

## **Governor’s Military Advisory Committee on Army-Leased Lands**

February 10, 2026

Meeting Minutes

### **Attendees**

First Lady Jaime Green

William Ailā

Ryan Kanaka’ole

Kūhiō Lewis (excused)

Laurie McAllister Moore

Mahina Paishon

Ed Sniffen

Summer Sylva

Kali Watson (excused)

Noe Noe Wong-Wilson

Scott Glenn

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

The facilitator opened the meeting, welcomed participants and began by discussing the prior draft minutes from the December 22 and January 9 meetings. Members were asked to review and provide feedback so the minutes could be finalized and posted to the Engage Hawai’i website.

Participants noted that community members are actively checking the website for updates and expressed appreciation for returning to a regular posting schedule.

The group discussed establishing a consistent monthly meeting cadence to improve planning, transparency and coordination. Members supported identifying a recurring meeting date and providing agendas in advance whenever possible. The importance of timely draft minutes and public posting was reaffirmed.

Participants also discussed the potential value of longer-format meetings or workshop-style sessions in the future to allow deeper discussion of complex issues, particularly as negotiations and community engagement efforts progress.

## **II. Update on Federal Legislative and Budgetary Timeline**

Members received an overview of the current federal budget and legislative timeline, noting two parallel processes: the President's Budget request and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), with the general understanding that both should conclude by the end of 2026.

It was explained that the President's Budget proposal is expected in early 2026 and may include funding related to Mākua Valley and unexploded ordnance (UXO) cleanup. Based on prior discussions with federal officials, the Army may propose some amount of funding over a period of several years for a UXO "Center of Excellence," along with language related to the potential return of Mākua Valley and additional land acquisition authority.

Several participants expressed concern that the potential funding level could be significantly lower than prior cleanup cost estimates. For context, prior estimates for the Mākua cleanup were substantially higher, and inflation-adjusted comparisons with other sites, such as Kaho'olawe, suggest that full remediation could require significant funding.

Members noted that this anticipated proposal appears narrower in scope and funding level than the Governor's previously communicated comprehensive community benefits package. That package outlined a broader set of priorities, including substantial funding for cleanup and long-term stewardship, as well as additional measures intended to address environmental, cultural and infrastructure impacts across affected communities.

Participants emphasized that what may appear in the federal budget reflects the Army's preliminary proposal and does not constitute an agreement by the state.

Members discussed that federal budget proposals are subject to congressional review and modification. Congress may adjust funding levels, add provisions ("plus-ups"), or revise proposed language during the NDAA process. The state may also engage directly with the Army and Hawai'i's congressional delegation to communicate concerns about proposed funding levels and scope.

The group clarified key points regarding cleanup obligations:

- Under existing lease agreements, the military is required to conduct surface clearance on state-leased lands upon return.
- Cleanup obligations related to contamination, unexploded ordnance and hazardous materials are governed by federal law, including CERCLA.
- Cleanup requirements are not solely triggered by land return; in some cases, remediation obligations exist during ongoing use.
- Questions remain about the scope of subsurface contamination and long-term monitoring needs.

Members noted that no one is aware of a comprehensive statewide cost estimate for the cleanup of all affected military lands having been done. It was agreed that obtaining clearer estimates and maps of affected areas would be important for future discussions.

Participants also discussed the importance of hearing from the United States Army Pacific and involving Hawai'i's congressional delegation in future meetings to provide insight into federal legislative strategy and practical considerations within Congress.

### **III. MACRO Community Engagement Process and Timeline**

An overview of upcoming community engagement activities planned by MACRO was provided. Three open-house style meetings are scheduled for March on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island, with additional sessions tentatively planned later in the year on Maui, Kaua'i, and Hilo.

The stated goals of the open houses include:

- Increasing public understanding of military training, land use and environmental processes.
- Providing opportunities for residents to engage directly with military representatives and relevant agencies.
- Gathering community input to inform ongoing discussions.

The proposed format includes topic-based stations addressing subjects such as Hawai'i's strategic role, training land use, environmental and cultural resource management, and unexploded ordnance.

Members engaged in extensive discussion about the framing and purpose of these meetings. Several participants emphasized that military land use remains a highly sensitive issue in many communities, shaped by long-standing environmental damage, restricted access and intergenerational impacts. They noted that public engagement must be carefully designed to:

- Clearly articulate the purpose of engagement.
- Avoid the perception that the state is advocating on behalf of the military.
- Ensure that affected communities feel heard, particularly those with long-standing concerns related to environmental damage and land access.
- Provide clarity on how public input will be used.

Concerns were raised about ensuring that meetings do not unintentionally present a one-sided narrative focused only on current military practices without acknowledging historical impacts and community concerns.

Members stressed the importance of thoughtful facilitation, clear question design and transparency regarding how feedback that is collected will inform recommendations to the Governor. Participants emphasized that if these sessions are intended to inform state recommendations, then the advisory committee should help shape the engagement framework. Several participants offered to assist in reviewing engagement materials and refining the structure of the sessions.

Members also highlighted the need to avoid overburdening communities with repetitive meetings and to ensure that engagement efforts are meaningful. The importance of acknowledging both improvements in military practices and unresolved legacy issues was reiterated.

Participants recommended that accessible maps of affected lands be made available for committee review. Clarifying distinctions between state-leased lands, federally owned lands and areas under negotiation was identified as an important step for both internal understanding and public transparency.

There was agreement that additional coordination between staff and advisory committee members prior to the March sessions would be beneficial to ensure alignment and clarity.

#### **IV. Update and Input on Community Engagement**

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was not substantively addressed beyond the discussion incorporated above. Further refinement of the community engagement framework will be taken up in a future meeting.

#### **V. Discussion on the Technical Advisory Groups**

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was not substantively addressed. The committee previously discussed the potential formation of technical working groups to address issues such as cleanup scope, legal obligations, and governance structures for potential funding mechanisms. This discussion will be continued at a future meeting.

#### **VI. Next Steps**

The following next steps were identified:

- Members will provide feedback on draft meeting minutes from prior sessions to allow posting to the Engage Hawai'i website.
- The committee will explore establishing a regular monthly meeting schedule.
- Agencies will work to provide clearer maps and land classification materials for committee review.
- Consideration will be given to inviting members of Hawai'i's congressional delegation and other relevant stakeholders to future meetings.

- Advisory committee members and staff will coordinate to review and refine community engagement materials prior to the March open house sessions.
- Staff traveling to Washington, D.C., later in February will seek clarity on federal budget proposals and communicate that community engagement is ongoing and that no final State position has been determined.