



**OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96817

January 27, 2025

Sent via email to: dhrd@hawaii.gov

Office of Hawaiian Affairs Salary Commission
235 S. Beretania Street, Room 1400
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: OHA Salary Commission Testimony – January 29, 2025 Agenda Item 3(a) Discuss and finalize the draft Report of Recommendations for the 2024 OHA Salary Commission

Aloha mai e Chairperson Gomes and Commissioners,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), I would like to express our deep appreciation for the work that the OHA Salary Commission members have undertaken over the past two months to fulfill your collective charge as set forth in Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Section 10-9.5.

Through your focused work, supported by the staff of the Office of Governor Green and the Department of Human Resources Development, this Commission has conducted an open and rigorous analysis of its state law mandate, the work of past OHA Salary Commissions, and the current salary landscape for Hawai'i elected officials. This Commission also took concerted steps to reach out to OHA Trustees and Administration to gain a better understanding of the Trustees' duties and responsibilities and, as summarized in the draft report, recognized the immense kuleana and associated time commitment borne by OHA Trustees. By adopting updated salary amounts that are comparable to elected officials with similar year-round time demands and constituencies, this Commission has helped to address the issue of pay inequity stemming from misaligned salary benchmarks and the past failures to convene this body since 2016.

OHA does seek clarification on the Starting date for the 2024 OHA Salary Commission's salary recommendations. In Table 1 of the draft report, the Commission has indicated that the "Starting" date for the 2024 OHA Salary Commission recommendations is "January xx, 2025", assumedly to be updated to reflect the date on which this Commission approves the final report and recommendations. However, the Note also contained in Table 1 states "July 1, 2028, is the date the 2028 Salary Commission recommendations will go into effect[.]" which appears to indicate that the 2028 Salary Commission recommendations (presumably finalized in early 2029) would have

a retroactive effect to July 1, 2028. This retroactive implementation of salary recommendations is consistent with the 2012 OHA Salary Commission recommendations and the 2016 OHA Salary Commission recommendations provided in Tables 3 and 4, respectively, that both were implemented retroactively to July 1st of the year prior to the release of each Commission's final report. Accordingly, OHA seeks clarification on the Starting date of the 2024 OHA Salary Commission's recommendations, especially given the delays already faced by OHA Trustees.

Table 5 also appears to be in need of adjustment to reflect the missed 5% annual salary increases described in the preceding paragraph to Table 5.

In conclusion, I would again like to thank the OHA Salary Commission members for your collective efforts and time to voluntarily serve on this Commission under appointment by Governor Green. The overdue increases to Trustee salaries, supported by the thorough analysis documented in the Commission's report and recommendations, will benefit not just current Trustees, but also future public servants who aspire to serve the lāhui.

Hau'oli Ka Mana'o,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kaiali'i Kahele', written in a cursive style.

Kaiali'i Kahele
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Office of Hawaiian Affairs



Brickwood Galuteria
Chair of Beneficiary Advocacy
& *Empowerment Committee*
Trustee, At-Large

Phone: (808) 594-1860

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Aloha Chairman Gomes and Commissioners,

I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for your diligent and expedient work in fulfilling the mandate under Hawaii Revised Statute Section 10-9.5 to bring pay parity to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Trustees. Your commitment to ensuring fair and equitable compensation for the Trustees is commendable and greatly appreciated. The Commission's thorough review and thoughtful recommendations have not only addressed long-standing disparities but have also set a precedent for fairness and transparency within our state government.

Furthermore, the establishment of pay equity within the Office of Hawaiian Affairs is a significant step towards encouraging future generations of Native Hawaiians to consider public service as a viable and honorable career path; and by providing fair compensation, you have made it possible for talented and dedicated individuals to serve their community without the barrier of financial hardship.

Equally important, this move ensures that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs remains an attractive option for future generations of Kanaka and those who are passionate about advocating for the rights and well-being of Native Hawaiians. In addition, your efforts have paved the way for a more inclusive and diverse range of candidates to consider serving as an OHA trustee. This, in turn, will enrich the organization with fresh perspectives and innovative approaches to addressing the unique challenges faced by our community. The promise of equity pay will help foster a sense of security and stability, allowing Trustees to focus on their mission of enhancing the lives of Native Hawaiians.



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Mahalo for your dedication and unwavering service to the people of Hawaii. Your efforts are a testament to the values of justice and equality that we hold dear. With sincere appreciation... Mahalo and Malama for now.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized letter 'B' followed by a horizontal line.

Trustee Brickwood M. Galuteria, Chairman
Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment
Office of Hawaiian Affairs

BG:lad