



Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. As the governor's office works to become paperless, the newsletter will be available on-line and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at [governor.hawaii.gov](http://governor.hawaii.gov) to subscribe to this newsletter. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check [www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge](https://www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge) for daily activities.

## From the governor: Protecting what's special about Hawai'i

**Our Hawai'i — like nowhere else on Earth.** We say it and live it every day. We're the most diverse, the healthiest state, but we still have a host of challenges. This issue of Capitol Connection focuses on Gov. David Ige's Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative and the progress we're making, the National Governors Association conference in Washington, D.C. and talks with the Trump administration.

**Q. What was your approach in meetings with the Trump administration — especially on health care and sustainability?**

**A.** My job is to represent Hawai'i's interests, to reach out to anyone who might help the state and to put politics aside. I explained to some Trump cabinet members why Hawai'i is unique and needs to have a different relationship or interaction with the agency than they might otherwise have. As for President Trump, what you see on TV is what you get. He did express interest in working with the governors.

**Q. Are you concerned about the future of the Affordable Care Act for Hawai'i?**

**A.** Our commitment is to assure that all who get coverage today can continue to get coverage. Hawai'i has a long history of providing medical care through the state's 1974 Prepaid Health Care Act, under which 90 percent of the population has health insurance. I believe Hawai'i will be affected less severely than some states by any changes. Our perspective is how do we take the best of both worlds, to preserve what has helped the people of Hawai'i for so long.

**Q. Do you think there will be repercussions for Hawai'i because of the lawsuit filed by the state over the latest travel ban?**

**A.** The state's position is that discrimination based on religion or national origin is flat-out wrong, especially if you look at the history of Hawai'i. As attorney general Doug Chin has said, the nation needed to hear from a state where diversity is the norm.

**Q. What do you think about possible policy changes at the Environmental Protection Agency?**

**A.** Although we're hearing lots of pronouncements by different people about policy changes, I do think the reality of governing, the reality of repealing regulations will slow the impact to our state. What counts is what is appropriated by Congress in the budget. The reality is Hawai'i still needs to interact with the EPA. When I met with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, I made the case that, as an island state, we are unique in our isolation and our commitment to 100 percent renewable energy for our electricity by 2045. We need flexibility to focus on the long-term. He said he understood that, in terms of energy needs and other areas, Hawai'i was different. I was also glad he said he's been to the islands several times and recognized the state's natural beauty. **Our state has a great opportunity to help people see that sustainability just makes sense for Hawai'i and the world.** (For details on the Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative, go to <http://governor.hawaii.gov/sustainable-hawaii-initiative/>)



***"I'm focused on being able to deliver for the people of Hawai'i."***  
— Gov. David Ige

# Progress statewide: ‘Invasive Species Heroes’ honored

What does it take to fight invasive species? Often it means an army of ordinary citizens, working hand in hand with government, attacking one bug, one weed at a time. That was the message from a recent ceremony at the state Capitol honoring statewide Invasive Species Heroes who have fought to control alien pests on their islands. Here are the 2017 awardees recognized by the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council:

**Community Hero** – The Pacific American Foundation has a long record of involving the community in reducing invasive species and protecting the historic Waikalua Loko fishpond in Kāne‘ohe.

**Business Leader** – Serina Marchi, owner of Kaua‘i Seascapes Nursery, has followed best practices recommended by the Kaua‘i Invasive Species Committee to reduce the spread of invasives on her island.

**Greatest Hit** – Solomon Champion, with the O‘ahu Invasive Species Committee, stopped the spread of Miconia trees in the Waiawa watershed by spotting one immature tree in the Ko‘olau range.

**Hottest Pest Report** – Community member Shawn Baliaris has helped stop the spread of mongeese on Kaua‘i by using the 643-PEST reporting system in the state Department of Agriculture.

**Hawai‘i County MVP** – Community organizer Carolyn Dillon has helped coordinate efforts to combat little fire ants on her island. She brought many different government agencies, businesses and organizations together to map infestations and help homeowners.

**Maui County MVP** – The community of Haiku Hill tackled a major infestation of coqui frogs in their neighborhood and kept the pests from spreading to new areas.

**O‘ahu MVP** – Mililani Elementary teacher Sandy Webb has incorporated units on invasive species into her teaching to encourage students to become part of the solution.



Gov. Ige, surrounded by the state’s Invasive Species Heroes and two giant pests — a coconut rhinoceros beetle and a not-so-little red fire ant.

**Kaua‘i MVP** – Kawika Winter, director of Limahuli Botanical Garden, has played a crucial role in protecting over 1,000 acres of priority watershed area on Kaua‘i’s north shore.

**How you can help:** If you spot an invasive pest, call the hotline, 643-PEST or go to [ReportAPest.org](http://ReportAPest.org) to report pests online, pinpoint your sighting on a map and provide details.

## State’s first Interagency Biosecurity Plan

From little red fire ants to Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death and Zika, invasive species can affect every part of life in Hawai‘i. Now, for the first time in the state’s history, the Ige administration has developed a coordinated, comprehensive plan to tackle the threats and harms from alien species that can threaten the state’s economy and people’s health and well-being.

“This plan provides a 10-year framework to prevent invasives from entering our borders, detect them if they enter the state, and better manage them if they are already within our borders,” said Governor Ige. The plan includes roughly 150 action items assigned to various agencies and stakeholders with specifics on how and when to take action.

# Coral reefs under stress: Solutions and how you can help



At the recent NGA conference, Governor Ige was the first state governor to attend a meeting of the **U.S. Coral Reef Task Force**. “We have to take bold, meaningful action if future generations are to benefit from this resource,” said the governor. “In our **Sustainable Hawai‘i Initiative**, we have committed to effectively managing 30 percent of our nearshore ocean waters by 2030. This means managing human activity. The ultimate goal of effective marine management is to ensure healthy reefs for all — whether you’re a diver, fisher, surfer or someone who just enjoys being outdoors.”

**What is coral bleaching and why should we be concerned?** Coral reefs are vital to island communities like Hawai‘i. When corals experience stress from conditions such as global warming, they expel the algae living in their tissues — causing the coral to turn white. “Coral bleaching in some parts of Hawai‘i is unprecedented in recorded history, placing our corals at much greater risk of dying,” said Dr. Bruce Anderson, DLNR division of aquatic resources administrator. “We need to ensure our reefs are as healthy as possible.”

**Solutions to make progress:** The state has developed a **comprehensive coral bleaching recovery plan that targets four priority areas: West Hawai‘i, West Maui, Kāne‘ohe Bay and North Kaua‘i**. These areas were chosen because they were exposed to the most severe thermal stress during 2014 and 2015. <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/reefresponse/current-rapid-responses/coral-bleaching-recovery-plan/>

**How you can help:** Every Hawai‘i resident and visitor can help take care of our reefs. This includes conserving water to reduce runoff, disposing of trash carefully, avoiding harm to coral while swimming and fishing, and not using sunscreen with oxybenzone, if possible.



# Creating a Sustainable Hawai‘i begins with all of us

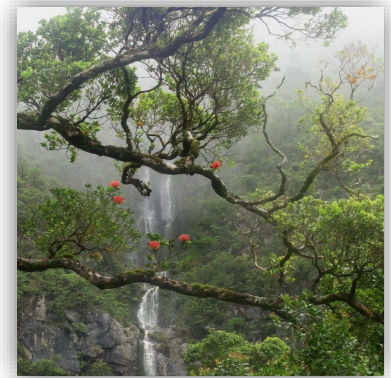
*“Our natural world is a gift with limits. We must carefully steward this gift if we are to survive together.” — Governor David Y. Ige*

Clean drinking water seems as simple as turning on the tap. Hawai‘i’s beaches and coral reefs still look inviting. Invasive species feel like a distant threat. But as many have said, these natural gifts have limits. Sustainability for our state means having strategies to protect our natural resources — now and for the future.

That’s why the governor, the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Office of Environmental Quality Control have developed the **Sustainable Hawai‘i Initiative** — a far-reaching plan to protect the natural resources of our island home, even as we balance our population growth and economic development. The plan includes:

- Protecting 30 percent of priority watersheds by 2030
- Implementing the Interagency Biosecurity Plan by 2027
- Effectively managing 30 percent of nearshore ocean waters by 2030
- Achieving 100 percent renewable electricity by 2045
- Doubling local food production by 2020

This legislative session the governor is proposing increased funding statewide that includes more resources for watershed protection, infrastructure improvements to aging water systems, support for small farmers and invasive species control. The fascinating — and alarming — thing is how, in nature, everything connects. Fighting disease that threatens ‘ōhi‘a trees — the cornerstone species of our native forests — means protecting our watersheds, water supply and endangered plants and animals. Reducing erosion helps keep reefs and oceans healthy for our economy and way of life.



Working together to protect state watersheds.

## Protecting our state’s watersheds

In his executive budget, Governor Ige has proposed \$7.5 million in each of the next two years for watershed protection. The funds would be used for fence construction to protect more than 18,000 acres of high-priority areas from intrusion with additional funds for maintenance.

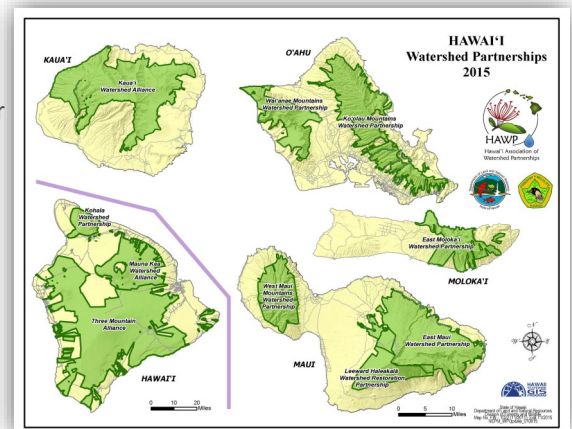
**Why are watersheds so important?** Without vegetation and forest cover, most of our islands’ rainfall would quickly run off into the ocean. Rainfall collects on the leaves and understory made up of mosses and ferns so it can seep into the ground or be captured in rivers and streams. Natural underground reservoirs store this water, to be tapped by the wells that supply almost all of Hawai‘i’s drinking water.

**Solutions to make progress:** The state’s **Watershed Partnerships** are voluntary alliances of both public and private landowners who work with the state to protect and prevent the loss of more native forests. This involves building and maintaining protective fences, combating the main threats of hooved animals such as pigs, goats and deer, controlling invasive species and planting more native forest species. Today, there are 10 partnerships on five islands. Together, these partnerships involve over 74 private landowners and public agencies that cover over 2.2 million acres in the state.

“Our native forests in Hawai‘i comprise one of the world’s natural treasures. They supply billions of gallons of fresh water, provide a home for our unique Hawaiian plants and animals, moderate climate change impacts, reduce flooding, protect our coral reefs and hold profound cultural significance. By protecting our forested watersheds, we protect all life in these islands,” said Dr. Sam ‘Olu Gon III, cultural advisor for the Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i and Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) member.

**DLNR and its watershed partners** are working continually to protect the state’s forests. However, funding to cover costs is always an issue. A \$500,000 governor’s budget request would provide additional operating funds needed to maintain newly fenced areas. In addition, a newly formed statewide Game Management Advisory Commission will serve as advisors to the Board of Land and Natural Resources and recommend policies and criteria regarding the management, protection and promotion of public hunting in Hawaii. The hunting community plays a vital role in the implementation of watershed initiatives statewide.

**How you can help:** The Hawai‘i Watershed Partnerships urges everyone to learn about watersheds in their area and prevent the spread of invasives. Call the DLNR watershed program at 808-587-4189 or the hotline at 808-643-DLNR to report anything that might negatively impact a forested area.



# Harnessing the sun: KIUC project called first in nation



Gov. Ige, Mayor Bernard Carvalho and Senate President Ron Kouichi gather with Tesla and KIUC officials at the blessing of a new Kaua'i solar farm.

A Kaua'i solar farm project that uses Tesla batteries to store enough power to serve 4,500 homes during peak night hours is helping the state reach its goal of having 100 percent of its electricity come from renewable energy sources by 2045.

The Kauai Island Utility Cooperative project, working with SolarCity and Tesla Energy, is believed to be the nation's first utility-scale system that can provide electricity from solar energy on demand — even at night.

“To date, the biggest challenge for achieving the 100 percent goal has been energy storage so electricity can be available when we need it,” said Governor Ige. “Today we’re one step closer since the plant will increase KIUC’s renewable generation to more than 40 percent.” KIUC president David Bissell emphasized the project’s importance. “We’ll reduce our use of imported fuels and greenhouse gas emissions.”

## Honolulu Biennial 2017 showcases local, Pacific artists through May 8

The first Honolulu Biennial, running through May 8, is a multi-venue celebration of 33 artists from Hawai'i and the Pacific with stunning visuals, interactive exhibits and larger-than-life pieces.

Most of the exhibits are at The Hub in the former Sports Authority space at Ward Village. Other venues include Honolulu Hale, Foster Botanical Garden, the Honolulu Museum of Art, Bishop Museum, The Arts at Marks Garage and the IBM Building.

“Hawai'i is truly the center of the Pacific and our strategic location makes Honolulu the perfect place to bring together artists from the East and West,” said first lady Dawn Amano-Ige. “This event raises the global stature of Hawai'i as a place that takes the art community seriously and gives exposure to our abundant local talent.”

Curator Ngahiraka Mason said what the artists care about is the impact of the rest of the world on the islands and their environment, relating to water, nature, sustainability, identity and the intersection of art and science. For details about the various exhibits sponsored by the Honolulu Biennial Foundation and the Howard Hughes Corporation/Ward Village, go to [honolulubiennial.org](http://honolulubiennial.org).



Photo by Wain Newhart  
First lady Dawn Amano-Ige admires a textile installation by Marques Hanalei Marzan with (from left) Kristen Chan, Mona Abadir and Fumio Nanjo.

## Hawai'i ranked No. 1 for healthcare

Hawai'i ranked No. 1 in the nation for health care, said a U.S. News and World Report analysis — thanks in part to what the magazine called “a four-decade jump on health care reform.”

The analysis said the state's Prepaid Health Care Act of 1974 “provided strong evidence that increasing access to health care coverage has contributed to wellness,” according to the data compiled. That's because “people who are uninsured often skip needed testing, care or medicines because of concerns about cost.” Hawai'i scored high in all three sub-elements of the ranking, which included public health and healthcare access and quality.



### April upcoming events

**Thursday, April 6 - Governor's Community Connection on Kaua'i**  
Chiefess Kamakahalei Middle School. Check-in starts at 5:30 pm.

**Saturday, April 29 - Hawaiian Electric's "Grow Hawaiian" Festival** at Bishop Museum, 9 am -3 pm, highlighting sustainability, native culture, clean energy resources, DLNR conservation efforts and more.

## Free pre-kindergarten classes offered

Many keiki in Hawai'i whose families can't afford preschool may find themselves lagging behind. But at 19 public elementary schools on six islands, eligible children can attend pre-kindergarten at no cost.

While priority will be given to families who apply by April 29, applications will continue to be accepted throughout the year. The state-funded program serves children who qualify based on federal guidelines and age requirements.

To qualify, children must be age 4 on or before July 31 of this year. Those interested can download an application at [earlylearning.hawaii.gov/doe-eoel-prekindergarten-program/](http://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/doe-eoel-prekindergarten-program/) or call 586-3813.

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