

32 LEGISLATIVE BIENNIUM GENERAL FUND BUDGET REQUEST FOR 2022
KAHO`OLAWA ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
December 2021

1. Restore funding from Act 140 SLH 2018 (\$100,00) eliminated due to COVID Budget

Background: Act 140 SLH 2018 appropriated \$100,000 in general funds for FY2019 to support on-island restoration efforts for Kaho`olawe. This funding was continued in Act 113 SLH 2019 for FY2020. For FY2021, continuation of this funding for the second year of the biennium budget was included in the Governor's Executive Budget and in HB2200 HD1 SLH 2020 but the second-year funding for FY2021 was removed in the SD amendment due to the impact of COVID. This request is to reestablish the funding authorized in Act 113 SLH 2019 as a critical, underfunded program established by Act 140 SLH 2018.

Request: Add \$100,000 in general funds to the KIRC budget to restore eliminated due to COVID

Justification: The purpose of these funds (per Act140 SLH2019) "for the support Kaho`olawe island reserve commission to effectively meet the unique challenges of restoring, preserving, and determining the appropriate uses of the Kaho`olawe island reserve for the people of Hawaii. Without the funding the KIRC will not be able to continue its innovative management regime. The Kaho`olawe island reserve commission's management and control of the Kaho`olawe is not only restoring the ecological damage on Kaho`olawe and protecting its endangered and rare flora and fauna but is also ensuring that the people of Hawaii can safely visit the Kaho`olawe island reserve. Without this funding the Kaho'olawe island reserve will not be able to support year-round field operations and thereby a consequential reduction in safety and the public access to Kaho`olawe, and a significant setback to the restoration efforts on Kaho`olawe."

2. Provide General Funds to fund a Cultural Resource Specialist II position.

Background: After a three-year effort to restore the Culture Resource Project Coordinator (CRPC) position, the funding and position was authorized in Act 140/SLH2018 and was authorized to be filled in 2019. We were in the process of recruiting and filling the position but many of the most viable candidates were already pre-occupied by other events occurring on Mauna Kea.

Staff was unable to find a candidate with the necessary qualifications and willing to relocate to Maui to take the unique position prior to the funding elimination for the position in the current fiscal budget.

The CRPC position was then eliminated in the FY2022 administrative budget, therefore the KIRC will be seeking to fund a new position to replace the previous duties occupied by the CRPC.

Request: Fund a new Cultural Resource Specialist II position.

Justification: HRS 6K-3 sets aside the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve for four specific purposes. One of the most significant and a key distinction between the KIRC and other conservation organization is the island, and its waters were set aside for the "Preservation and practices of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by native Hawaiians for cultural, spiritual, and subsistence purposes." The Cultural Project Coordinator assists the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) in its management of the historic and cultural resources in the Reserve by instilling traditional Native Hawaiian practices and knowledge in its day-to-day program management activities and tasks; oversees multiple preservation projects of cultural sites in the Reserve and coordinates the various requests for cultural use of the Reserve.

With the end of fulltime occupation on Mauna Kea, the conditions are better to recruit and hire full-time staffing to support the KIRC's cultural programs. This request is for the first-year funding for a Cultural Resource Specialist II (\$50,000) Position No. 112516. This position is necessary to review and coordinate the various requests to use the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve for Native Hawaiian cultural practices; conduct regular surveys and project coordination of the KIRC many cultural and archaeological preservation and protection projects and to help expand the KIRC's staff ability to institute traditional native Hawaiian practices and knowledge into its many programs.

3. Request to increase the KIRC's general fund appropriations in LNR 906 by \$500,000 for KIRC's on-island operations and logistical support.

Background: In the State's FY18/FY19 approved biennium budget, Act 49 SLH 2017, the KIRC was authorized 15 temporary positions and \$1,065,147 (FY18) and \$1,097,047 (FY19) in general funds for the management and restoration of the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve. In FY20, Act 5 SLH 2019 authorized 15 temporary positions and \$1,198,159 (FY20 and FY21) in general funds and Act 113 SLH 2019 added one additional temporary position (FY20 and FY21) and \$100,000 (FY20) in general funds. Act 88, SLH 2021 eliminated the additional funding and personnel established in Act 113 SLH 2019.

This request for additional funds for FY23 is to support on-island operations and logistical support. The additional funding is necessary to support volunteers, contractors and KIRC staff while on Kaho`olawe. This includes housing, meals, on-island transportation, repair and maintenance of buildings and infrastructure as well as safety equipment and supplies. Additionally, the funds are necessary to support the operations, repair, and maintenance of the KIRC's landing craft, which is the primary means of transporting people, supplies, and equipment to Kaho`olawe.

The KIRC is currently running its entire field operations from the remnants of the Kaho`olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund and small limited grants. Over the years field operations have been cut to reduce cost but still accomplish the KIRC's assigned goal of restoring the island of Kaho`olawe. Operations have been cut and repairs deferred to the point where the KIRC is currently operating on a razor thin margin and would not survive if any issue, problem, or disaster were to strike. The KIRC is still recovering from the impact of the island-wide wildfire in February 2020 that destroyed most of our field equipment.

4. Request \$72,000 in general funds in LNR 906 for a Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist II (KIR II) and Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist III (KIR III).

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. Those positions that were vacant were not funded.

The Kaho`olawe island Reserve Specialists support all KIRC field programs by operating and maintaining KIRC field assets, equipment, vehicles, and machinery as well as acts or assists as Field Team Leaders for KIRC volunteer work groups on Kaho`olawe. The positions also serve as KIRC boat crew and field escorts as needed. The positions are based at the KIRC Office on Maui and involve extensive fieldwork on Kaho`olawe requiring extended overnight stays. They are temporary exempt appointments subject to extensions authorized by the KIRC.

Request: Fund a new Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist III (Position No. 117430, \$48,000/year) and II position (Position No.117428, \$40,000/year).

Justification: Due to the vacancy of the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Specialist II and III positions in 2016, the KIRC was not able to include these positions with those authorized in Act 49. These positions are necessary to support necessary safety and logistic functions as well as on-island restoration efforts and sustainability field projects while on Kaho`olawe and act as boat crew while on KIRC vessels.

These positions are critically vital as the KIRC has observed a recent increase in the unpredictability and severity of weather and ocean conditions in the waters surrounding Maui and Kaho`olawe, most likely due to climate change and global warming. This has resulted in an increased need for additional manpower to safely and effectively operate the KIRC ocean vessel. The KIRC operates a landing craft between Maui and Kaho`olawe to transport staff, volunteers, materials, and equipment between the island to support the on-island restoration efforts. The current boat crew consists of the Maintenance and Vessel Operator and the Logistic Specialist, other KIRC staff augment the boat crew when available. There is a need for additional manpower to assist with handling cargo, operating lines and equipment and safety lookouts as staff have been encountering rougher weather conditions and more boat traffic between Kaho`olawe and Maui.

The current Kaho`olawe field teams also need additional field support as staff have been successful in expanding restoration efforts to create more native dryland forest habitats, expand beach restoration and shoreline protection efforts, cultivate food sustainability, and increase on-island water generation, collection, storage, and distribution systems.
