RES26-236
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 454

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Nov 5, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 13

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	waianaenb569@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 30, 2026 @ 08:29 PM

Testimony:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, SUPPORT RES26-236

URGING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO RETURN THE LANDS UTILIZED BY THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE STATION AT BELLOWS, WAIMĀNALO, HAWAIʻI, TO THE PEOPLE OF HAWAIʻI.

OPPOSE ANY AND ALL FUTURE LUXURY DEVELOPMENT AFTER TOTAL CLEAN-UP BY THE USAF AND OTHER MILITARY BRANCHES.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rebecca Bishop	beccy143143@gmail.com	96817-4530
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 2, 2026 @ 11:01 AM

Testimony:

I support the returning of the land to the Hawaiian people!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hilina'ikamakanali'ili'i Kane	hilinaik@hawaii.edu	96740
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 2, 2026 @ 03:07 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters and members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Hilinaʻi Kane, and I am a Native Hawaiian mother of three living in Kona. I strongly support Resolution 26-236, CD1, urging the United States to return the lands used by Bellows Air Force Station in Waimānalo to the people of Hawaiʻi.

As a mother, I want our keiki to grow up connected to their ʻāina, culture, and community. Returning these lands is an opportunity to restore that connection and support a future shaped by the people who call Hawaiʻi home.

I support requiring the United States to cover the costs of removing unexploded munitions and cleaning up chemical contamination. Our communities deserve land that is safe for our families and future generations.

The Native Hawaiian and Waimānalo communities must have a meaningful role in deciding the future of these lands. Consultation should respect their voices, knowledge, and priorities throughout the process.

Please pass this resolution and continue advocating for concrete action toward the safe return of these lands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Hilina'i Kane

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Dylan Armstrong	dylan.p.armstrong@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 3, 2026 @ 09:43 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Forest Frizzell	forestaf@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 3, 2026 @ 01:06 PM

Testimony:

As a resident of Waimanalo DHHL, I stand in full support of this resolution.

Thank you,

Forest Frizzell

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Taecia Kukui Akana	taecia@hawaii.edu	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 3, 2026 @ 09:13 PM

Testimony:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee.

My name is Taecia Kukui Akana. I am a third-generation resident of Waimānalo and the youngest member of the Waimānalo Neighborhood Board, where I serve as secretary. I specifically live in Waimānalo Village, situated next door to Bellows Air Force Station.

I am testifying today in strong support of RES26-236, CD1, urging the United States to return the lands occupied by Bellows Air Force Station in Waimānalo to the people of Hawai'i for several reasons.

1. The restoration of Crown lands currently occupied by Bellows Air Force Station in Waimānalo would fulfill Hawai'i's public land trust obligations, recognized under Article XII, Section 4 of the Hawai'i Constitution, and Section 5(f) of the Admission Act.

2. Restoration of Crown lands would also revitalize Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, restore access to ancestral 'āina, and promote environmental stewardship of land and coastal resources by Native Hawaiian and local

communities. The Bellows landscape includes Hūnānāniho, a wahi pana recognized in Waimānalo moʻolelo as one of the earliest places settled in the Hawaiian Islands and potentially home to some of the oldest Hawaiian burial sites. Generations of military occupation and restricted access have disrupted Native Hawaiian relationships with these lands, including the ability to care for iwi kūpuna and exercise traditional and customary practices. While Resolution 26-236 concerns Bellows Air Force Station, restoration would strengthen protections for Hūnānāniho, ensure meaningful access to culturally significant places, and support community-led environmental restoration and stewardship throughout the surrounding landscape.

3. Addressing Historical Dispossession and Military Occupation: In the 1993 Apology Resolution, Public Law 103-150, Congress acknowledged that Native Hawaiians never directly relinquished their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people or over their national lands. The continued federal military occupation of Bellows must be understood within this broader history of dispossession and the longstanding struggle to restore Native Hawaiian access to and stewardship of ancestral ʻāina.

I also support the resolution's provision that the United States bear the costs of cleaning up unexploded munitions and remediating chemical contamination. I urge continued cleanup and planning with community members through the Restoration Advisory Board over the last seven years. The burden of addressing environmental harm associated with military activities should not fall upon the communities seeking redress.

Thus, I strongly urge the Council to adopt Resolution 26-236, CD1, and support returning the ʻāina at Bellows Air Force Station to the people of Hawaiʻi, to the Waimānalo community, with continued and intentional consultation with the Native Hawaiian and local Waimānalo communities. The future of these lands must honor the enduring values of the Native Hawaiian community, including the kuleana to mālama ʻāina, protect iwi kūpuna, and perpetuate the traditional and customary practices that have sustained these lands for generations.

Mahalo nui for this opportunity to testify.

Taecia Kukui Akana

96795

Name: Lenei Naipo	Email: leneinaipo@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: ʻAhahui o Hawaiʻi	Position: Support	Submitted: Nov 4, 2026 @ 01:11 AM

Name: Lenei Naipo	Email: leneinaipo@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Nov 4, 2026 @ 01:37 AM

Testimony:

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for RES26-236 URGING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO RETURN THE LANDS UTILIZED BY THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE STATION AT BELLOWS, WAIMĀNALO, HAWAIʻI, TO THE PEOPLE OF HAWAIʻI.

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Lenei Naipo. I am a Kānaka Maoli, a third-year law student focusing on Native Hawaiian rights and environmental law, and a kupa of Waimānalo. I have lived beside Bellows Air Force Station for more than a decade and am their closest residential neighbor.

For well over ten years, I have endured military training exercises involving gunfire, explosions, and aircraft operating directly over my home. I have listened to foreign military forces conduct training in what is effectively my backyard, above my roof, and outside my windows. Tonight, gunfire continued until approximately 11:30 p.m. Earlier in the day, military aircraft hovered over my roof for hours, shaking my windows.

This is a persistent intrusion into our homes, our health, and our ability to live peacefully in our own community. The keiki of Waimānalo are growing up with the sounds of warfare as a regular part of their lives. Even promises of nighttime quiet hours are continuously violated. No community should be expected to endure these conditions indefinitely, much less a Native Hawaiian community whose ancestral lands have been occupied for military purposes for generations.

The harm extends far beyond noise. The ʻāina Bellows occupies includes Hūnānāniho, a wahi pana of profound cultural and spiritual significance to the people of Waimānalo. Hūnānāniho is believed to be among the earliest places settled by Hawaiians and may contain some of the oldest Hawaiian burial sites in all of the pae ʻāina. Yet we, as Kānaka Maoli, remain restricted from accessing portions of this sacred landscape, maintaining our cultural relationships with it, and fulfilling our kuleana to care for our iwi kūpuna.

Our ʻāina and waters have also borne the consequences of military occupation. Pūhā Stream, which flows through our community, has experienced contamination concerns involving bacteria, led, and other toxins. During Kona lows and other severe storms, flooding carries contaminated waters into surrounding wetlands and residential areas. Inadequate maintenance of mauka-to-makai drainage and natural water flow compounds these concerns. These conditions demand comprehensive investigation, transparent environmental monitoring, and meaningful remediation, including an examination of the military's contribution to contamination and flooding.

Waimānalo was once among Hawaiʻi's most productive agricultural regions, sustaining generations through its fertile lands and abundant water. Today, our community faces intensifying climate disasters, food insecurity, a housing crisis, and the continuing displacement of Kānaka Maoli from our kuleana ʻāina. Substantial areas of our ancestral ʻāina remain under federal military control, including lands that are no longer in use by the military.

As a law student studying Native Hawaiian rights and environmental law, I recognize that these concerns raise serious issues involving environmental protection, historic preservation, Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and the federal government's trust duties for lands and resources under its control.

I urge the military and responsible government agencies to identify and return military lands no longer needed for federal purposes, prioritizing restoration, Native Hawaiian stewardship, cultural access, food production, and community-directed uses. Any lands returned must first be thoroughly investigated and remediated so that the burden of military contamination is not transferred to our community. I also urge the military to continue their work with the Bellows Air Force Station Restoration Advisory Board to continue conducting transparent reporting, meaningful consultation with Kānaka Maoli, and opportunities for Waimānalo residents to participate directly in decisions affecting our ancestral lands and waters.

For generations, the people of Waimānalo have borne the noise, environmental harm, cultural restrictions, and loss of access resulting from U.S. military occupation. Amid worsening climate disasters, food insecurity, and Native Hawaiian displacement, the return of lands no longer needed for military purposes is long overdue. These lands must be restored, cleared of dangerous ammunitions, and returned to serve the cultural, ecological, and community needs of the kupa of Waimānalo.

We seek the protection of our homes, the restoration of our ʻāina, and the ability to fulfill our kuleana to the lands and kūpuna who have sustained our people for millennia.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Lenei Naipo
Kupa ʻĀina o Waimānalo
Third-Year Law Student, William S. Richardson School of Law

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Keoni DeFranco	defranco.keoni@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Nation of Hawai'i	Support	Nov 4, 2026 @ 08:01 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jocelyn Brody	josiebrody@gmail.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 4, 2026 @ 12:42 PM

Testimony:
Dear Councilmembers,

My name is Josie Brody and I live in Heeia and work for the University of Hawaii. I strongly urge you to pass this resolution to urge the US to return Bellows. That land should be stewarded by Hawaiians and open to the public. With the 2029 land leases coming up, it's important that we all communicate clearly to the US government that we want land back, all the land, for housing and agriculture.

Thank you for your consideration,

Josie

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Eomailani Kukahiko	eomailani@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 4, 2026 @ 12:52 PM

Testimony:

As a Hawaiian educator and long-time Waimānalo resident, I have seen first hand the importance of ʻāina in our communities. Waimānalo struggles with both gentrification and houselessness and yet as a resilient community our residents provide kūpuna wisdom-based solutions to ongoing social, environmental, and cultural challenges. The return of this ʻāina would give extended opportunities to reassert the inextricable links of ʻāina and kānaka through aloha ʻāina in this special place of Waimānalo, through its return from current military control.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chanel Sebala-Bumanglag	chanel4_u@yahoo.com	96778
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Nov 4, 2026 @ 02:16 PM

Testimony:

It has been long enough and way overdue. Hoʻihoʻi ʻāina.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Leinaala Ley	leinaalal@oha.org	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Office of Hawaiian Affairs	Support	Nov 4, 2026 @ 02:19 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kahikina Young	kahikinayoung@gmail.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 4, 2026 @ 04:21 PM

Testimony:

Aloha, I live in earshot proximity to the practice range, and it is very traumatizing to hear the guns go off at any time of the day. Sometimes I can't sleep when I have to go to work the next day, because they are practicing late at night. Regardless

if they are shooting during the day, at night, on the weekends or week days, it is disturbing and distressing to hear firearms at any time of the day. I strongly support a return of the lands to the people, because no amount of violence is a healthy amount to experience. Similar to a child hearing their parents fighting and arguing in another room; your support would stop this quarrel for good. Please support this measure, and positively affect the lives of many who live in Waimānalo. Mahalo nui loa for reading this testimony.

Testimony for the Honolulu City Council
The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair, and Andria Tupola, Vice Chair

5 November, 2026

Res 26-236

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Respectfully, and having given this consideration, I *SUPPORT* Res 26-236, which would return lands now owned by the US Air Force to the state of Hawai'i in consultation with the Native Hawaiian community, the Waimānalo community, and the State of Hawai'i Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

The advancement and empowerment of the Native Hawaiian people is more than just an ideal, it pairs with duties and responsibilities codified in federal and state law. The City and County of Honolulu itself contains vestiges of or references to Kingdom-era law throughout its organization and ordinances.

There is a clear line of descent from that time to the planning, actions, and efforts today to rectify wrongdoings done to the native people of Hawai'i, which include coups, thefts, defrauding, cultural genocide, and neglect.

This measure seeks to rectify the seizure of land, including Crowd Lands, now owned by the US Air Force. Some of these lands are essentially fallow or occupied by derelict facilities, including a large landing strip that appears long-unused, so it is important to note that the request of the document is quite reasonable relative to the mission requirements of the US Department of Defense and its Air Force.

The regular renegotiation of land title and land use is a primary responsibility of government. Here, the added context of past injustice, current disparity, and the scarcity of available land for a variety of critical needs is also part of the conversation, necessarily.

I hope that the Council will consider this opportunity thoroughly, and as just one of many such potential avenues of progress on behalf of the residents of Honolulu, not limited to our Native Hawaiian brothers and sisters.

Mahalo nui loa,
Dylan P. Armstrong, *Individual Capacity*

N Alakai o Ahahui o Hawaii
Advocates for Native Hawaiian Justice
William S. Richardson School of Law | University of Hawaii at Mnoa

Testimony of N Alakai o Ahahui o Hawaii

Honolulu City Council
November 5, 2026, 10:00 AM
Agenda Item RES26-236

URGING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO RETURN THE LANDS UTILIZED BY THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE STATION AT BELLOWS, WAIMNALO, HAWAII, TO THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII.

Aloha e Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

We are the alakai of Ahahui o Hawaii ("the Hui"), an organization of law student advocates at the William S. Richardson School of Law. For over 50 years, the Hui has advocated for Native Hawaiian justice in all areas of law, especially those affecting Native Hawaiian communities, traditional and customary practices, resource management, and environmental protection.

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT Resolution 26-236, CD1**, urging the United States to return the lands occupied by Bellows Air Force Station in Waimānalo to the people of Hawaii.

The lands at Bellows were once Crown Lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom and subsequently came under federal control following the illegal overthrow and annexation of Hawaii. In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson set aside approximately 1,510 acres in Waimānalo for military purposes under Executive Order No. 2565. More than a century later, portions of these lands are used primarily for military recreation, while the former airfield has remained closed since 1958.

Federal law provides a mechanism for returning these lands. Public Law 88-233 establishes a process for conveying qualifying surplus federal lands to the State of Hawaii, subject to the public land trust established under Section 5(f) of the Hawaii Admission Act. The continued recreational use of lands originally reserved for military purposes warrants review of whether those lands remain necessary for federal use or should be returned to the people of Hawaii.

Congress also acknowledged in the 1993 Apology Resolution, Public Law 103-150, that Native Hawaiians never directly relinquished their claims to their inherent sovereignty over their national lands. The continued federal occupation of these lands must be understood within this history of dispossession and the longstanding struggle to restore Native Hawaiian access to ancestral āina.

The broader Bellows landscape includes Hūnānāniho, a wahi pana of profound cultural and spiritual significance to the people of Waimānalo, believed to be among the earliest settled places in Hawaii and home to some of the oldest Hawaiian burial sites. Generations of military

occupation and restricted access have affected Native Hawaiian relationships with this ancestral landscape, including the ability to visit sacred places, care for iwi kūpuna, and exercise traditional and customary practices. Although Resolution 26-236 concerns the lands occupied by Bellows Air Force Station, their return should be considered alongside the need to protect Hūnānāniho and ensure meaningful access to culturally significant places throughout the surrounding area.

Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawaii Constitution obligates the State to protect Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights, while Article XI, Section 1 requires the conservation and protection of Hawaii's natural resources for present and future generations. Any return and future management of the Bellows Air Force Station lands must respect these obligations, center the Waimānalo community, and provide for cultural access, protection of iwi kūpuna, and community-led stewardship.

We also support the resolution's provision that the United States bear the costs of cleaning up unexploded munitions and remediating chemical contamination and urge the continued cleanup and planning that has taken place along with community members with the Restoration Advisory Board for the last seven years. The responsibility for addressing environmental harm associated with military activities should not fall upon the communities seeking the return and restoration of their ancestral lands.

The Hui therefore urges the Council to adopt Resolution 26-236, CD1, and support the return of the ʻāina at Bellows Air Force Station to the people of Hawaii, with meaningful consultation with the Native Hawaiian and Waimānalo communities. The future of these lands must prioritize cultural access, environmental restoration, protection of iwi kūpuna, and the enduring kuleana of Native Hawaiians to care for their āina.

Mahalo nui for your consideration and for upholding your kuleana to protect Hawaii's āina, cultural resources, and future generations.

Aloha ina Oiaio!

N Alakai o Ahahui o Hawaii

Nā Alakai:
Lenei Sousa Naipo (ʻ27)
Kaohi Gomera (ʻ27)
Kyson Kainalu James-Foree (ʻ27)
Justice Kaeo Castroverde-Moniz (ʻ27)
Taecia Kukui Akana (ʻ28)

N Alakai o Ahahui o Hawaii
Advocates for Native Hawaiian Justice
William S. Richardson School of Law | University of Hawaii at Mnoa

Kalāmanamana Harman (‘28)
Sonny Dryden Kuehuikapono Seto Myers (‘28)
Kiana Kekoa (‘28)

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-236, CD1

Honolulu City Council — November 5, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

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

My name is Keoni DeFranco, Minister of the Interior for the Nation of Hawai‘i at Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo, Managing Director at Purple Mai‘a Foundation, and a board member of Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation. I submit this updated testimony in **strong support of Resolution 26-236, CD1, and urge its adoption as presented**.

Mahalo to Councilmember Esther Kia‘āina, Chair Tommy Waters, and the Committee on Zoning & Planning for advancing this measure. I welcome CD1's added consultation with the Waimānalo community and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, alongside the Native Hawaiian community, and its call for the United States to bear all unexploded-munitions cleanup and chemical-contamination remediation costs.

The history of these lands must guide their return. As the resolution recounts, Crown Lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom were seized following the unlawful overthrow in 1893, merged with Government Lands by the self-declared Republic in 1895, and purportedly ceded to the United States in 1898 without Native Hawaiian consent. Executive Order 2565 set aside 1,510 acres at Waimānalo for military purposes in 1917. Bellows remained under federal ownership at statehood in 1959.

In the 1993 Apology Resolution, Public Law 103-150, the United States acknowledged its participation in the illegal overthrow, recognized that Native Hawaiians had never directly relinquished their sovereignty claims or claims over their national lands, and committed to supporting reconciliation. Returning these lands offers an opportunity to give concrete meaning to that commitment.

Reconciliation must restore the ability of Hawaiian communities to make decisions about ancestral lands and sustain their care. In Waimānalo, our organizations are already building the relationships, educational pathways, and stewardship practices to carry this responsibility forward.

At Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo, the Nation of Hawai‘i brings together over 1,000 volunteers each month through Aloha ‘Āina Days. We stand ready to mobilize this community to restore the historic loko i‘a and lo‘i kalo at Bellows. We actively participate in Bellows wetland restoration, helped establish the iwi kūpuna vault, and meet monthly with Bellows leadership regarding its care. Working with Bellows researchers, we have established a nursery with more than 150 niu seedlings representing over 30 varieties sourced from Bellows, preserving diversity threatened by the coconut rhinoceros beetle for future replanting across Hūnānāniho.

At Purple Maiʻa Foundation, we educate culturally grounded, community-serving technology makers and problem solvers. Through Hālau Hekili, which we co-operate in partnership with Kailua High School and Windward Community College, Waimānalo high school students can pursue dual-credit education and graduate with an Associates Degree in Hawaiian Knowledge and Innovation. These pathways can connect ʻōpio with restoration, environmental monitoring, and ʻŌiwi innovation in their own community.

Hui Mālama o Ke Kai Foundation connects ʻōpio with ʻāina, ocean, and culture through education and service. Through Papahana Hanauma at Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve, administered in partnership with the City's Department of Parks and Recreation since May 2026, we integrate ʻike kūpuna and contemporary science in conservation education. This partnership offers a practical foundation for community-led stewardship at Bellows.

Together, these efforts support a shared vision: restoring Bellows to ʻāina momona while creating opportunities for Waimānalo's young people to remain, work, and care for their homeland.

Following adoption, I encourage the Council to support three priorities:

1. Establish a transparent chain-of-title review and pathway toward return.

The federal review should document the instruments through which these Hawaiian Kingdom Crown Lands came under federal ownership and control, identify the parcels proposed for return, and distinguish ownership from military jurisdiction and use. It should identify the transfer authority, receiving entity, and continuing federal obligations.

We encourage the return of the Bellows Air Force Station lands to the people of Hawaiʻi, restoring these ancestral Crown Lands to the inventory of lands held for their benefit through transfer to the State's Public Land Trust under the administration of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, pursuant to the applicable process referenced in this resolution under Public Law 88-233. The review should address public land trust obligations, applicable Hawaiian Home Lands requirements, and Native Hawaiian beneficiary interests, with Native Hawaiian and Waimānalo community representatives and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands participating from the outset. The process should establish clear agency responsibilities and a public timeline.

2. Connect land transfer to Native Hawaiian community authority and long-term stewardship.

The return of these ancestral Crown Lands should restore meaningful Native Hawaiian authority over their care and future use. These lands should be held in trust in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Hawaiʻi, with enforceable protections against their sale, privatization, or permanent alienation.

We encourage the State of Hawaiʻi Department of Land and Natural Resources to work with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Waimānalo cultural practitioners, lineal descendants, and

qualified community organizations to develop a co-management framework under Act 203, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2026. Honolulu’s Office of ‘Ōiwi Resources and Cultural Stewardship, upon its establishment, should support this partnership.

Building upon its Papahana Hanauma partnership, the City should help advance a framework grounded in Waimānalo knowledge and community priorities, with meaningful decision-making authority, dedicated resources, and long-term protections for ecological restoration, iwi kūpuna, cultural practices, and public access.

The Nation of Hawai‘i and our community partners stand ready to participate. Co-management must serve as a pathway toward Waimānalo-centered, Native Hawaiian self-determination, ensuring these lands remain a source of cultural practice, sustenance, and abundance for future generations.

3. Secure federal cleanup responsibility and invest in restoration and workforce development.

Implementing CD1’s call for federally funded cleanup should include comprehensive environmental assessments, transparent findings, appropriate cleanup standards, and long-term monitoring. The Hawaiian people should not inherit the financial burden of remediating lands impacted by military use.

Beyond cleanup, dedicated resources should support community-led restoration of wetlands, watersheds, coastal ecosystems, niu groves, and culturally significant places. Paid internships, workforce development, stewardship training, and ‘Ōiwi technology development should enable Waimānalo ‘ōpio to participate directly.

Our organizations provide a foundation for connecting place-based education, technical training, and restoration work. Partnerships with educational institutions and researchers can turn these experiences into lasting careers in caring for mālama ‘āina.

I urge the Council to adopt Resolution 26-236, CD1, and help establish a clear path toward land return, community authority, and stewardship across generations.

Mahalo nui loa,

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

PHONE (808) 594-1888 FAX (808) 594-1938

STATE OF HAWAIʻI
OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
560 N. NIMITZ HWY., SUITE 200
HONOLULU, HAWAIʻI 96817

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-236 CD1
URGING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO RETURN THE LANDS UTILIZED BY THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE STATION AT BELLOWS, WAIMĀNALO, HAWAIʻI, TO THE PEOPLE OF HAWAIʻI.

Honolulu City Council
Honolulu Hale
530 S. King Street

November 5, 2026 10:00 a.m. City Council Chamber

Aloha e Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council:

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs ("OHA") submits this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of Resolution 26-236 CD1**, which urges the United States to return the lands used by the United States Air Force Station at Bellows, Waimānalo, to the people of Hawaiʻi.

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 CD1, 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 Stations 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 Kauikeaolani 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.

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[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 CD1 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, including clean up and remediation to ensure returned land is usable, and consultation with Waimānalo to ensure work opportunities and stewardship is community driven.

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 CD1 and its transmission to the named parties.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.