
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE COCO PALMS RESORT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Coco Palms
2 Resort location in Wailua on Kauai's eastern shore is of
3 historical importance.

4 The ancestral home of Kauai's alii (royalty) since the
5 thirteenth century, the area around the mouth of the Wailua
6 river was an important royal center where high chiefs and
7 chiefesses conducted business and entertained visitors. The
8 area includes a group of sites, known as the Wailua Complex of
9 Heiau, which are designated as a national historic landmark.
10 Within this complex are some of the oldest heiau, which are
11 places of refuge and for birthing of chiefs, in Kauai.

12 In the mid-1800s, the area now encompassing the Coco Palms
13 Resort was the home of Kauai's last reigning queen, Queen
14 Deborah Kapule. At the turn of the century, agricultural
15 pursuits in the area included the copra and coconut plantation
16 planted by William Lindeman in 1892, and numerous rice and taro
17 farmers. The two thousand-tree coconut grove within the resort,



1 which is the largest of only three similar groves in the entire
2 State, was originally planted with coconut tree nuts imported
3 from Samoa by Mr. Lindeman in 1896.

4 The Coco Palms Resort originally opened on January 25,
5 1953, taking advantage of the expansion of the tourism industry
6 resulting from the introduction of air travel. Under the
7 visionary and promotional eye of Grace Guslander, the Coco Palms
8 Resort grew consistently, reaching four hundred sixteen rooms by
9 the 1970s.

10 In 1961, the Coco Palms Resort became famous as the
11 location of the finale wedding scene in Elvis Presley's film,
12 *Blue Hawaii*. As Kauai's oldest hotel, the Coco Palms Resort
13 stands as a model of the travel-trade history, a history only
14 now beginning to be appreciated as a notable component in the
15 study of Hawaii's past.

16 When Hurricane Iniki damaged the resort in September 1992,
17 the Coco Palms Resort was shut down indefinitely as repairs
18 proved too costly during a period of recession. Having been
19 left to decay for over a decade, the Coco Palms Resort property
20 and the adjoining coconut grove are neglected and currently in
21 extreme disrepair.



1 The legislature also finds that the Coco Palms Resort site
2 currently contains approximately 12.63 acres zoned RR-20
3 (resort) and 19.29 acres zoned open, and includes adjacent lands
4 owned by the State and leased by the Coco Palms Resort owners.
5 The latter includes the historic coconut grove, the former
6 tennis courts, and a small segment at the entry to the property.
7 Mauka of the property is conservation land that extends back
8 into the valley and consists of extensive wetlands.

9 Recently, cancellation of development plans caused by a
10 real estate market downturn combined with many development
11 challenges, resulted in the property being placed back on the
12 market. Proposed residential development of department of
13 Hawaiian home lands property in the immediate area has created
14 additional interest in converting the Coco Palms Resort property
15 area on Kauai to a public, historical, and cultural preserve.

16 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the
17 board of land and natural resources to acquire the land commonly
18 referred to as the Coco Palms Resort located on the east side of
19 Kauai, Hawaii. The acquired lands shall be used as a public
20 resource, and a public or nonprofit entity shall be selected to
21 manage and operate a public historical park and cultural



1 education center to preserve and benefit the native Hawaiian
2 culture.

3 SECTION 2. (a) The board of land and natural resources
4 shall secure public and private partnerships, enter into
5 negotiations, and, in partnership with other public and private
6 nonprofit entities, acquire the land commonly referred to as the
7 Coco Palms Resort located on the east side of Kauai, Hawaii.
8 The acquired lands shall be utilized as a public resource, and
9 the board of land and natural resources shall select a public or
10 nonprofit entity to manage and operate a public historical park
11 and cultural education center that will serve to preserve and
12 benefit the native Hawaiian culture.

13 (b) The board of land and natural resources shall
14 communicate with and seek partnerships to support the purchase
15 and operations by entering into discussions with major public
16 and private nonprofit organizations, including:

- 17 (1) The office of Hawaiian affairs;
- 18 (2) The department of Hawaiian home lands;
- 19 (3) Kamehameha Schools;
- 20 (4) The mayor and members of the council of the county of
21 Kauai;
- 22 (5) Members of the Kauai state legislative delegation;



- 1 (6) Appropriate federal officials and agencies;
- 2 (7) The Kauai Public Land Trust; and
- 3 (8) The Kauai Planning and Action Alliance.
- 4 (c) The board of land and natural resources, working in
- 5 conjunction with the entities designated in subsection (b) shall
- 6 also:
- 7 (1) Conduct community outreach meetings designed to
- 8 ascertain community needs and desires in regard to
- 9 this project; and
- 10 (2) Formulate a citizens' advisory group composed of:
 - 11 (A) Native Hawaiian practitioners familiar with the
 - 12 history of the area;
 - 13 (B) Residents of the Wailua and Kapaa area;
 - 14 (C) Residents who have historically been associated
 - 15 with the Coco Palms Resort as former employees;
 - 16 and
 - 17 (D) Kauai state legislators.
- 18 (d) The citizens' advisory group shall develop
- 19 recommendations on the long-term vision, goals, operational
- 20 nature, and scope of a community-based, Hawaiian-centered,
- 21 public historical park and cultural education center facility on
- 22 the island of Kauai.



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for
4 the planning and preparation necessary to purchase the Coco
5 Palms Resort on the island of Kauai and develop the location
6 into a community-based, public historical park and cultural
7 education center facility to preserve and benefit the native
8 Hawaiian culture.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
10 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 4. The director of finance is authorized to issue
12 general obligation bonds in the sum of \$ or so much
13 thereof as may be necessary and the same sum or so much thereof
14 as may be necessary is appropriated for fiscal year 2008-2009
15 for the purpose of providing matching funds to purchase the Coco
16 Palms Resort on the island of Kauai and develop the location
17 into a public historical park and cultural education center to
18 preserve and benefit the native Hawaiian culture.

19 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
20 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

21 SECTION 5. The appropriation made for the capital
22 improvement project authorized by section 4 of this Act shall



1 not lapse at the end of the fiscal biennium for which the
2 appropriation is made; provided that all moneys from the
3 appropriation unencumbered as of June 30, 2010, shall lapse as
4 of that date.

5 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.



Report Title:

Coco Palms Resort; Board of Land and Natural Resources;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates matching funds for the board of land and natural resources in partnership with other public and private nonprofit entities to acquire the Coco Palms Resort on the island of Kauai and convert it into a public historical park and cultural education center to preserve and benefit native Hawaiian culture. (SB3221 SD2)

