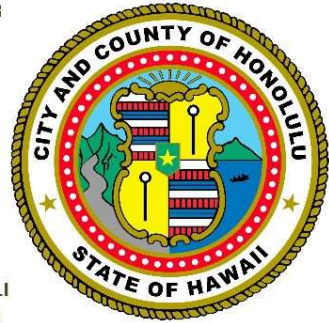


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ESTHER CITY COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 3

KIA'ĀINA



ĀHUIMANU | HE'EIA | HA'IKŪ | KĀNE'OHE | MAUNAWILI
KAILUA | OLOMANA | ENCHANTED LAKE | WAIMĀNALO

January 6, 2021

**Quality of O'ahu Water Supply
Top Priority in 2022**



Photo Credit: Cory Lum/Civil Beat

I agree with Ernie Lau, Chief Engineer and Manager of the Board of Water Supply, as he rearticulated in his [Civil Beat community column](#), that O‘ahu’s future water supply requires everyone’s cooperation and that it is time for the U.S. Navy to relocate its fuel away from the aquifer at Red Hill as the only acceptable solution to protect O‘ahu’s drinking water.

On December 15, 2021, the Honolulu City Council held a special hearing on the ongoing water crisis at Red Hill. The Council approved [Resolution 21-276 FD1](#), which I introduced, and which calls for the immediate defueling, permanent removal, and relocation of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Underground Storage Tanks by the U.S. Navy. The Council also heard [Bill 48](#), which would require a City permit to operate an underground storage tank system holding more than 100,000 gallons. Under Bill 48, which passed its first reading, a permit would not be granted unless the operator could demonstrate that the tank would not leak during its operating life.

Since the hearing, more information has come to light about the risk the fuel storage tanks and pipelines pose to our island's groundwater resources, and I continue to be disappointed in the U.S. Navy and Federal government's response to the ongoing crisis and failure to take full responsibility. The State Department of Health recently affirmed the Governor's order to shut down the red hill fuel tanks, submit a plan to defuel the tanks, and then defuel the tanks. The Hawai'i Congressional delegation is now supporting the order to plan and execute the safe removal of the fuel. The Navy has vocalized their objections to draining the fuel entirely and if the Navy continues to protest the order and pursues a case in circuit court, swift administrative action by the Biden Administration and congressional action by the U.S. Congress must be taken.

Mahalo nui to the Board of Water Supply and community advocates for their long-standing and steadfast commitment to protecting our water resources. I will continue to work with my colleagues to protect our most invaluable resource-- Ola I Ka Wai.

**Affordable Housing & Affordable Housing
Fund Application Due Feb. 11**



Maunakea Marketplace Apts. in Chinatown, an Affordable Housing Fund project.

As the Honolulu Board of Realtors' December 2021 Monthly Housing report demonstrated, Oahu's median housing prices continue to climb. The median price for a single-family home on O'ahu was \$1,050,000 million, and \$485,000 for a condo.

It will take a multitude of tools to increase the supply of affordable housing, including sufficient funding and incentives by the City and the state. Last year, Chair Tommy Waters and I secured an additional \$170 million in funding, for a total of more than \$250,000,000, in the City's capital budget for a variety of affordable housing projects and programs. Additionally, the Council recently passed [Resolution 21-192](#), which would pose a question to the voters on the 2022 election ballot whether to increase the percentage of Honolulu's estimated real property tax revenues, appropriated annually for the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), from half of a percent to one percent.

Most recently, the City's Department of Community Services also announced that a solicitation for AHF is now open for applications. The long awaited solicitation was recently published and the City may award as much as \$40 million in Affordable Housing Fund grants. I highly encourage non-profits and developers to apply for funding for the construction, renovation, or acquisition of affordable rental housing projects for households earning 60% of the Area Median Income or less. Interested parties can find the solicitation on the "State of Hawaii – Hawaii Awards & Notices Data System (HANDS)" webpage <https://hands.ehawaii.gov/hands/opportunities>. Deadline for the submission of project proposals will be February 11, 2022. Please share with your contacts, especially those that may be interested in projects for District 3.

Finally, I continue to work with community leaders in Waimānalo, as well as representatives from the City administration to address the homeless issues specific to Waimānalo, and to increase homeless services and affordable housing in the area. We have specifically discussed the encampment near Kalanianaʻole highway and other areas and solutions specifically targeted at those families. I also continue to work with the City Departments of Land Management and Community Services to identify and conduct due diligence on certain state lands in Waimānalo that might be suitable for temporary housing for our homeless community.

I look forward to continuing to work with the City administration to solidify the City's affordable housing and homeless action plans and as the Housing and the Economy Chair, I anticipate holding committee hearings to get updates on these plans early in 2022.

**City's Agricultural Grants Program to
Start in Early 2022**



Photo Credit: Nate Yuen

In May 2021, I was pleased to see my first legislation, [Res 21-079, CD1, FD1](#), urging the establishment of a City Agricultural Grants program, pass the full City Council. I was also able to secure \$5 million, with help from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund the program. My objective for this resolution was to support local farmers, promote economic diversification, and strengthen food security. I am excited that the Office of Economic Revitalization is working hard on developing a solicitation for Level 1 grants, which will be posted in the first quarter of this year. Level 2 and 3 grant solicitations will be announced shortly thereafter.

You may also be interested in related developments dealing with food hubs and food systems. Please see: [Hawaii Food Hubs Get \\$1 Million for Statewide Expansion](#) and [Kamehameha Schools to Invest in \\$10 million in Hawaii's Food Systems](#)

**Community Development Block Grant
Applications Due January 21**



Photo Credit: Honolulu Star-Advertiser

For several months, I have raised questions over the City's management of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) funds as all funds were being allocated to City government operations and projects.

That is why I am pleased that for the first time in many years the City is making CDBG funds available to non-profit organizations. The Department of Community Services will be awarding up to \$790,000 in CDBG funds for FY 2023 for eligible public service and economic development projects. Priority will be given to projects that provide employment services, such as job training; services for seniors; and/or non-governmental educational services. Applicants can apply for grants between \$100,000 and \$200,000. Interested parties can find the solicitation on the "State of Hawaii – Hawaii Awards & Notices Data System (HANDS)" webpage <https://hands.ehawaii.gov/hands/opportunities/opportunity-details/20853>. Deadline to apply is January 21, 2022. Please encourage non-profits to apply.

It is my objective to continue to advocate that the majority of CDBG funds will be made available to non-profit organizations for future fiscal years.

City Needs to Fight for its Fair Share of Federal Funding

WANT TO HELP THE CITY FIGHT FOR MORE FEDERAL FUNDING?



The City and County of Honolulu is looking for qualified individuals to join its grants team to compete for more federal and private grant funding.

Open positions :

Grants Administrator

Grants and Data Administrator

Community and Data Specialist

Administrative Specialist



APPLY NOW

Visit oneoahu.org/join-our-team and send a 1-page cover letter, resume, and 3 current references to oeer@honolulu.gov.

I believe that the City and County of Honolulu can do better in competing for federal funding to help core government services and help improve the quality of life for our communities. Last year I was able to secure \$200,000 in the City's Operating Budget to kick start a federal grants team through the Office of Economic Revitalization. Currently, the Office of Economic Revitalization is looking for qualified individuals to join their grants team to compete for more federal and private grant funding. The office is looking for a Grants Administrator, Grants & Data Administrator, Community and Data Specialist, and Administrative Specialist. To learn more about these jobs, please go to <https://www.oneoahu.org/join-our-team>.

If you are part of a non-profit organization, you too are eligible for federal grant funding, including COVID-19 related funding. Please go to: <https://www.grants.gov> to learn more about federal grants. Agencies that you may be interested in include: [the Economic Development Administration](#), [the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Office](#), and the [Administration for Native Americans](#).

**2021 Year in Review: Councilmember
Kia‘āina Introduced/Cointroduced
Legislation and/or Significant Amendments**



- [Resolution 21-023](#), Adoption of the Resolution and Findings of Fact to adopt a revised Oahu General Plan - adopted December 1, 2021. I was able to successfully reincorporate affordable housing language and encouraged the administration to provide an updated map for clarity.
 - [Resolution 21-079](#), Urging the establishment of a City Agricultural Grants Program - adopted May 5, 2021.
 - [Resolution 21-100](#), Urging the disaggregation of data collection and reporting of Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander and Asian race categories - adopted June 30, 2021.
 - [Resolution 21-104](#), Supporting and adopting goals to support investment in broadband infrastructure that supports equitable access to internet services - adopted June 2, 2021.
 - [Resolution 21-132](#), Renaming Waimānalo Bay Beach Park to Hūnānāniho - adopted July 7, 2021.
 - [Resolution 21-147](#), Commemorating the centennial anniversary of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and committing the City to play a role in furthering the intent of the Act - adopted September 8, 2021.
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- [Resolution 21-154](#), Urging the removal of Hā'iku Stairs - adopted September 8, 2021.
- [Resolution 21-187](#), Urging the re-opening of COVID-19 community testing sites - adopted September 8, 2021.
- [Resolution 21-189](#), Urging the re-opening and expansion of COVID-19 isolation and quarantine locations - adopted September 8, 2021.
- [Resolution 21-193](#), Urging the reinstatement of safe travels negative pre-test for domestic and international travels regardless of vaccination status - adopted September 8, 2021.
- [Resolution 21-276](#), Urging the immediate defueling, permanent removal, and relocation of Red Hill Storage tanks - adopted December 15, 2021.
- [Bill 27](#), Requiring Special Management Use permit applicants to present its project to area Neighborhood Boards - adopted August 11, 2021.
- [Bill 38, CD1](#), Prohibiting most commercial activities at City managed parks and City-owned and -operated rights of way in Waimānalo. I anticipate that Bill 38 will move forward for its final hearing in the Parks and Recreation Committee on January 13, 2022, and its third and final Council reading on January 26, 2022.
- [Bill 40](#), Relating to Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) - adopted December 1, 2021. I successfully inserted language that would require that a portion of the City's newly established TAT be set aside into a special account to mitigate impacts of visitors on public facilities and natural resources.

Legislation Needing your Feedback



Photo Credit: Honolulu.gov

These measures continue to move through the City Council's legislative process. I am interested in your feedback, please email me the provisions you support or oppose at ekiaaina@honolulu.gov. Specific recommendations are greatly appreciated.

- [Bill 41](#) is anticipated to be heard on January 20, 2022 at a special committee meeting of the Committee on Zoning and Planning, of which I am Vice-Chair. The Department of Permitting and Planning's proposed CD1 can be found [here](#). It is my hope that there will be an agendaized draft proposal by Committee Chairman Brandon Elefante, which will likely not be available until a week before the hearing. Please check in at this link as the hearing date approaches for any proposed amendments: <https://hnlldoc.ehawaii.gov/hnlldoc/measure/2007>
 - [Bill 48](#), which would require a City permit to operate an underground storage tank system, such as the system at Red Hill.
 - [Bill 49](#), which would establish a new property tax classification for vacant residential units that have been unoccupied for more than 180 consecutive days during the previous tax year.
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Community Outreach



Zoom discussion with former Department of Facility Maintenance Director Roger Babcock, Storm Water Quality Director Randall Wakumoto, and Kailua Neighborhood Board member Levani Lipton, related to storm drainage improvements at Ka'elepulu stream in Kailua.

One of the most important jobs as your Councilmember is to make sure that you are able to reach me with your inquiries, identify issues, or to share your concerns. You can either email me at ekiaaina@honolulu.gov or call me at (808) 768-5003. You may also want to follow me on my [Facebook page](#).

If you want to contact City agencies directly, you can also utilize the City's 311 mobile application, which provides a free, simple, and intuitive platform empowering people to report potholes, broken streetlights, cracked sidewalks, illegal dumping, vandalized/broken signs and more via your smartphone. Please note that this app serves as a tool for residents to request City services and report non-emergency issues, which will then be reviewed by the appropriate City department and assigned.

You can also access this service through the City's website [here](#) or call the City's information hotline at: (808) 768-CITY (2489).

Wishing you all a safe and productive Hau'oli Makahiki Hou!

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Councilmember Esther Kia'āina, District 3

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