

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR



October 13, 2025

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)
Attention: Habitat Conservation Planning
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative second draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

To whom it may concern:

Please accept our letter in support of the draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) submitted by Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC).

It is our understanding that KIUC developed the draft HCP in close coordination with and under guidance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and DOFAW over several years, and the draft was reviewed by technical experts from both agencies multiple times. This second draft addresses comments received from the public, the Endangered Species Recovery Committee (ESRC), USFWS and DOFAW.

KIUC has demonstrated a strong commitment to conservation of the nine covered species—including the Newell's shearwater, Hawaiian petrel, band-rumped storm-petrel, Hawaiian stilt, Hawaiian duck, Hawaiian coot, Hawaiian common gallinule, the Hawaiian goose, and green sea turtles—by implementing most of the HCP prior to it being finalized and approved. The comprehensive conservation strategy includes six distinct conservation measures designed to provide a net environmental benefit to these species over the 50-year permit term.

The HCP's powerline collision minimization efforts, which include reconfiguration to reduce wire layers and height, static wire removal, and installation of reflective and LED bird flight diverters, have shown promising results. Initial monitoring data indicates KIUC is on target to meet the HCP goal of reducing seabird powerline collisions by 66.4%. These minimization projects, completed island-wide in 2024, will be maintained for the full 50-year term.

Beyond powerline improvements, the HCP's conservation strategy includes significant commitments to habitat management at twelve conservation sites featuring intensive predator control, predator exclusion fencing, social attraction methods, and invasive plant control. These measures are expected to substantially increase seabird populations on Kaua'i. Additionally, KIUC will continue to fund the Save our Shearwaters (SOS) Program at \$300,000 annually to support rehabilitation and release of grounded seabirds and waterbirds.

The plan also incorporates innovative programs for green sea turtle protection, including nest detection and shielding on beaches with suitable habitat within view of KIUC streetlights, and light minimization measures at KIUC facilities and streetlights to reduce light attraction for both seabirds and sea turtles.

KIUC's commitment to adaptive management throughout the permit term demonstrates a thoughtful approach to achieving the biological goals and objectives of the HCP while ensuring safe and reliable electrical power for Kaua'i.

Based on historical data and the comprehensive conservation strategy outlined in the draft, the HCP should be successful in increasing seabird populations at conservation sites and reducing powerline collisions. We encourage you to approve this well-researched HCP as drafted so KIUC can move forward with full implementation of this important conservation program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek S.K. Kawakami', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Derek S.K. Kawakami
Mayor, County of Kaua'i