

THIRTIETH DAY

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

The Senate of the Thirty-Second Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2024, convened at 11:33 a.m. with the President in the Chair.

The Roll was called showing all Senators present, with the exception of Senator Fevella who was excused.

The President announced that he had read and approved the Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Day.

At this time, Senator Keohokalole welcomed Alikea Rivera, a close friend from 'Ele'e,le, Kaua'i, who was seated in the gallery.

On behalf of Senate President Kouchi, Senator Kidani introduced students, chaperones, and teachers from Island School, located in Līhu'e, Kauai, who were present in the gallery. Senator Kidani requested that the names of the students and faculty be entered into the Journal, and the Chair so ordered.

The Chair having so ordered, the names read as follows:

"Students: Kahano Cobb-Adams, Jax Ragsdale, Finn Nunes, Makia Cassel, Logan Ing, Lucian Mokeddem, Ka'ena Chock, Cyril Erikson-Clay, Kahlo Soule, Kalama Kealoha, 'Alohi Higashi, Mia Vincent, Abbey Romero, Makena McBride, Gemma Kirkcaldie, Abby Virag, Julianna Ho, Jaya Fazio, Sophia Kua, Aria Prem, Sealei Kaleiohi, and Rylee Fu.

"Chaperones: Erin Cobb-Adams, Mapuana O'Sullivan, Shyla Ayau, Josh Brown-Clay, Malama Kealoha, Gisele Gardner, Ashley Kirkcaldie, Amy Walia, and Breana Silva.

"Teachers: Cindy Wortmann, Cristy Peeren, and Saebre Kaleiohi."

The Chair explained that he had visited the guests from Island School earlier that morning, and they had discussed the school's Division II boys soccer championship, its first state championship.

Senator Wakai introduced members of his staff who were present in the gallery: Tosa Lobendahn, who had offered a moment of contemplation prior to the Senate's floor session; Ashley Niibu, who made a phenomenal apple crisp; and office manager Richard Mizusawa.

Senator Wakai then honored and recognized Vice Admiral John Wade, Commander of the Joint Task Force-Red Hill, on the successful completion of defueling the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, and presented the following remarks:

"An Olympic-sized swimming pool is 50 meters by 25 meters and is 2 meters deep. It holds 660,000 gallons of water. The Navy drained 104 million gallons of fuel out of Red Hill. That equates to about 158 Olympic-sized pools. That is a lot of liquid! All of that traveled two and a half miles offshore to tankers. Not a single—not a single—drop of fuel leaked into our aquifer during the defueling process. That is a monumental feat. It is with tremendous gratitude that I stand here to recognize Vice Admiral John Wade, Commander of the Joint Task Force-Red Hill. He came up with the plan and executed it to perfection. Vice Admiral Wade, if you could please stand to be recognized? You can be seated—this is going to take a few minutes.

"This saga had a very grim beginning. Back in 2014, 27,000 gallons of jet fuel leaked into our aquifer. The mishap brought attention to the aging World War II facility and its threat to O'ahu's groundwater. The Navy argued that Red Hill

was an important strategic asset and needed to continue operating. They came up with a plan to fix the tanks by 2037. Navy officials consistently assured us that this leak was an aberration and everything was A-okay.

"Then, in November 2021, another 14,000 gallons of fuel leaked from Red Hill, this time seeping into the Navy's water system that services 93,000 customers. After initially dismissing concerns, the Navy later acknowledged that their well was contaminated. The Navy's water system contained levels of gasoline and diesel hydrocarbons as much as 350 times higher than acceptable levels. They created an environmental and public health disaster.

"The ingestion of fuel led to an assortment of negative health consequences for families—2,200 people have filed suit. A Navy investigation reveals shoddy management and human error were to blame for fuel and toxic fire suppression foam that got into our water. Residents were dissatisfied with the Navy's repeated gaffes and denials. We were all clamoring for the closure of the storage facility. And in March of 2022, the U.S. Department of Defense finally agreed to permanently shut down Red Hill and remove the fuel. A report issued two months later indicated a host of maintenance issues, such as corroded piping, damaged coating, and missing bracing. That's a lot of fixes. Many of us were skeptical about how the defueling process would play out.

"In September of 2022, the secretary of defense appointed Vice Admiral John Wade to establish and command the Joint Task Force-Red Hill. His mission was to ensure the safe and expeditious defueling of Red Hill. He nailed it. Vice Admiral Wade didn't create this catastrophe, but he inherited it. He owned it and took on this assignment head-on. Vice Admiral Wade held a number of town hall meetings, where he was confronted by angry servicemembers, their families, environmentalists. In all cases that I witnessed, he responded to furious criticism with respect and grace. His answers were honest; his efforts were earnest.

"I would now like to pass the microphone over to the Vice Admiral of Public Safety and Military Affairs, Senator Elefante, to share the next chapter of Vice Admiral Wade's triumph."

Senator Elefante rose to present the following remarks:

"Mr. President, I also stand in support, recognizing Vice Admiral Wade for his leadership in putting together a team comprised of military and civilian professionals to work with our Hawai'i congressional delegation, congressional committees, the governor, mayor, and numerous state legislators and committees, and federal and state regulatory agencies.

"During his assignment, Vice Admiral Wade was committed to keeping all lines of communication open with the community, engaged with the media, and was receptive to feedback from stakeholders. The defueling was supposed to take three years and be completed this year, but under the leadership of Vice Admiral Wade, the defueling plan moved quickly. His team was able to remove more than 104 million gallons of fuel, including 61,000 gallons of residual fuel, six months ahead of schedule. That is phenomenal. As Majority Floor Leader mentioned, there were no mishaps.

"The Navy's responsibilities are far from over—they are committed to continuing their turnover of the facility with the newly established Navy Closure Task Force. There is still a need to clean up contamination from prior leaks; that is another ominous task. However, the Red Hill tanks are no longer a threat to our aquifer.

“Thanks to the exceptional work of Vice Admiral John Wade, that chapter has been closed. He couldn’t have done that alone. Today, he’s accompanied by his team, and I ask that the members and people in the audience please hold your applause while we recognize the following individuals as part of his team: We have General Mark Hashimoto (if you could please stand); also with him is his wife, Catherine Wade; Brigadier General Michelle Link and husband Chris Link; Brigadier General Lance Okamura; and then the rest of the members of his team or if you’re from INDOPACOM, if you could please stand so you could be recognized by the Senate. Thank you so much.

“Please join me in expressing our gratitude and aloha to Vice Admiral Wade and his leadership team for all that they have done to successfully defuel the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility and their commitment to doing so with aloha for our community. Again, let’s give another round of applause to Vice Admiral Wade.”

Senator Keohokalole recognized Jennifer Sabas, a former constituent and resident of Kāne’ohe who was a member of the Joint Task Force-Red Hill team and had been instrumental in the effort to defuel the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, who was seated in the gallery.

The Chair announced that the honoree would be greeted on the Senate floor immediately after adjournment.

The Chair then made the following comments:

“I would be remiss if I didn’t report to the Senate: Two Fridays ago, I attended a meeting of the Military Affairs Council of the Chamber of Commerce. One of the presenters was Vice Admiral Wade. I commented—like you, Senators Wakai and Elefante—that his presentation was clear, concise; a layperson like myself clearly understood what he was talking about.

“What I also found out at that meeting is that General Hashimoto has come to the end of his three-year rotation and will be moving on in life. I was concerned when General Vares-Lum’s rotation ended and who is going to replace ‘just call me Suzy,’ and I met General Hashimoto, and through this time and interfacing with Senator Keohokalole—who was lead on the Senate’s Red Hill efforts as he was Health chair at the time—General Hashimoto has been forthright, candid, available, and had my trust in the conversations that we had. So, on behalf of the rest of the Senate, we’d like to wish you well in your future endeavors as well, General Hashimoto.”

HOUSE COMMUNICATION

The following communication from the House (Hse. Com. No. 454) was read by the Clerk and was placed on file:

Hse. Com. No. 454, informing the Senate that on March 11, 2024, the House disagreed to the amendments proposed by the Senate to H.B. No. 159, H.D. 1 (S.D. 1).

ORDER OF THE DAY

RE-REFERRAL OF HOUSE BILLS

The Chair re-referred the following House bills that were received:

H.B. No.:	Re-referred to:
H.B. No. 1688, H.D. 2	Jointly to the Committee on Agriculture and Environment and the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection, then to the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 2742, H.D. 1	Jointly to the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection and the Committee on

Judiciary, then to the Committee on Ways and Means

At this time, Senator DeCoite rose to speak on a point of personal privilege as follows:

“I would like to request that the Senate adjourn on a rising vote and observe a moment of silence in honor and memory of former Maui county councilwoman Gladys Baisa. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and the Maui delegation, yesterday, we lost a wonderful woman that made Maui County a better place. Former Maui county council chair Gladys Baisa, who represented Upcountry Maui, was a dynamic individual who worked tirelessly for communities across Maui Nui. She was known to be tough and caring at the same time. Not counting her time on the county council, Gladys dedicated herself to the people of Maui County as a former executive director of Maui Economic Opportunity and many community nonprofits, boards, and groups. Since her retirement from the county council, Gladys still stayed very involved in the community, showing up to meetings and participating in talk-stories. While she was a dynamic force, her presence with her caring smile could light up a room, and I, for one, took comfort, knowing she was there to keep us all on our toes in a positive way that only she could do. I send my aloha and deepest condolences to her family and my mahalo to them for sharing her with all of us, not just in Maui Nui but across the entire state. Mahalo.”

The Chair announced that there would be a leadership meeting in his office immediately following adjournment and the greeting of honored guests.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:48 a.m., on motion by Senator Wakai, seconded by Senator DeCoite and carried, the Senate adjourned until 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 13, 2024, on a rising vote, observing a moment of silence in memory of former Maui county councilwoman Gladys Baisa.