



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • August 2025

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

As bill signing season has concluded for the recently ended legislative session, I wanted to highlight some key achievements. We successfully signed hundreds of bills aimed at enhancing safety and providing essential support to our communities across Hawai'i. These new laws will improve public safety, healthcare access, environmental sustainability and more. We are grateful for the collaboration and hard work of our legislators to make the session a success.

I would also like to acknowledge the partnership between the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and schools statewide, to honor our 'Ready to Work' graduates from this past summer. This program equips our youth with essential skills and resources to thrive in the workforce.

Additionally, the Department of Accounting and General Services hosted its second "Builder's Spotlight" at the Hawai'i State Archives, featuring a local luthier who showcased the artistry involved in instrument making through sound and material selection.

Mahalo to our state legislators, state departments and community advocates for your support and involvement as we work to improve Hawai'i. Your input is essential and together, we can ensure that Hawai'i continues to be a safe and healthy place for everyone.

Mahalo,

Josh Green M.D.

DAGS' STATE ARCHIVES HOSTS SECOND "BUILDER'S SPOTLIGHT"

Bolder – crispier – stronger overtones – mellower. The terms sound like adjectives used in wine reviews, but in this scenario they're actually used to describe sound. In the most recent Builder's Spotlight, an event by the Hawai'i State Archives, viewers met a Moloka'i luthier whose work with different woods brings out those subtle variations. Hawai'i State Archives is a division of the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS).

Eric DeVine of DeVine Guitars and 'Ukuleles discussed how he selects the wood for his instruments. 'Ukulele player Mika Kane also demonstrated the concepts DeVine shares, with well-known Kaua'i musician Kimo Hussey as the series host.

This sophomore effort occurred on July 19 and can be viewed on the Archive's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/user/HawaiiStateArchives>.

DAGS Director and Comptroller Keith Regan said, "This was a wonderful opportunity for people to better understand how

incredibly talented Hawai'i's stringed instrument makers are and how much thought they put into their work."

"Our featured builder, Eric, is one of the top makers in the world. I hope this series helps the audience appreciate the design process that transforms a piece of raw lumber into an artful masterpiece," said State Archivist Adam Jansen, Ph.D.



Ke Ala Hou intends to elevate, recognize, and celebrate the hard work done by our state departments. Our goal is to share top achievements from our state employees, emphasize aloha and kindness in action and demonstrate caring leadership at the state level. It is our hope that by sharing these stories, we build trust and understanding in what we do everyday in service to you.



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Building a Safer, Healthier Hawai'i

Bill signing season has been nothing short of a success! Bills have been passed and signed into law to protect Hawai'i and its people. After a long season, 313 bills have been signed this summer, making this a very productive session. This season focused on prioritizing the well-being of the community and strengthening protective measures.

The Office of the Governor hosted 13 bill-signing ceremonies. These ceremonies were an opportunity for us to hear from legislators, community leaders and local voices. Bills signed address climate action, wildfire preparedness, affordable housing, healthcare expansion and protection for our most vulnerable communities.

As we move forward, these laws will help bring our people together, protect our 'āina and amplify the voices of those who are often unheard. With 313 bills now enacted, Hawai'i takes significant steps toward a safer and healthier future.

"This legislative session delivered many important wins, and I'm deeply grateful to the Hawai'i State Legislature for championing measures that serve our people and protect our 'āina. At the same time, we faced real challenges, especially the uncertainty of federal funding, which put critical lifelines for our communities at risk.

I remain committed to advocating for key administrative priorities, including housing, homelessness, healthcare, wellness and resilience, and climate action. We are turning lessons learned into action and delivering solutions that will benefit our state for generations to come."

— Governor Green

WRAPPING UP BILLS

Bill Highlights

Green Fee

Hawai'i reached new heights and became the first state within the nation to codify a climate impact fee. Senate Bill 1396 (Act 96), also known as "The Green Fee," implements a fee on visitors, which aids in establishing a sustainable funding stream to support environmental conservation and climate resilience projects. This revenue will fund the management and protection of our 'āina, helping Hawai'i mitigate and adapt to climate change and preserve what we love most, our home.



Maui Wildfire Settlement and Fire Marshal

In order to protect the people of Maui and Hawai'i as a whole, Governor Green signed House Bill 1001 (Act 301) to establish \$807.5 million to support the state's contribution to the Maui Wildfire Settlement of claims, which shall be deposited into the trust fund. Governor Green also signed House Bill 1064 (Act 302), which transferred the Office of the State Fire Marshal to the Department of Law Enforcement. The legislation further clarifies the roles, duties and discretionary authority of both the Office and the State Fire Marshal, supporting the state's efforts to provide coordinated, statewide fire prevention and readiness strategies.



313

bills signed after this legislative session

\$10.53B

in general funds in FY 2026

46

years since we have had a State Fire Marshal

13

bill signing ceremonies held

\$3.3M

to the DOE to subsidize free school meals

SIGNING SEASON

Fireworks Bill/Public Safety

Tragedy struck this past New Year's Eve in Āliamanu. It drew the attention of many, and made it apparent that the state needed protections to prevent such accidents from ever occurring again. Governor Green signed House Bills 1483 and 550 (Acts 243 and 244, respectively), which increase penalties and improve enforcement of illegal fireworks. These laws expand law enforcement authority, close regulatory loopholes and create a task force to address the broader public safety concerns linked to fireworks use. This improved framework empowers our law enforcement personnel to better protect the community and prevent injuries, property damage or environmental harms associated with illegal pyrotechnics.



School Meals

Governor Green signed Senate Bill 1300 (Act 139), which expands access to free school meals for students who qualify for reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program. The program starts in the 2025-26 school year. To further support ALICE (Asset Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) families, the bill will expand again in the 2026-27 school year, providing free school meals to any public school student whose family income is below 300% of the federal poverty level. Act 139 appropriates more than \$3.3 million to the Department of Education over the two school years to cover the cost of free meals.

SMOOTHER ROAD AHEAD FOR PROPERTY INSURANCE MARKET

Governor Green signed Senate Bill 1044 into law on July 7, taking another step forward in stabilizing the state's property insurance market amid escalating premiums and limited coverage options.

"The rising cost of insurance has become yet another unbearable burden for Hawai'i and its residents," said Governor Green. "This is one piece of the solution that helps prepare and protect us from future crises, which puts us in a better position than other states that have recently suffered from catastrophic events."

SB 1044, now known as Act 296, reactivates the Hawai'i Hurricane Relief Fund (HHRF) to provide insurance coverage in scenarios where the private market fails to do so. Applications are now being accepted by the HHRF for condominium and townhouse associations of apartment owners seeking to obtain hurricane commercial property insurance.

The measure also enhances the powers of the Hawai'i Property Insurance Association to provide additional coverage options, establishes the Condominium Loan Program to help buildings remain insurable, and mandates the Insurance Commissioner to conduct a comprehensive study aimed at developing sustainable strategies for market stabilization.

"The HHRF board of directors worked tirelessly to get the program operational to bring additional coverage availability for the market. We anticipate this program can help every eligible



association with a portion of their full hurricane coverage," said Acting Insurance Commissioner Jerry Bump. "Also, from the launch of HHRF, we quickly saw pricing pressure and market competition significantly decrease the cost of coverage."

"The condominium community will now benefit from much-needed premium relief. As we have already seen in some of the initial submissions, properties of all sizes have seen upwards of 70% savings on their hurricane insurance," added Alex McLaury, commercial insurance agent at ACW Group.

More information about the Hawai'i Hurricane Relief Fund, including frequently asked questions, the application, and other required forms visit <https://hhrf.hawaii.gov>.

DLIR Joins Schools Across the State to Recognize 'Ready to Work' Graduates

This summer, employees from the Hawai'i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), including Director Jade T. Butay, traveled across the state to celebrate the success of the "Ready to Work" program with students, families, educators and community partners. These vibrant and heartfelt celebrations took place at schools including Kapolei High School, Leilehua High School, Kapa'a High School, Maui High School and Roosevelt High School.

The "Ready to Work" program is a collaborative initiative designed to prepare high school students for life after graduation by equipping them with essential soft skills and real-world work experiences. The program's focus on Competitive Integrated Employment ensures that students have the tools they need to pursue meaningful jobs in inclusive workplace settings.

Each celebration marked the culmination of months of student effort and growth. Participants showcased their accomplishments, ranging from internships with local

businesses, to mock interviews, resume-building workshops and skills demonstrations. These events highlighted not only the progress of the students, but also the strength of community partnerships and the commitment of educators and workforce development professionals statewide.

"Watching these students grow in confidence and ability has been truly inspiring," said Butay. "The 'Ready to Work' program demonstrates what's possible when schools, employers and state agencies work together to support our youth. These young adults are leaving high school prepared to pursue their goals with purpose, and that's worth celebrating."

The DLIR's involvement in the program supports its broader mission to foster a prepared and inclusive workforce in Hawai'i.

As the program ended for the year, the celebrations served as a powerful reminder of the value of community investment in youth development. With continued support and recognition, Hawai'i's "Ready to Work" graduates are poised to make meaningful contributions to the state's workforce and beyond.



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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