



October 23, 2025

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry & Wildlife
Attn: Habitat Conservation Planning
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Support for KIUC's Second Draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

Aloha kākou,

On behalf of the Kaua'i Chamber of Commerce, I write in support of Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative's (KIUC) Second Draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Chamber's mission is to support the economic vitality of our island while honoring our collective responsibility to protect the natural and cultural resources that define Kaua'i. The HCP represents a balanced and proactive framework that advances both goals.

Shared responsibility for species conservation

The HCP provides a science-based approach to protecting threatened and endangered seabirds and waterbirds through measures such as predator control, colony management, light minimization, and powerline modification. These actions—many of which KIUC has already implemented ahead of approval—demonstrate a sincere commitment to environmental stewardship. Conservation is not the responsibility of government alone. It requires leadership from utilities, businesses, and community partners, and the HCP reflects that shared kuleana.

Energy reliability as an economic necessity

Reliable electricity is the backbone of Kaua'i's economy. Small businesses, healthcare facilities, agricultural producers, schools, and hospitality industries all depend on uninterrupted power. Every major outage threatens jobs, food security, public safety, and basic quality of life for residents. By modernizing infrastructure, undergrounding or shielding powerlines, and reducing wildlife impacts, KIUC's HCP helps protect our economy while also protecting species. This is not simply an environmental document—it is an economic resilience plan.

Renewable energy and conservation must move forward together

Hawai'i's clean energy laws require 100% renewable electricity by 2045. KIUC has been a statewide leader, with some of the highest renewable penetration levels in the country. However, we also recognize the reality that conservation goals and renewable development

can sometimes conflict—new power infrastructure, energy storage sites, and lighting systems can impact sensitive species and habitats. The HCP is essential because it provides a structured process to minimize and mitigate those impacts rather than halt progress or force unintended environmental trade-offs.

Federal science agencies—including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA, and the U.S. Geological Survey—have acknowledged that climate change is already affecting native species by altering habitat, increasing predation pressures, and degrading coastal breeding areas. That reality makes it more important—not less—that Hawai‘i continues transitioning to cleaner energy while investing in targeted habitat protection and species recovery. KIUC’s HCP strikes that balance.

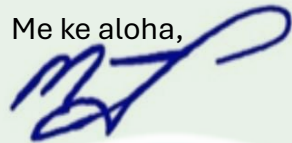
Why timely approval matters

The HCP includes long-term monitoring, adaptive management, and transparent public reporting. It ensures KIUC remains accountable to conservation goals while also allowing essential utility services to continue. Timely approval will help lock in mitigation funding, regulatory certainty, and ongoing protection for seabirds and their habitats.

Mahalo for your leadership and for recognizing that Kaua‘i’s people and native species depend on thoughtful, collaborative planning. Should you have any questions, I would be happy to assist at mark@kauaichamber.org or (808) 855-8066.

With appreciation and respect,

Me ke aloha,



Mark Perriello
President & CEO