



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • May 2026

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Our islands faced back-to-back Kona Low and severe weather storms in March and April that brought heavy flooding, damaged infrastructure and disrupted the lives of families across our communities. The response from our state agencies was immediate and unwavering — from the National Guard conducting emergency evacuations in helicopters and high-water vehicles and distributing thousands of gallons of clean water, to state public health nurses providing care on the North Shore and Moloka'i, to tax relief secured for residents and businesses who needed more time to get back on their feet.

Recovery is still underway, and my team is working to help families stabilize their lives. Our teams will continue to repair roads and infrastructure, test waterways and ocean waters for contamination and connect impacted residents with case managers who can help them navigate housing support, financial assistance and the long road ahead of recovery. If you or someone you know needs help, please call 211 to connect with disaster recovery services.

Our work does not stop at storm recovery. The challenges our communities face every day — affordability, the need for accessible healthcare, housing our homeless community and the growing threat of climate change — remain some of our top priorities. These recent storms are a reminder that climate change is not a future problem. It is here — and it is hitting our most vulnerable communities hardest.

We will continue to build a Hawai'i where every person has access to a place to call home, quality healthcare and the ability to thrive in their community. Those are the promises I made to the people of this state which remain the foundation of everything we do.

Mahalo for your strength, your aloha and your trust. We will get through this together.

Mahalo,

Governor Josh Green



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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State Agencies Come Together to Support Community Needs During Kona Low and Severe Weather Events

Always Ready, Always There: Hawai'i National Guard Stands Strong Through Spring Storms

Across three major storms in March and April 2026, citizen-soldiers and airmen of the Hawai'i Army National Guard and Hawai'i Air National Guard (HING) demonstrated their unwavering commitment to protecting their communities and 'ohana. In the aftermath of each weather event, the Guard supported state and county officials with high-water rescues and evacuations, dam observation, traffic control points, medical transport, freshwater support via large water tank trailers, debris clearance teams, damage assessments and aerial support.



HING Soldiers and Airmen assist the community with sandbag distribution in Waialua on April 7, 2026. At the request of civil authorities, HING is assisting with local emergency preparations by staging vehicles and equipment statewide in preparation for heavy rains and possible flooding due to incoming severe weather. Photo courtesy: U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Donald Bond.

They also distributed over 8,600 gallons of clean water, cleared more than 3,700 cubic yards of debris and helped 164 homeowners begin the long road to recovery. The Guard also assisted Maui County with over 68 damage assessments.

HING, the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Veterans' Services and Civilian Military Programs are a part of the Hawai'i Department of Defense (HIDOD). HIDOD's purpose is to be responsive in times of need and to provide safety and security. This applies to disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

DCCA Provides Educational Video, Assists People Filing Damage Claims

The Hawai'i Insurance Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) developed a Post-Disaster Insurance Claims Guide and instructional video on how to file an insurance claim.



The video was intended to help residents navigate the claims process after the March Kona Low Storms. People may also contact the Hawai'i Insurance Division at 1-844-808-DCCA (3222) or visit <http://cca.hawaii.gov/ins> for additional claim-filing tips, disaster recovery resources and assistance with insurance-related concerns.

HIEMA Interim Disaster Recovery Case Management Program Launched

In this recovery stage of the March Kona Low Storms, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) opened an interim Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP), which connected affected residents with trained Disaster Case Managers (DCMs) who were available to facilitate disaster recovery plans and address needs.

The program is free of charge and is led by the Global Empowerment Mission in coordination with community-based organizations to deliver services, including housing support, financial assistance, critical resources and damage assessments.

Residents impacted by the Kona Low disaster are able to reach out to the interim DCMP by calling 211 to begin the enrollment process. This allows DCMs to reach out to assess their needs and begin providing disaster recovery services. DCMs ensured language access services were available as well as coordinated with counties to ensure a cohesive and trauma-informed disaster response for residents.

HIEMA plans for and responds to both natural and human-caused emergencies. More information is available at ready.hawaii.gov.



Governor Green, Hawai'i County Mayor Kimo Alameda and other officials tour the flood damage at Greenwell Farms.

DOTAX Secures Tax Relief for Residents and Businesses

The Kona Low Storms caused many disruptions, one of which was preventing people from filing their tax forms. In response, Governor Green and the Department of Taxation (DOTAX) secured state and federal tax relief for affected residents and businesses.



Federal tax returns and tax payments originally due on or after March 10, 2026 are now due July 8, 2026. The state deadline to file taxes was changed from April 20, 2026 to July 20, 2026. Those who were affected by the storms may request a waiver of late file and/or late pay penalties and interest by completing and filing Form L-115, Tax Relief Request for State Declared Disasters. The department will accept Form L-115 until July 20, 2026, but taxpayers are urged to file their requests as soon as possible.



Damaged Roads Under Repair

The Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) has been conducting various post-storm work, such as pavement repair, drainage culvert, slope repairs and road restoration across O'ahu and other islands. Additionally, HDOT has asked the Legislature to provide \$15 million in emergency funding to clear streams throughout O'ahu and to focus on clearing the rivers to prevent further flooding while in this period of recovery.



Governor Green, Hawai'i County Mayor Kimo Alameda and other officials tour the flood damage at Greenwell Farms.

BLNR Action on Wahiawā Dam and Reservoir



Governor Green touring the Wahiawā Dam with a DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement officer.

The Wahiawā Dam water levels elevated to alarming heights during the heavy rains in March. Coupled with age and poor maintenance, there were major concerns of a dam failure which would have risked the lives of many residents, their homes and businesses.

After the March Kona Low Storms, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) voted to approve the acquisition of the parts of the Wahiawā Irrigation System that comprises the Wahiawā Reservoir for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). If the transaction is successful, the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity will be able to improve the irrigation system to fit modern standards.

The DLNR is responsible for managing public lands, water resources, ocean waters, navigable streams, coastal areas (except commercial harbors), minerals and further related matters.

HDOT remains diligent about infrastructure repairs, including this work remaining from the Kona one and two and April severe weather event:

- Construction of a 300-lineal-foot Glass Polymer Reinforced retaining wall next to Kamehameha Highway in 'Aiea. Estimated completion is May 4.
- Dredging of Kaukonahua Stream to restore original capacity. Estimated completion is mid-May.
- Draping of rockfall protection fencing over the slope above Kamehameha Highway at Waimea Bay. This is anticipated to continue through late summer.
- Culvert repair under Kiona'ole Road and the ramp to the H-3 from Kamehameha Highway in Kāne'ohe. Expecting to restore access to Kiona'ole Road by mid-May, access to the ramp by mid-June and overall completion of the repairs by mid-August.
- Rockfall mitigation work along Honoapi'ilani Highway near Honolulu Bay on Maui. It began in early April and will last through the summer. This was the area of several rockfalls during the storms.
- Guardrail repairs on the state roads in Upcountry, Maui along with tree removal in Kula. All are currently ongoing.

DOH Provides Medical Assistance Across the Islands

After a storm, floodwater, flood-carried mud and nearshore waters increase the risk of contamination as well as infection after skin contact. The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) has been testing sediment samples from the North Shore and recently confirmed that dangerous levels of pesticides or heavy metals were not present.

DOH previously announced the presence of *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Escherichia coli* (E. coli), *Enterococcus*, *Salmonella* and *Leptospira* bacteria in the same samples. In addition to testing water, the Department's Vector Control Branch has also been trapping and testing mosquitoes for disease risks.

For people who have come into contact with contaminated water or participated in post-storm clean-up, the DOH issued safety guidelines for proper gear and clean-up: <https://health.hawaii.gov/konalowstorm/>.

The DOH has also been providing additional medical support as public health nurses are providing care at North Shore, other locations on O'ahu and in East Molokai. For residents who lost their records in the flood, the DOH is expanding its services for people to request one free copy of birth, death, or marriage certificates using online services at vitrec.ehawaii.gov. During this time of great loss for residents, the DOH also has mental health guidance and references to services available on its website.



DOTAX Brings Pop-Up Tax Workshops to Waimea and Nā'ālehu

The Hawai'i Department of Taxation (DOTAX) remains committed to serving communities across Hawai'i by hosting two successful rural pop-up tax workshops in Waimea and Nā'ālehu on Hawai'i Island. These outreach events are designed to bring tax resources directly to residents who find it difficult to visit district offices, ensuring individuals and businesses have access to needed guidance - right where they live. One taxpayer remarked it takes her over four hours to drive to and from the Hilo or Kailua-Kona office and stated, "I received wonderful service and would highly recommend the tax services I received for the community."

The first workshop took place in Waimea, attracting community members seeking support with tax filing, online services and general tax questions. Attendees expressed appreciation for DOTAX's presence in their community. One resident shared his gratitude, noting that he felt "the state didn't forget about us," and others joined in the sentiments as participants welcomed the opportunity to speak face-to-face on tax issues.

DOTAX hosted a second workshop in Nā'ālehu, one of the most remote communities on Hawai'i Island. The event saw steady engagement, including conversations with approximately 16 residents about available tax services, online resources and filing assistance. A staff member reported that the outreach was well received by others within the Nā'ālehu Civic Center, including other state agencies that were excited about DOTAX's presence saying, "it's a great thing for their community." The collaborative atmosphere highlighted how valuable in-person



Stephanie Okumura and Duquesne (Duke) Hulihe'e working at the pop-up tax workshop. Photo courtesy: DOTAX.

services are in strengthening relationships between agencies and the communities they serve.

Both workshops reaffirmed DOTAX's commitment to meeting taxpayers where they are - especially in rural or underserved areas. By offering accessible, in-person support, DOTAX aims to reduce barriers, promote voluntary compliance and empower residents with the knowledge needed to navigate Hawai'i's tax system confidently.

DOTAX extends its warm appreciation to the Waimea and Nā'ālehu communities and the Hawai'i State Library for their hospitality and engagement. Additional outreach events are planned in July as part of DOTAX's ongoing effort to ensure every taxpayer feels supported, informed and connected.

Western Governors' Association Policy Forum



Governor Green hosted the Western Governors' Association Annual Policy Forum on Maui, bringing leaders together to talk honestly about what leadership looks like through disasters. New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham attended and took part in the policy discussions, adding a valuable perspective from her state's own disaster response experience. Leaders from across the country shared lessons learned, pushed for stronger coordination with our federal partners and focused on investing in long-term resilience.

Mahalo for Supporting our Annual Chili and Rice Fundraiser!



The Governor's Office is proud to announce that its annual Chili and Rice Fundraiser raised enough support to provide more than 10,700 meals for local families through the Hawai'i Foodbank. Last month's event brought together community members whose generosity made a meaningful difference for families facing hardship.

The Hawai'i Foodbank plays a critical role in ensuring that kama'āina have access to food and this partnership reflects the administration's ongoing commitment to supporting those most in need. A heartfelt mahalo to all who attended, as well as to the dedicated staff and volunteers whose hard work behind the scenes made it all possible!



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

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