

Kaka'ako Makai

The Governor's proposed settlement of past-due revenue in Kaka'ako Makai.

What is this about?

The Constitution of the State of Hawai'i says the state must give some of the revenue from use of public lands to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). There has been a dispute on how much OHA should get and that has led to several lawsuits over the years. The Hawai'i State Supreme Court has consistently ruled that the amount due to OHA is a political question and it is up to the legislature to settle the issue.

The Governor has proposed giving OHA 10 parcels of land in Kaka'ako Makai to settle the claim or money owed to OHA from the use of Public Land Trust Land from 1978 to 2012. This dispute is over money that by law should have been paid to OHA for revenue generated by that airports, state hospitals and public housing. The value of the proposed settlement is estimated at \$200 million dollars.

What would this do?

OHA supports many causes that benefit Native Hawaiians. The office supports college scholarships, programs for gifted and talented students and social service programs. The organizations we support leverage OHA's contribution with other grants to serve people from all walks of life. We support cultural events and programs to preserve our culture.

The parcels of land the Governor has proposed to transfer to OHA will become a source of revenue to help us grow these programs, and bring about positive change that will support Native Hawaiians, and all of Hawai'i.

Why OHA in Kaka'ako?

Many urban renewal projects are already planned for Kaka'ako, from Kamehameha Schools' Kaiāulu 'o Kaka'ako master plan to the redevelopment of the Ward Warehouse and Ward Centre by the Howard Hughes Corporation.

It is important for OHA to utilize the area in a culturally sensitive way, while honoring its history and culture. Our trustees have made a commitment to honor the guiding principles of the Kaka'ako Community Planning Advisory Council, a group of citizens who worked on a conceptual master plan for the area. The plan calls for open space, gathering places and shoreline access.

A diversified portfolio

The Kaka'ako lands would be just part of a diversified portfolio that includes Wao Kele o Puna rainforest on Hawai'i Island, and Waimea Valley on O'ahu along with an investment portfolio. This land has the potential to support other land purchases so future generations can benefit.

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FAQ:

Q: This area used to be a landfill. Is it safe to build on a landfill?

A: Yes, it was formerly a landfill. Many former landfills have been redeveloped, among them, Sydney Olympic Park in Australia. Areas of Hong Kong and Tokyo have been built on artificial islands. There are environmental concerns; however, there are many ways to mitigate any problems that arise. For instance, the Kaka'ako Waterfront Park has been developed and is safe for families and surfers despite being built atop a landfill. Golf courses parks and other facilities have been built on landfills around the world.

Q: Isn't this in a tsunami zone? Is it safe to build in a tsunami zone?

A: Many of Hawai'i's top resort properties are built in a tsunami zone. Kyo Ya has plans to build a new tower in the area of the Moana Hotel in Waikiki. Hilton is also building on its property. Today's building codes make it safe to stay in such buildings during a tsunami. Waikiki hotel guests are usually evacuated to higher floors in case of a tsunami.

Q: Why don't you take fishponds or other preservation land instead?

A: The current proposal from the governor calls for parcels in Kaka'ako. However, this land could be key to being able to support and preserve other land in the future.

Q: When will you start getting money from the land assuming the deal goes through?

A: Some of the parcels generate revenue, estimated at a little over a million dollars a year. However, leases vary on the parcels. Some expire in a few years from now and some are longer. OHA is committed to working with the community to implement a master plan.