

# Ke Ala Hou

*A New Path Forward*

*Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'āina | Office of the Governor • December 2023*



## GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D. Reflecting on my first year in office, I'm very grateful for all of our state employees and their dedication to serving Hawai'i. From establishing the state's first kauhale to signing vital bills and addressing Hawai'i's housing and homelessness crisis, we are well on our way to achieving our ambitious goals. In my Inaugural speech, I said Hawai'i is one 'ohana – one family. In that light, my team and I look forward to continuing to take bold action toward our goals and addressing issues of health care, housing, homelessness, education, and the climate crisis.

In addition to those goals, the state is dedicated to providing the necessary resources and support to help the Maui community heal and thrive. Last month, I introduced the One 'Ohana Initiative, which aims to provide financial support to those

most seriously impacted by the Maui wildfires. This initiative will hopefully make the healing process a little easier for the families who have lost loved ones in the fire, or who suffered severe injuries.

As we enter the time of gift-giving, I encourage you to support our local businesses while shopping and dining this holiday season. Small businesses form the backbone of our communities and shape the unique character of our state. Supporting local this holiday season will help our businesses recover, keep local jobs, and diversify our economy.

As we dive into the holiday season, I hope you are able to take some time to be with loved ones. I wish you and yours a season filled with warmth, safety, and joy!

Warmest Regards,

*Josh Green*

## Blueprints for the Future: Affordable Housing Projects on the Horizon

Governor Josh Green, M.D. continues to make affordable housing a priority to ensure that all of our people can live in Hawai'i. Since signing the Emergency Proclamation Relating to Housing on July 17, 2023, multiple groundbreakings have made possible a diverse range of affordable rental housing solutions.

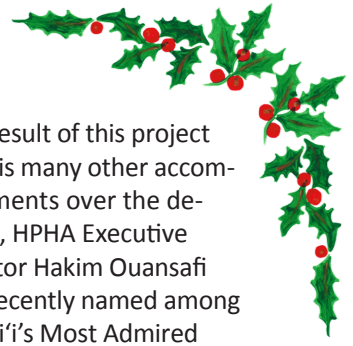
"Over the next year, nearly 800 new housing units will emerge statewide, marking the initial surge of thousands of low-income and workforce apartments set to hit the market in the next two to three years," said Governor Green.

For details on planned and in-construction affordable housing projects, visit <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hhfdc/files/2023/05/Planned-In-Construction-ONLY-2022-UPDATED-050923.pdf>.



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Simultaneously, the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) issued an RFQ (request for qualifications) in January 2023, seeking a master developer to lead the transformation of a portion of its public housing properties, including Mayor Wright Homes. Highridge Costa Development Co. was selected as the master developer through the RFQ process and was entrusted with evaluating and master planning the redevelopment of nine targeted sites, spanning almost 80 acres. The goal is to create mixed-income, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities.

The Ka Lei Momi Redevelopment Project aims to deliver a minimum of 10,000 additional housing units in multiple phases spanning approximately two years per phase. The timeline is subject to permit approvals, market factors, funding, and financing availability. The HPHA will support the redevelopment effort by offering assistance when needed, while adhering to relevant regulations through regular monitoring activities.



As a result of this project and his many other accomplishments over the decades, HPHA Executive Director Hakim Ouansafi was recently named among Hawai'i's Most Admired Leaders for 2023 by Pacific Business News (PBN) for his housing efforts and public service to the community. PBN has celebrated business and community success through its awards over the years. Ouansafi was chosen due to his principled dedication, charisma, and desire to improve the human condition. He has shown extraordinary leadership for more than three decades leading multiple organizations. Congratulations Hakim!

## JTF-50: Hawai'i National Guard's Fire Recovery Effort



State of Hawai'i Adjutant General, Major General Kenneth Hara, Governor Josh Green, M.D., and the U.S. Department of Defense collaboratively established the Hawai'i National Guard's Joint Task Force-50 (HING JTF-50) within five days of the Maui wildfires.

The JTF-50 is under the command of Brigadier General Stephen F. Logan, Deputy Adjutant General, and comprises a diverse coalition of responders including the Hawai'i Army and Air National Guard, the Active Duty Army and Navy, and the U.S. Army Reserve.

The JTF-50 primarily focused on ensuring the safety and recovery of affected Maui residents, collaborating closely with Maui County emergency managers. JTF-50 has also been in close coordination with local first responders and Maui County emergency managers to ensure concerted efforts and efficient use of resources.

Approximately 250 HING personnel provided critical support to the Maui Police Department, staffing 21 traffic control points on the perimeter of Lahaina town. Personnel at the posts managed access and supported first responders and crucial organizations.

In the first few days of the response, HING's efforts also extended to fire suppression missions. The JTF-50 also leveraged

the expertise of its very specialized unit, HING's Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear, Emergency Force Package (CERFP) to support the search and recovery operations and on-site decontamination procedures.

In addition to the HING missions, JTF-50's contributions encompassed interisland sea and air transportation and supporting survey operations. The task force also facilitated the distribution of essentials, including more than 4,000 gallons of potable water and more than 470 gallons of fuel. JTF-50 has played a crucial role in support of many partnership agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, and medical support groups.

The magnitude and long-term challenges posed by the wildfires to Maui are immense and the effects of the fires will be felt for years to come. We appreciate the National Guard's major roles in supporting Maui's recovery efforts.



*Photo courtesy: U.S. Army National Guard, Spc. Sean Walker*





## PSD's Office Takes Strides Toward a Healthier Workplace

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) Keoni Ana office became a Blue Zones Project Approved Worksite® on October 31, 2023, demonstrating its commitment to improving employee well-being. A company or department earns the certification by creating an environment where employees flourish and make healthy choices. According to the Blue Zones Project, being a Blue Zones Worksite translates to higher employee performance, reduced long-term healthcare costs, reduced healthcare risks, stronger employee engagement, and higher morale and retention.

To achieve this significant milestone, the Keoni Ana office met various benchmarks including, accumulating at least 78 out of 137 points documenting evidence-based best practices, like encouraging at least 25% of building employees to participate in a wellness activity/workshop, tracking three metrics/outcomes relating to

health and wellness, and creating a sustainability plan toward long-term well-being development.

Inspired by a Health and Wellness Fair that PSD conducted in May and the results of the RealAge Test, Keoni Ana employees collectively set a goal to become Blue Zones-approved. In addition to walking groups they formed, they attended lunch-and-learns on health and

wellness, and implemented changes to their office environment to encourage healthier living.

Deputy Director for Administration Melanie Martin led the charge. She has been a wellness champion since 2018 when she began working with Blue Zones Project Hawai'i's Worksite Lead Cyrus Howe. With the support of PSD Director, Tommy Johnson, PSD plans to continue well-being strategies beyond Keoni Ana to its facilities across the islands.

"PSD is committed to the health and wellness of its employees," said Johnson. "The Blue Zones Project approval is just the beginning of PSD's journey to providing a healthy work environment for its staff who work tirelessly to serve the public."



Photo courtesy: PSD

## A Path to Recovery: The One 'Ohana Initiative



Governor Josh Green, M.D., announced the One 'Ohana Initiative on November 8, providing a collective path forward to Hawai'i's recovery following the devastating Maui wildfires. The initiative will proactively provide financial support to those who lost loved ones and suffered serious injuries due to the wildfires. It will also advance efforts to promote Hawai'i's recovery, in a manner that best serves the people of Maui and all of Hawai'i. The focus is to rebuild Lahaina in a manner that embodies Hawai'i values and traditions.

The One 'Ohana Initiative is comprised of multiple recovery programs the state has initiated, or which have been launched as part of numerous efforts to benefit the entire state. These include the \$100M Maui Relief TANF Program; the updated siren policy by the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency; Hawaiian Electric's wildfire safety strategy, and many others.

As part of the One 'Ohana Initiative, Governor Green introduced the Maui Recovery Fund which will exceed \$150 million and distribute money to families of those who lost loved ones, and to those who suffered severe injuries in the Maui wildfires. This fund is supported by partners like the state of Hawai'i, Hawaiian Electric Co., Kamehameha Schools (KS), and Maui County. Additional organizations are anticipated to join in this healing effort. The fund will provide substantial monetary sums to victims much faster than they could receive through litigation. Those who choose to receive money from the fund will waive

their ability to bring legal action related to associated claims.

"I have been talking about this fund for the last three months and I am beyond grateful to be able to formally announce initial details today," Governor Green said. "This fund is made possible by the state and multiple partners who are committed to seeing our Maui community and our whole state, heal from the most devastating disaster most of us will ever see. When we all join as one, we can diminish suffering," the Governor said.

"Our hope is that those families who choose to engage in this process can find a healing path to closure," said Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen.

Beneficiaries who voluntarily opt in to the program will receive payments of more than \$1M as early as the second quarter of next year after an administrator is selected and a protocol is finalized.



## 'Tis the Season to Support Local

As we approach the festive holiday season, it's a time for celebration and reflecting on resilience and community spirit. Following the Maui wildfires in August, the state has been committed to supporting local businesses on the path to recovery.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) Business Development and Support Division provided grants to cover vendor booth fees at the annual Made in Maui County Festival through its Community-Based Economic Development program. The sponsorship allowed 132 Maui County companies to exhibit their creativity and talent and the community to experience vendors' variety of offerings while helping their recovery efforts.

DBEDT also supported the launch of a Hawai'i-themed pop-up retail shop featuring locally made products at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. Named the Aloha Market Powered by Mana Up, the shop provided a glimpse of Hawai'i's talented people, vibrant culture, and natural beauty to the gateway of Tokyo. With an estimated 60,000 travelers and nontravelers passing through daily, shoppers had the chance to experience a curated selection of unique and diverse products from more than 40 Hawai'i-based companies including long-standing favorites as well as up-and-coming brands.



Photo courtesy: Bryce Pedersen

In addition, the department sponsored the Mana Up Showcase Japan Livestream. The one-hour special featured fresh Hawai'i entrepreneur stories, local entertainment, and e-commerce opportunities with Japanese translations.

Finally, in February, DBEDT will be presenting an e-commerce workshop to increase the reach and sales of Hawai'i-made products nationally and internationally.

Let's embrace the spirit of giving and aloha by supporting local this holiday season. From Kailua-Kona on Hawai'i Island to Kōloa on Kaua'i, choose to visit the charming boutiques, mom-and-pop shops, and farmers markets for locally made products found nowhere else.

## Agribusiness Development Corporation Provides Land for Farmers and Ranchers



The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) was chartered in 1994 with the mission to conserve and convert arable lands and formerly large mono-crop plantation lands into new, productive uses. The ADC is a state leader and innovator in agriculture with the goal to increase local production of agricultural products and reduce Hawai'i's reliance on imported crops. As of October 2023, the agency has 22,801 acres, 16,663 of which are farmable. Farmers, ranchers, and agribusiness companies are working on 10,999 acres, and 2,483 acres are currently in negotiation with selected tenants.

"I am encouraging people to think of ADC as being open for business," said newly selected ADC Executive Director Wendy Gady. She added, "I cannot begin to express the enthusiasm of the board's hope that this action will invite new and younger

farmers and ranchers into a conversation for how to grow their businesses and drive economic growth in the communities they are in. We very much want to open a dialogue with producers at all stages of production in developing a future for Hawai'i in the ag industry."

ADC posted the acreage in October for interested food producers and other farmers. The remaining vacant lands are in Kālepa and Kekaha on Kaua'i, and in Whitmore outside of Wahiawā on O'ahu. You can view the available lands at <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/adc/available-lands/>.

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) invites farmers and all who may want to explore the availability of its remaining agricultural acreage, to fill out an online Expression of Interest form for submission to the agency at [dbedt.adc@hawaii.gov](mailto:dbedt.adc@hawaii.gov). (Visit <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/adc/land-application/>).



**Ke Ala Hou** is a monthly publication of the Office of Governor Josh Green, M.D.

**We invite you to stay connected with us!**

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