

**LEGISLATIVE BIENNIUM GENERAL FUND BUDGET REQUEST FOR 2025**  
**KAHO`OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION**  
**January 2025**

**1. Request CIP Funding for Phase II of the Kaho`olawe Restoration and Resilience Center at Kihei in DLNR's Fiscal Year 2026 Administration's budget request**

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**Summary:** The KIRC has the unique opportunity to build the Kaho`olawe Restoration and Resilience Center at its currently base yard property located adjacent to the Kihei Small Boat Harbor. This project will not only consolidate and provide a single KIRC office on Maui but will also tell the story of Kaho`olawe's cultural significance, its ecological devastation and the efforts to restore and demonstrate our communities' resiliency to heal the damages of the past. Additionally, this facility will also create an additional revenue generating venue in the South Kihei corridor to assist in Maui's economic recovery, generate additional tax revenues and funding to assist in the continuing restoration efforts on Kaho`olawe.

**Background:** Act 119, SLH 2015, Item D-14 as amended by Act 124, SLH 2016 and corrected by Act 49, SLH 2017 authorized \$500,000 in general obligation bonds for the planning and design of an education center, exhibit area/visitor center and administration building for the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) in Kihei, Maui.

This new facility will be located on an 8.261-acre property controlled by the KIRC, situated on South Kihei Road. The new office/information center facility will replace currently leased office space to house the KIRC's full-time Maui-based employees. Another portion of the new facility will be devoted to the KIRC's historic and interactive exhibits about Kaho`olawe, with a community center, archive, kitchen, café, retail spaces, visitor center and workshops/classrooms.

In 2018, the KIRC finalized the conceptual drawings for this new facility and completed all the entitlement work needed to take this project to the next phase. The work completed included: reaffirming the existing Environmental Assessment, completing new shoreline assessment and traffic studies, and making an application for a Special Management Area permit from the Maui Planning Commission.

The next phase of the project is to develop the detailed drawings and plans necessary to build this project. This includes final construction drawings and specifications, planning and development of exhibits and archive storage, final planning, design for office layout, and final design of the building infrastructure (HVAC, network).

Additionally, this request includes construction efforts to expand the current boathouse to include a larger concrete pad and two additional covered wings for additional boat storage as well as creating a small educational pavilion and restroom facilities adjacent to the current boathouse.

**Request: Request \$4,250,000 in general obligation bond funds to complete final designs and planning for KIRC Education and Operations Center**

**Justification:** The KIRC is looking beyond the pandemic and the Maui wildfires. The present conditions provide an appropriate opportunity to begin the final design and eventual construction of the Center as it would be ready to welcome the return of visitors to Maui and to expand a new visitor destination in the South Kihei corridor. The influx of funding to start construction would help revitalize jobs on Maui and the raising of the new Center will become a beacon of hope to the community.

The supplemental appropriation of \$4,250,000 is necessary to continue this project that will create a

new facility in South Maui and will help create a new revenue generating destination in South Maui while at the same time creating a central base for all the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission's restoration efforts. It will create a unique center to document, research and educate the community on the environmental resiliency of Kaho`olawe and other areas across the state impacted by the effects of environmental damage, habitat degradation and climate change. The next phase of the project is to complete construction design and planning, develop a community-based thematic vision for the center and to expand the current boathouse facility to house and maintain multiple ocean vessels.

When completed, the KIRC' Kaho`olawe Restoration and Resilience Center will become the central location for all operations and support for the long-term management and restoration of Kaho`olawe. The Kihei Operation/Education Center is necessary to consolidate all the KIRC's operations to a single State-owned facility that will eliminate the need for leased office space in Wailuku, provide the KIRC with revenue generating opportunities unavailable on Kaho`olawe and provide a community outreach site to increase the public awareness on the efforts to restore Kaho'olawe. If the project is deferred, the KIRC operations will continue to be scattered across Maui, the KIRC will have to continue leasing office space in Wailuku and it will not be able to develop revenue generating opportunities that could lead to financial self-sustainability.

CIP Request	Amount	Description of Work
Planning	\$350,000	Update community planning documents and SMA permits
Design	\$3,000,000	Complete design process and construction drawings. Develop museum exhibition designs.
Construction	\$900,000	Expand current boathouse to include additional workspace and boat storage capabilities. Build a small educational pavilion with restroom adjacent to the boathouse.
Total	\$4,250,000	

**2. Request additional general operating funding and authorization to add one new position for KIRC in DLNR's Fiscal Year 2026 Administration's budget request.**

**Background:** In 2017 legislative request, the KIRC initially submitted a request for general funding for 19 temporary positions. Act 49 SLH 2017 authorized 15 temporary KIRC positions, which were the currently filled positions. Vacant positions were not funded.

In addition to protecting, restoring, and managing the resources of Kaho`olawe Island, the KIRC is also responsible for protecting the aquatic resources of the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve which includes the surrounding two miles of ocean. The Ocean Resource Specialists support this effort through the objective measurement, documentation, and restoration of Kaho`olawe aquatic resources. With current climate changes and effects of more severe weather conditions, a renewed effort is now being undertaken by the Ocean program on coastal reclamation, rehabilitation, and protection.

**Request: Add half-year general funds to support new KIRC field personnel in LNR 908/KIRC for and one (1) Ocean Resource Specialist II (\$27,000 FY26, \$54,000 FY27).**

**Justification:** The increasing impact of coastal erosion and severe weather along the shorelines of Kaho`olawe has increased the staff's focus on coastline stabilization and coastal wetland restoration efforts. These additional efforts need additional field support including additional staffing. The KIRC is requesting funding to establish one (1) Ocean Resource Specialist II to support on-island coastal management, restoration, and protection.

This request is for half-year funding in FY26 and full-year funding in the in FY27 as follows:

Position	FY26	FY27
Ocean Resource Specialist II	\$27,000	\$54,000

**3. Request additional general operating funding to design, build and deliver a new KIRC ocean vessel through a separate legislation request to the legislature.**

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**Background:** During the OHA Trustee Keoni Souza's confirmation hearing for KIRC Commissioner, Senator Lorraine Inouye, Chair of the Senate Water and Land Committee asked if KIRC needed funding for a new boat. KIRC staff responded that a new boat would be welcomed and would prepare a request for her consideration during the next legislative session.

The KIRC currently operates a 38' Almar landing craft which was purchased in 2007. The KIRC transports volunteers, materials, supplies and equipment from the Kihei Small Boat Harbor adjacent to the KIRC Boathouse in Kihei to the Honokanai`a Base Camp located on the southwest side of Kaho`olawe. The vessel is also used to conduct periodic patrol of the waters surrounding Kaho`olawe as well as support transportation needs to other areas on Kaho`olawe.

The KIRC staff developed specifications for a new vessel based upon their experiences operating the 'Ohua for the past 17 years and sought out possible vendors that could meet those specifications and inquire about possible pricing and shipping costs. Our best response so far has been for another 38' Almar landing craft build by North River Boats.

Based upon estimates received from various vendors and past experience in purchasing equipment for the current ocean vessel, the KIRC staff has developed an estimate of general funds (operating) that will be needed to replace the current vessel. KIRC staff will be approaching Senator Inouye to introduce separate legislation for this request. The following is a breakdown of the request:

General Fund Operating	Amount	Description
Design, construction and outfitting of a new 38' Almar Landing Craft	\$990,000	Quote provided by North River and includes marine testing and trailer
Shipping	\$60,000	Shipping from Oregon to Kahului
Additional safety equipment and lines	\$50,000	Lifejackets, life raft, mooring lines and other consumables
Contingency	\$100,000	10% contingency
Total	\$1,200,000	

**Request: Add \$1,200,000 in general funds (operating) for LNR 908 for FY2026 for a replacement KIRC ocean vessel**

**Justification:** The KIRC has been operating its current ocean vessel, `Ōhua, for the past 17-years. The initial design was based upon recommendations made by the manufacturer and the KIRC staff's past experience with its previous vessel, Hakilo. Since that time, the KIRC has shifted its primary transportation requirements from helicopters to ocean vessel in order to develop a more economical and reliable means to support the Kaho`olawe restoration requirements. This shift resulted in a significant increase in the `Ōhua's utilization resulting in an increase in wear and tear on the vessel. Additionally, the KIRC staff has observed in turbulent weather conditions between Maui and Kaho`olawe, most likely due to the impacts of climate change.

These changing conditions combined with the age of the vessel has led to significant down time for `Ōhua in the past few years. The KIRC staff has been innovative in finding and utilizing other vessels to support the continuing restoration efforts on Kaho`olawe, but without the heavy lift capabilities of the `Ōhua, to the KIRC's ability to conduct and sustain on-island projects and operations has been significantly impacted.

A new vessel would significantly support the KIRC's on-island operations and allow the staff to shift operations to a new vessel design that incorporates the additional lessons learned from operating the `Ōhua for the past 17 years. Thus, it will allow the staff to increase their operating capabilities. The KIRC's current limitation for utilizing volunteers on Kaho`olawe is based on the number of passengers that can be transported to and from Kaho`olawe on the `Ōhua. Currently, the KIRC staff has two qualified boat captains who can operate the `Ōhua. With a second vessel, the `Ōhua would become a backup to the new primary vessel and also provide additional personnel and supply transport when needed. This will increase the KIRC's functional flexibility and expand its operational capacity.