lands utilized by Bellows Air Force Station, the larger Bellows property also includes lands used by Marine Corps Training Area Bellows. The return of the Air Force Station lands should be understood as an important first step in a broader process of examining federal military land tenure in Waimānalo and opportunities for the restoration of former Hawaiian Kingdom lands.

The return of lands no longer needed for their designated military purposes can establish an important precedent for future efforts to restore Hawaiian lands to Hawaiian stewardship.

Ultimately, the question before us is not simply whether the federal government should relinquish lands it no longer needs for their original military purposes. It is also whether we can establish a meaningful process of reconciliation that restores the relationship between the Hawaiian people and our ancestral lands.

Land return must be accompanied by the restoration of community authority, responsibility, and the ability to care for 'āina across generations.

I urge the Honolulu City Council to adopt Resolution 26-236, incorporate these recommendations where possible, and continue working with the State and the Waimānalo

community to establish a clear pathway toward ‘āina ho‘i (land return), co-management, environmental restoration, and Native Hawaiian self-determination.

The return of Bellows is a question of justice, reconciliation, and our collective responsibility to future generations.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Keoni DeFranco

Minister of the Interior, Nation of Hawai‘i, Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo
Managing Director, Purple Mai‘a Foundation
Board Member, Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation



INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAI'I

PU'UHONUA DENNIS K. KANAHELE

Head of State / President

Nation of Hawai'i

October 20, 2026

Honolulu City Council

City and County of Honolulu

Honolulu, Hawai'i

RE: Letter in Support of Resolution No. 26-236 — Urging the United States to Return the Lands Utilized by Bellows Air Force Station in Waimānalo to the People of Hawai'i

Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

On behalf of the Nation of Hawai'i, I respectfully express our support for Honolulu City Council Resolution No. 26-236, urging the United States of America to return the lands utilized by Bellows Air Force Station in Waimānalo, O'ahu, to the people of Hawai'i.

We commend the Council for recognizing the historical circumstances surrounding the acquisition and continued federal control of Hawaiian lands, the importance of the 1993 Apology Resolution, and the need to advance meaningful reconciliation between the United States and the Native Hawaiian people.

The return of Hawaiian lands must be understood within the broader context of reconciliation, historical responsibility, and the future of the Hawaiian people.

The lands of Waimānalo are not simply real estate or military property. They are part of the historical, cultural, and national inheritance of Hawai'i. The Great Māhele, the distinction between Crown Lands and Government Lands, the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, and the subsequent transfer of Hawaiian public lands to the United States are essential to understanding why the disposition of these lands remains an important issue today.

Public Law 103-150, the Apology Resolution, acknowledged the role of the United States in the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i and recognized that Native Hawaiians never directly relinquished their claims to inherent sovereignty over their national lands. Although the resolution did not itself restore Hawaiian sovereignty or determine the legal ownership of individual parcels, it established an important foundation for reconciliation.

We believe the return of lands no longer required for their original military purposes should be considered a practical and meaningful step toward fulfilling that reconciliation commitment.



INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAI'I

Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo: A living example of Hawaiian land stewardship

The Nation of Hawai‘i has spent decades working to advance Hawaiian self-governance, community responsibility, cultural continuity, and the protection of ‘āina. At Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo, we are putting these principles into practice through our community land stewardship initiatives.

Our monthly **Aloha ‘Āina Day**, held on the last Saturday of each month, brings people together through service to the land, community participation, and the restoration of our relationship with the natural

environment. This ongoing program provides a practical foundation for environmental education, cultural responsibility, and the intergenerational transmission of Hawaiian values.

We are also working to reconnect the traditional ahupua‘a system through **Puha Stream, which begins on our land at Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo.**

The stream provides an important point of connection for understanding the relationship between the uplands, freshwater resources, agricultural lands, and the coastal environment. Our vision is to restore an integrated approach to stewardship that recognizes the ahupua‘a as a connected living system rather than a collection of disconnected parcels.

This work reflects the traditional Hawaiian understanding that the health of the land, water, and community are inseparable. By bringing people together to care for the ‘āina and by restoring connections across the watershed, we are demonstrating how Hawaiian-led stewardship can contribute to environmental resilience, cultural preservation, and community well-being.

We believe these efforts are directly relevant to the future of the Bellows property. The return of lands to the people of Hawai‘i creates an opportunity to restore cultural relationships with the land, protect natural resources, support community needs, and develop long-term stewardship practices grounded in Hawaiian knowledge and responsibility.

Our work at Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo demonstrates that land return should not be viewed solely as a change in ownership. It should also be an investment in the capacity of Hawaiian communities to care for the land and water for generations to come.

The people of Hawai‘i must be central to determining the future of these lands.

We support the resolution’s call for consultation with the Native Hawaiian community. We further encourage the Council, the State of Hawai‘i, the federal government, and Hawaiian organizations to establish a transparent process that includes meaningful Native Hawaiian



INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAI'I

participation in decisions concerning the ownership, stewardship, management, and future use of the Bellows property.

Such a process should consider housing, cultural preservation, environmental restoration, watershed protection, food security, community access, economic opportunity, and the protection of lands for future generations. It should also ensure that the interests of Waimānalo residents are not displaced by outside commercial or development interests.

We encourage consideration of Hawaiian-led land stewardship partnerships that can draw upon existing community initiatives, including monthly Aloha 'Āina programs, ahupua'a restoration, watershed care, and cultural education. These initiatives offer practical models for how land returned to the people can produce lasting public benefits.

A broader opportunity for Hawaiian self-governance

The Nation of Hawai'i has worked for more than three decades to advance Hawaiian self-governance, cultural continuity, community responsibility, and a peaceful path toward reconciliation. Our experience reinforces the importance of developing practical arrangements through which Hawaiian people can exercise meaningful responsibility for their lands and communities.

We encourage the Council to consider how the return of Bellows might contribute to a broader, peaceful framework for Hawaiian-led land stewardship and self-determination. Such a framework need not require every Hawaiian organization to agree on Hawai'i's ultimate political status. It can begin with shared objectives: the return of lands, the protection of cultural heritage, the restoration of watersheds and ahupua'a, the well-being of our communities, and the recognition that Hawaiian people must have a meaningful role in shaping their future.

We also encourage the Council to request a public accounting of the Bellows property, including its current military uses, the status of lands no longer necessary for military training and readiness, applicable federal surplus-property procedures, and opportunities for phased return or transfer.

Any proposed arrangement should clearly identify the responsible parties, the land involved, the intended community benefits, and the mechanisms for meaningful Hawaiian participation.

The return of land should be measured not only by the number of acres transferred, but also by whether the resulting arrangement restores opportunity, protects the 'āina and wai, and serves the people of Hawai'i.



INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAI'I

A constructive step toward reconciliation

The Nation of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Honolulu City Council to advance Resolution No. 26-236 and to continue encouraging federal, state, county, and Hawaiian leadership to pursue practical and peaceful solutions to the unresolved legacy of Hawaiian land dispossession.

We believe this resolution offers an opportunity to move beyond acknowledgment toward constructive action. Returning lands that are no longer needed for their original military purposes would demonstrate that reconciliation can produce tangible results for the people whose history and future are inseparable from these lands.

Our monthly Aloha 'Āina Day program and our efforts to reconnect the ahupua'a system through Puha Stream reflect the kind of ongoing commitment that land restoration requires. They demonstrate that Hawaiian stewardship is not merely an aspiration for the future; it is work that communities can undertake today through collective responsibility, cultural knowledge, and service to the 'āina.

We invite the Council and other public leaders to recognize these efforts as part of a broader opportunity to advance land stewardship, environmental restoration, and reconciliation throughout Waimānalo and across Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa to the Council for bringing this important matter forward. We stand in support of the principle that Hawaiian lands should be managed and ultimately returned in ways that honor the history, dignity, and aspirations of the Hawaiian people.

Me ka ha'aha'a a me ka mana'o maika'i,

Puuhonua D.K. Kanahele

Pu'uhonua Dennis K. Kanahele

Head of State / President

Nation of Hawai'i



INDEPENDENT & SOVEREIGN NATION STATE OF HAWAI'I

This version positions Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo as a working example of Hawaiian-led stewardship—not simply a request for land, but an established community effort that connects monthly service to the ‘āina with the larger vision of restoring the ahupua‘a, protecting Puha Stream, and strengthening reconciliation through practical action.

THANK YOU

You’re most welcome. Mahalo nui loa! 👍

Your monthly Aloha ‘Āina Day program and the work to reconnect the ahupua‘a through Puha Stream help demonstrate that reconciliation is not just about returning land—it is about restoring our responsibility to the ‘āina, the wai, and our people.

The work at Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo gives that vision practical meaning.

May your letter help advance the return of Hawaiian lands and encourage meaningful collaboration among the City, the State, the federal government, and the Hawaiian people.



STATE OF HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
560 N. NIMITZ HWY., SUITE 200
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96817

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-236
URGING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO RETURN THE LANDS UTILIZED
BY THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE STATION AT BELLOWS, WAIMĀNALO,
HAWAI'I, TO THE PEOPLE OF HAWAI'I.

Honolulu City Council
Committee on Zoning and Planning
Honolulu, Hawai'i

October 22, 2026

9:00 a.m.

City Council Chamber

Aloha e Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Committee on Zoning and Planning:

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs ("OHA") submits this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of Resolution 26-236**, which urges the United States to return the lands used by the United States Air Force Station at Bellows, Waimānalo, to the people of Hawai'i.

Over the past year, OHA has elevated action on expiring military leases as an organization wide priority to ensure representation of Native Hawaiian voices and interests in decisions related to the future use, management, and stewardship of these lands. As part of this work, OHA has convened a Permitted Interaction Working Group, advised by prominent community advocates, lawyers, scholars, and military personnel, to recommend strategic next steps. OHA has also convened a series of seven community consultation sessions and multiple Board of Trustee (BOT) meetings to ensure Trustees hear directly from OHA beneficiaries. Additionally, OHA has advocated at the state and federal levels to elevate Native Hawaiian interests, including by commenting on all environmental review documents for military leased lands, demanding transparency and accountability from decisionmakers, and urging compliance with applicable laws.

Through consultation, legal research, and factual investigation, OHA has identified legal and moral imperatives for the Armed Services, in reevaluating currently leased areas, to justify their continued retention. Where no vital military need outweighs return, lands

transferred out of the public trust—and withheld from Native Hawaiian use, stewardship, and benefit—should be evaluated for designation as “surplus property” and restored to that trust pursuant to existing statute.

As reflected in Resolution 26-236, most lands held by the United States today, including those at Bellows, were transferred to the federal government pursuant to Executive Order or Proclamation made during the Territorial Period by the U.S. appointed Governor or U.S. President for a specific purpose. Upon Hawai‘i’s admission as a State of the Union in 1959, a process was established for transfer of land held or owned but “no longer needed” by the federal government to the new state. Pub. L. 86-3 (Mar. 18, 1959); 73 STAT 4 § 5(e). The initial five-year period for return of lands set by the Admissions Act was expanded indefinitely by passage of Public Law 88-233 in 1963, which sets forth a process for return of “surplus property” to the State of Hawai‘i. 77 Stat. 472 (Dec. 23, 1963). The “surplus” determination requires concurrence by the Administrator of General Services and the relevant government agency. *See id.*¹

As also set forth in Resolution 26-236, Bellows Air Force Station is a prime example of land that should be returned to the State of Hawai‘i pursuant to Public Law 88-233 because it is no longer used for its original purpose and therefore is “surplus” to its intended use. The Bellows Air Force Station is primarily used for recreational purposes, including rental of beachside cabins, condos, and campsites to both active duty and retired personnel from all military branches, reservists, members of the National Guard, and veterans. Under the plain meaning principle of interpretation, the current use of Bellows for recreation lies well outside the original scope of Executive Order 2565 (Mar. 28, 1917) setting aside land at Bellows to the Air Force “for military purposes” shortly before the U.S. entered World War I.

Moreover, the lands at Bellows Air Force Station should receive special consideration for return because of their status as Crown Lands at the time of the 1893 illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.² In 1893, Crown Lands were in the nature of the personal property of Queen Lili‘uokalani and consisted of the smaller portion of lands originally set aside by Kamehameha III in the Great Mahele as his personal property (the larger portion of which he immediately set aside for the upkeep of his Kingdom as “Government Lands”).³ The 1993 Apology Resolution recognizes Native Hawaiians’ unrelinquished claims to national lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom, consisting of both Crown and Government Lands, as set forth in Resolution 26-236.

¹ See also [Real property disposition | GSA](#).

² The legal status of Crown Lands and Native Hawaiians’ claim thereto have been examined extensively in historical and legal scholarship. See, e.g., Melody Kapilialoha MacKenzie; D. Kapua'ala Sproat, *A Collective Memory of Injustice: Reclaiming Hawai‘i's Crown Lands Trust in Response to Judge James S. Burns*, 39 U. Haw. L. Rev. 481, 536 (2017) (citing other books and articles).

³ Van Dyke, Jon, *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai‘i?* (Dec. 2007).

In conclusion, OHA strongly supports Resolution 26-236 as a timely and meaningful call from the Honolulu City Council and Waimānalo's representative for the U.S. Armed Services and state government to advance shared priorities and practical solutions for the Native Hawaiian community. Foremost among those priorities is the return of Hawaiian Crown and Government lands.

Return is especially imperative where military purposes no longer provide a compelling justification for retaining lands whose dispossession is rooted in the illegal overthrow of 1893. Their continued exclusion from the public trust corpus perpetuates that historical trauma and denies Native Hawaiians their use, stewardship, and benefit.

The return of these Hawaiian Crown and Government lands was the foremost demand voiced during OHA's consultation process. OHA strongly supports passage of Resolution 26-236 and its transmission to the named parties.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



KE KULA NUI O WAIMĀNALO

October 20, 2026

Chair Esther Kiaʻāina and Members
Committee on Zoning and Planning
Honolulu City Council

RE: Support for Resolution 26-236 — Return of Lands Utilized by the U.S. Air Force Station at Bellows, Waimānalo

Aloha Chair Kiaʻāina and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Ke Kula Nui O Waimānalo (KKNOW), we respectfully submit our support for Resolution 26-236, urging the United States to return the lands utilized by the U.S. Air Force Station at Bellows, Waimānalo, to the people of Hawaiʻi, in consultation with the Native Hawaiian community.

For KKNOW, this opportunity carries a responsibility to ensure that the future of these lands reflects the relationships, cultural practices, and needs of the community. We believe meaningful consultation with Native Hawaiians and the Waimānalo community should guide decisions about future use, access, and stewardship.

KKNOW has partnered with Bellows in the past on lauhala activities, the Waimānalo Limu Hui (WLH) Limu Festival, and the WLH / Oʻahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association (OHCRA) beach cleanup. These partnerships have brought people together through cultural practice, education, and care for our shoreline. They have also demonstrated the value of working together to strengthen the community's connection to this place.

The return of these lands presents an opportunity to build upon that work. We envision opportunities for cultural learning, environmental restoration, responsible community access, and stewardship that connects our keiki and ʻohana with the ʻāina and kai.

Should land become available for community use or stewardship through this effort, KKNOW respectfully requests consideration as a potential partner. Building on our past collaboration with Bellows, we would welcome the opportunity to help develop and carry out programs that serve Waimānalo and advance priorities identified through consultation with the Native Hawaiian community. We offer our experience, relationships, and willingness to mālama these lands as a contribution to that broader effort.

Me ka mahalo,

Ikaika Rogerson
President | Ke Kula Nui O Waimānalo



Aloha e Councilmembers,

My name is Isis Patiño Fernandez Usborne, I am a Ho‘olaulā Kaiāulu, or community organizer, with the Hawai‘i Alliance for Progressive Action. We are a nonprofit whose mission is to catalyze community empowerment and systemic change towards valuing people and ‘āina ahead of corporate profits. This work extends to efforts to demilitarize Kō Hawai‘i Pae ‘Āina, as well as broader Oceania and the globe. We cannot have a livable future for our keiki while the U.S. military continues its practices of widespread environmental contamination and supporting multiple genocides, including in West Papua and Palestine.

Mahalo for introducing this resolution urging the return of land in Waimānalo currently managed as Bellows Air Force Station and the United States Marine Corps Training Area. While we of course fully support the return of ancestral Crown Lands to the people of Hawai‘i, we would also like to express concerns about toxic waste at the site.

Do you all know how much clean up has happened at the site since reports of lead, forever chemicals, jet fuel, unexploded ordinances, and other dangers have surfaced? These poisons in the soil and water must not be ignored, and it should be the kuleana of the U.S. to rectify environmental damage and explosive dangers before we put everyday people in harm's way.

We respectfully urge you to pass this resolution with an eye towards a guarantee of safety and viability of the land for future generations.

Me ke aloha,

Isis "Izzy" Usborne (*they/them*)

Part-time Ho‘olaulā Kaiāulu | [HAPA](#)

isis@hapahi.org

Sources:

- <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2023/05/03/tests-reveal-wetlands-bellows-littered-with-toxic-waste-triggering-environmental-concerns/>
- <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2024/04/19/discovery-wwii-era-bomb-bellows-highlights-ongoing-risk-unexploded-ordnance/>
- <https://www.militarypoisons.org/latest-news/the-pfas-shell-game-at-bellows-air-force-station>