

**EVENT:** 2023 Annual Hawai'i State Association of Counties Conference

**DATES:** September 20 to 22, 2023

**ADDRESS:** 2641 Poipu Rd, Koloa, HI 96756

**ATTENDEE:** Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, Councilmember, District 6

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## **OVERVIEW**

The Hawai'i State Association of Counties consists of the legislative bodies and mayors of the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, City & County of Honolulu, and Kaua'i. It is the Hawai'i chapter of the National Association of Counties.

As stated in HSAC's Bylaws, the purpose of the organization shall be coordination of county programs in the best interest of the people of the State of Hawai'i through cooperation of the legislative bodies of the several counties of the State; the creation of more practical and efficient county legislation, administration and procedures; the provision of a single source of information in regard to all counties which shall be available to the Governor, the Legislature and to all proper persons and officials and a general improvement in the conduct of county government.

Annually, county officials from across Hawai'i convene in the HSAC conference to address mutual challenges affecting their respective communities. As stated by Mayor Derek Kawakami: the most pressing issue currently is the recovery of the Maui community. Emphasizing the collective spirit of unity, counties throughout the state have expressed their commitment to assist Maui as it rebuilds both physically and in spirit. This solidarity was evident among all attendees of the conference.

The theme for this year's event, "He Ali'i ke Āina," translates to "the land provides, so we need to do all to ensure the land is taken care of." This underscores the importance of sustainable stewardship and the intimate relationship Hawai'i has with its land. The overarching objective of the conference is to foster constructive dialogue, facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas, forge new connections, and explore avenues for the betterment of Hawai'i's future. The aim is to establish initiatives that benefit both current and future generations of Hawai'i's populace.

This year's conference was held in Koloa, Kaua'i. The majority of the conference sessions were held at the Koloa Landing Resort 2641 Poipu Rd, Koloa, HI 96756. The conference began September 21 and ended on September 22, 2023.

### **Thursday, September 21, 2023**

#### ***Official Opening Day***

***5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.***

#### ***Welcome Reception***

The Welcome Reception for the HSAC conference was hosted by former Kaua'i Mayor and current Kaua'i Councilmember Bernard Carvalho, and included councilmembers from each of the four Hawai'i counties.

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In attendance was Matt Chase, the CEO/Executive Director of the National Association of Counties (NACo), and NACo's President and 1st Vice President: Mary Jo McGuire and James Gore, respectively. Commissioner McGuire, inaugurated as the National Association of Counties (NACo) President in 2023, has served Ramsey County, Minnesota since 2012, with a prior 16-year stint in the Minnesota State Legislature. She is a key figure both in NACo's Executive Board and the Association of Minnesota Counties. NACo 1st Vice President Gore represented California's Wine Country for eight years, navigating challenges from wildfires to floods. An influential voice on housing, homelessness, and behavioral health, James also steered the California State Association of Counties as President during the pandemic.

The reception was not just a ceremonial event but a melting pot of ideas, collaborations, and discussions, setting the stage for constructive deliberations throughout the conference.

### **Friday, September 22, 2023**

#### ***Panel Discussions***

**10:15AM - 11:15AM**

#### ***Panel: Leveraging Resources to Support County Functions with Innovative Financial Technology***

##### **Introduction:**

This panel was conducted by an affiliate of the National Association of Counties, who provided attendees with a comprehensive overview of liquidity management. With the evolving financial climate, understanding and harnessing the power of cash is crucial. The presentation aimed to deliver insights into optimizing cash management operations and discovering new revenue streams.

##### **Core Content:**

The presentation highlighted multiple key areas:

1. **Cash-flow Forecasting:** techniques for anticipating incoming and outgoing cash, ensuring adequate funds to meet obligations.
2. **Stress Testing:** potential vulnerabilities in financial systems.
3. **Banking Relationships in a Rising Rate Environment:** evaluating and optimizing relationships with banks, focusing on producing new earnings from cash deposits.

The presentation underscored that leveraging innovative financial technology can maximize the power of cash. This is vital in the current era for offsetting inflation, bridging budgetary shortfalls, supporting frontline workers, and financing vital community projects.

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About the Speaker:

Garrett Macdonald, an expert in the field, presented the session. Since joining the company three+one in 2015, Macdonald has been instrumental in forging partnerships with public officials, focusing on generating public value via increased interest earnings and savings. With his cooperative work alongside governing bodies and financial institutions, he has ushered in strategic initiatives that reduce costs for the public sector.

Conclusion:

The panel was a convergence of timely information and expert insights, equipping us with the knowledge to navigate and leverage the power of cash in challenging financial times.

**11:15AM - 1:00PM**

***Panel: Legislative Forum***

Introduction:

In the legislative forum, attendees were provided an update on Hawai'i's 2023 Legislative Session and offered a sneak peek into potential legislative items for 2024. Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi, Speaker of the House Scott K. Saiki, Representative Luke A. Evslin, and Representative Daynette "Dee" Morikawa each gave a summary of the session, addressing pivotal issues such as emergency management, fiscal responsibility, and the Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL). Additionally, a question and answer session enabled members of the audience to seek clarity on matters like clean water and the Lahaina fires.

About the Speakers:

**Ron Kouchi:** Appointed by Governor Linda Lingle in 2010, Ronald D. Kouchi has since been elected as the senator representing Kaua'i and Ni'ihau. Senator Kouchi became President of the Hawai'i State Senate in 2015.

**Scott Saiki:** A representative for House District 25, Scott Saiki was born in Honolulu and raised in Kailua. With academic accolades from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Saiki entered political office in 1994. Currently, he's the Speaker of the House, a role he assumed in 2018.

**Luke Evslin:** A native to Kaua'i, Luke A. Evslin was appointed in 2023 by Governor Josh Green to represent District 16. Previously, he served on the Kaua'i County Council.

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Dee Morikawa: Representative Dee Morikawa began her career with Kaua'i's Department of Parks & Recreation. Elected to the Hawai'i House of Representatives in 2011, Morikawa has served various leadership roles, notably as the House Majority Floor Leader since 2018.

Conclusion:

The forum provided invaluable insights into Hawai'i's legislative scene. With an eye towards the 2024 Legislative Session, the forum contextualized the collective expertise and dedication of Hawai'i's leadership.

**1:15PM - 2:15PM**

***Panel: Introduction to Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program***

Introduction:

The Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program remains at the forefront of establishing vital, long-term partnerships aiming to bolster resilience, conserve natural resources, and facilitate sustainable land and water uses in neighboring communities. In the Fiscal Year 2023, the REPI program displayed its commitment to the cause by allocating close to \$27 million to champion REPI and REPI Challenge projects across Hawai'i. These projects, driven by significant external contributions, synergize with other federal conservation and resilience programs.

About the Speakers:

Kristin Thomasgard: Kristin Thomasgard has been the Program Director for the DOD's REPI Program since 2013. Under her leadership, the REPI program has achieved impressive feats, conserving over 1.1 million acres of land across 35 states and territories.

Susan Veazey: Susan Veazey serves as a Project Manager at the Western Regional Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. Veazey's tenure includes roles at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and executing federal grants for California localities.

Lena Fowler: Lena Fowler was the first Native American Chair of the Coconino County Board of Supervisors. She has experience with the REPI program in her own County, particularly with assistance for Native American communities.

Carlos Castillo: A specialist in environmental and land-use planning, Carlos Castillo delves deep into the socio-economic and environmental intricacies of planning, particularly in the Pacific Region. His multifaceted experience spans across the public, private, and NGO sectors.

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Conclusion:

The forum demonstrated the potential of the REPI program and its sweeping impact in the Pacific region. Notably, the opportunities presented by the REPI program could be transformative for regions like Kalihi Valley within my Council district which is adjacent to Fort Shafter. There have been several brushfires on the 'Ewa ridge of Kalihi Valley next to Fort Shafter, and the kinds of environmental management programs that REPI funds could be helpful to reduce fire risk and promote public safety.

**2:30PM - 3:30PM**

***Panel: Hawai'i's Affordable Housing Crisis: Sharing and Investigating Possible Solutions***

Introduction:

Affordable housing remains a significant concern in today's socio-economic landscape, with the generally accepted benchmark being that a household should spend less than 30% of its income on shelter and utilities. However, escalating housing costs force many to forgo other essentials, affecting their capacity to remain in their homes, accumulate generational wealth, or actively contribute to their communities. The 30% benchmark may not be realistic in the current economic environment. Addressing this crisis demands the collective efforts of governmental bodies, nonprofit organizations, private entities, and the community at large. In this session, officials shared insights, discussed potential solutions, and shedded light on county-specific initiatives undertaken to combat the affordable housing predicament.

About the Speakers:

**Dean Minakami:** As the Interim Executive Director for the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC), Dean Minakami shoulders the responsibility of financing and developing affordable housing throughout Hawai'i. Minakami, equipped with over 25 years of experience in planning and development.

**Adam Roversi:** Since 2019, Adam has been at the helm of the Kaua'i County Housing Agency. Prior to this role, he served as the Deputy County Attorney, specializing in general civil litigation.

**Kali Watson:** Kali Watson's appointment as Chairman of the Hawaiian Homes Commission in 2023 by Gov. Josh Green marks his second stint, having previously served from 1995 to 1998. During his earlier tenure, Watson facilitated the development of over 3,100 residential lots on Hawaiian Home Lands and executed a \$600 million State settlement.

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**Conclusion:**

The affordable housing forum was a convergence of expert insights and passionate dialogue aimed at devising actionable solutions for the pressing affordable housing crisis. Attendees were provided a holistic view of the challenges and potential remedies in the housing sector, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts to drive impactful change.

***6:00PM - 9:00PM***

***Closing Ceremony and Dinner***

The HSAC conference culminated in a closing ceremony at a ranch owned by former Kaua'i County Council Chair Arryl Kaneshiro. Attendees included representatives from all four Hawai'i counties. This included a gamut of Councilmembers, stakeholders, and various County Officials, underscoring the conference's collaborative environment.

Kaneshiro and Kaua'i Councilmembers Bernard Carvalho and Billy DeCosta emphasized the importance of sustained dialogue and collaboration. The event underscored the shared vision of all attendees: to drive Hawai'i forward, capitalizing on the collective knowledge and collaboration fostered during the conference.

In closing, the ceremony reinforced the commitment of Hawai'i's leaders to continue their conversations and collaborations, ensuring the state's progress and prosperity.

City Council  
City and County of Honolulu

# CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 09/29/2023

Traveler: Tyler Dos Santos-Tam

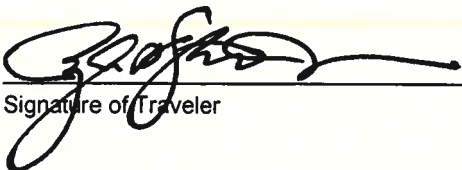
Event: Hawaii State Association of Counties 2023 Conference *in Maui*

Location: 2641 Poipu Rd, Koloa, HI 96756 *Kauai, HI*

Dates: From September 20 *21* To September 22 *, 2023*

Description	Amount	Notes:
1. Registration Fee	482.02	Early bird rate
2. Airfare	136.79	
3. Hotel	506.05	
4. Meals		
5. Ground Transportation	183.47	National Car Rental
6. Tips		
7. Other	22.87	Gas
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	1331.20	

This is to certify that the above data, based upon receipts submitted to Council Administrative Support Services via a CCLTRVL02 form, is accurate. Further, I am claiming reimbursement for expenses associated with a trip in which City business was conducted and personal funds were used to advance payment:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Traveler

10.6.23  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date