

HB203/SB390 (OHA-2)

Request for State Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Funds for a Water Storage and Distribution System on the Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ (OHA) Agricultural Lands in Wahiawā

This bill requests the issuance of \$3 million in state general obligation bonds to support the construction of a water storage and distribution system on OHA’s agricultural lands in Wahiawā, O’ahu, and thereby promote a diversified agriculture model that may be critical to enhancing our local food security in the post-COVID era.

WHAT LAND DOES OHA OWN IN WAHIAWĀ, O’AHU?

In 2012, in collaboration with the Trust for Public Land, the City and County of Honolulu, the State of Hawai‘i, and others, OHA acquired 511 acres of agricultural lands surrounding the **Kūkaniloko Birthing Stones**, to protect the site by providing a buffer against development, and by ensuring that uses of the area are consistent with Hawaiian cultural values.

The **Kūkaniloko Birthing Stones** is an ancestral place of great kapu and is considered to be one of the most sanctified places in Hawai‘i. The five-acre site is the piko of O’ahu where the highest-ranking ali‘i were born. These stones and the surrounding areas were also places of learning for martial arts, astronomy, and other cultural practices.



Kūkaniloko Birthing Stones, Wahiawā, O’ahu

HOW WILL OHA-2 POSITIVELY IMPACT THESE LANDS AND PROMOTE LOCAL DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURE IN WAHIAWĀ?

In 2016, OHA engaged with Wahiawā community members and subject matter experts in cultural and natural resource management, agriculture, archaeology, business and marketing, education, Hawaiian culture, and other fields, in a three-year planning process to create a conceptual master plan for its 511 acres in Wahiawā. The resulting conceptual master plan sets the following high-level goals for the property:

- Exploration of diversified and culturally relevant agriculture;
- Contribution to Hawai‘i’s food security; and
- Protection of the Kūkaniloko Birthing Stones as well as adjacent watershed lands.

With agriculture as a driving component of this conceptual master plan, access to sufficient water is crucial for the realization of its goals. To this end, OHA has secured an allocation of one million gallons of water per week from the state Agribusiness Development Corporation. OHA has also committed \$475,000 of its own funds for the engineering and permitting of a system to store and distribute the allocated water. OHA-2 funds would be used for the construction costs of this storage and distribution system, to include two water tanks; the installation of necessary pumps, pipes, and fencing; and the relocation or removal of old irrigation and other infrastructure currently on the property.