

Aloha e Friends,

I hope you and your 'ohana are safe and well. We're half way through session and the Capitol is now open again to the public! Yayyyy! It's been a loooooong two years operating remotely. It's so nice to see and hear people in person. As always, contact me at (808) 586-6830, or by email: sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Twitter @senmikegabbard, Instagram @GabbardAloha, [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

*Best wishes to you and your 'ohana,
Me ke aloha pumehana,*

Mike



**COMMITTEE
CHAIR**

**AGRICULTURE &
ENVIRONMENT**

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Government Operations

DISTRICT 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu

Bye, Bye Masks

So, after six months of being required by restaurants and businesses to show our vaccine card, or proof of negative COVID test, to enter, "Safe Access O'ahu" has ended. However, it's not over yet. We're still told to keep the vaccine card handy – just in case. Also, on March 25, at 11:59pm the indoor mask mandate ends, in concurrence with the end of the gov's emergency proclamation. (The Federal Airline mask mandate is set to lift March 18.) Governor Ige says that he'll reinstitute the mask mandates if conditions warrant.

Settings where masks are still recommended indoors include:

- ◆ City Busses
- ◆ Schools
- ◆ Hospitals and health care facilities
- ◆ Long term care facilities
- ◆ Shelters
- ◆ Correctional facilities
- ◆ Other congregate living settings



Red Hill Update

In 2014, 27,000 gallons of fuel leaked from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility tanks and gave us a preview of what we all feared at the time would happen—contamination of our water supply. In 2015, we established the Red Hill Fuel Storage Facility Task Force to hold the Navy accountable to come up with solutions and push the federal government to get involved.

I sat on this task force for the next five years. Unfortunately, the Navy didn't take the steps we called for to either double-line the tanks or move the fuel storage to another site. I introduced bills in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 in an effort to get the ball rolling and either put greater safety measures in place or shut down operations entirely. Unfortunately, none of the bills passed, and we were faced

On March 7, the Secretary of the Department of Defense finally announced that the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility will be permanently shut down!

with what many of us saw as the inevitable leaking again of the facility and this time with the even greater devastating consequences we'd been forecasting for years. People in the area becoming sick, being rushed to the hospital and then forced from their homes to seek residence where they would have access to a basic need: fresh water.

After years of debate between the Navy, Hawai'i Department of Health, and the legislators in highly publicized hearings, the Secretary of the Department of Defense finally announced March 7, that the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility will be permanently shut down! The Navy now says it'll take about a year to defuel the tanks and they're in the process of identifying alternative options for fuel storage. I'll continue to monitor this situation.



DISTRICT 20 COMMUNITY UPDATE

Reapportionment

Every 10 years, after the census, district maps are redrawn based on population shifting numbers. All 76 seats in the Legislature are now up for grabs — 25 Senate and the 51 House seats — and candidates won't be able to file their nomination papers until the Hawai'i Supreme Court resolves a legal dispute between a group of residents and the Hawaii Reapportionment Commission. On March 7, the state Reapportionment Commission created a special committee to help the attorney general defend it from a lawsuit filed by a citizen coalition, challenging maps featuring new political boundaries for the state Legislature and U.S. House. The court gave the state until March 11 to work it out, so it'll be interesting to see how this situation continues to unfold. I do plan to run again, so hopefully, we'll know soon what the new Senate Districts will look like.

Consolidated Theatres Grand Re-Opening and Blessing



On Feb. 26, Senator Gabbard and his colleagues presented a surprise Honorary Certificate from the Hawai'i State Senate to Ellen Cotter, CEO and President of Reading International, Inc. (Consolidated Theatres is an affiliate of Reading International). Pictured L-R: Congressman Kai Kahele, Sens. Kurt Fevella and Maile Shimabukuro, Ellen Cotter, and Rep. Sharon Har.

My wife, Carol, and I had a date night at the reopening of the Consolidated Theatres, next to the vacant K-mart on Feb 26. I, along with several of my colleagues and their families were invited to the grand re-opening and blessing to watch the documentary "Waterman", a

story of Duke Kahanamoku, which I highly recommend. Before the show, my colleagues and I presented a surprise proclamation from the Hawai'i State Senate, to Ellen Cotter, CEO and President of Reading International, Inc. (Consolidated Theatres is an affiliate of Reading International). The sixteen theaters had eight converted to reclining seats, while the other eight had every other row removed to create more space. It felt almost normal again being out to celebrate this event.

Roosevelt Ave./ Kamokila Blvd.



Roosevelt Ave./ Kamokila Construction, March 2022

Down the street, construction has been underway at the future site of the VA (ALOHA) Clinic near the intersection of Kamokila Blvd. and Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Ave. Work has begun on the building's foundation and nearby road construction continues in the area. Crews have completed most of the new underground electrical system and have started work on the FDR Ave. roadway drainage system. Additional road closures may be required in the coming months as Hunt Companies works to expand FDR Ave. from a 2-lane roadway to a 4-lane traffic pattern. Hunt's construction team has safety top of mind and continues to work diligently with engineers and respective government agencies to develop a plan to safely construct the new FDR Ave. and Kamokila Blvd. intersection. Any changes to road closures or construction will be announced as they become available. (Continued on p. 4)

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT UPDATES

2022 Priority Bills

March 10 was **First Crossover**, which means all the bills we've been discussing/ deliberating on in the Senate that passed Third Reading are moving over to the House; and the House bills that passed Third Reading are coming over to the Senate. Please see below some of my priority bills that crossed over to the House.

Agricultural Emergency Special Fund ([SB2969](#))

Establishes an agricultural emergency special fund to provide agricultural emergency loans.

Farmer Apprentice Mentoring Program; ([SB3197](#))

Establishes a farmer apprentice mentoring program. Makes an appropriation to the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement the program.

Green Fees ([SB3192](#))

Establishes within the Department of Land and Natural Resources a visitor impact fee program to collect a fee to allow visitors to visit a state park, beach, state-owned forest, hiking trail, or other state-owned natural area. In 2019, there were over 10 million tourists...they should help pay their share to keep paradise paradise... to help take care of our hiking trails, keep our beaches pristine, and coral reefs and marine life healthy and plentiful.

Little Fire Ant ([SB2996](#))

Appropriates \$600,000 to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for research, extension, and control of the little fire ant and other harmful ants.

Soil Health Initiative ([SB2989](#))

This bill is also part of our environmental legislative caucus package. It will promote agricultural practices that improve soil health. Farmers that adopt these practices will sequester more carbon, increase water infiltration, improve wildlife and pollinator habitat – all while harvesting better profits and often better yields.



Honoring O'ahu Awardees for Invasive Species Awareness Month

February was Hawai'i Invasive Species Awareness Month. During this month, the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) works to bring attention to the problems invasive species cause in our islands.

Each year, as the Agriculture and Environment Committee Chair, I participate in honoring people and organizations that have done an outstanding job in the invasive species fight over the preceding year.

In a virtual ceremony, in partnership with HISC, I recognized the four O'ahu award recipients: 1.) [Hawaiian Earth Products](#) was honored for being named "Outstanding Business Leader," for their dedication in the fight against invasive species, especially the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (or CRB); 2.) [Protect & Preserve](#) was the award recipient in the O'ahu MVP category for their efforts to mālama the 'āina and share that with their community; 3.) [Sandy Ward with Mālama Pu'uloa](#) was recognized in the "Community Hero" category for her efforts to educate and engage the community in restoring this precious resource; and 4.) [Ryan Chang](#) earned the "Greatest Hit" award for his native plant restoration efforts in an area currently overrun by non-native species. Learn more about each of these amazing individuals' work, by clicking the links above.



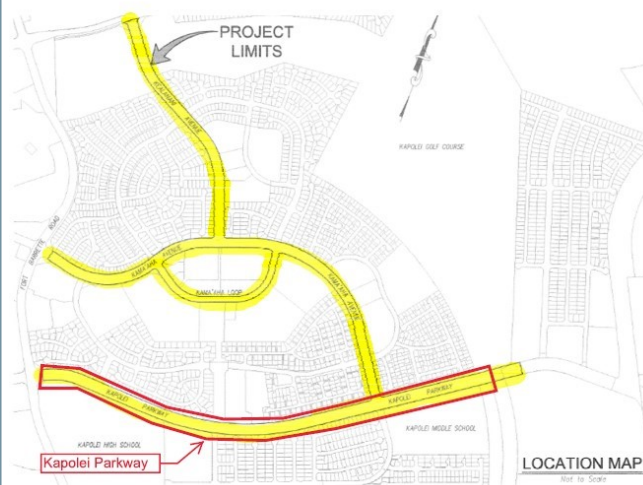
DISTRICT 20 COMMUNITY UPDATES

(Continued from p. 2)

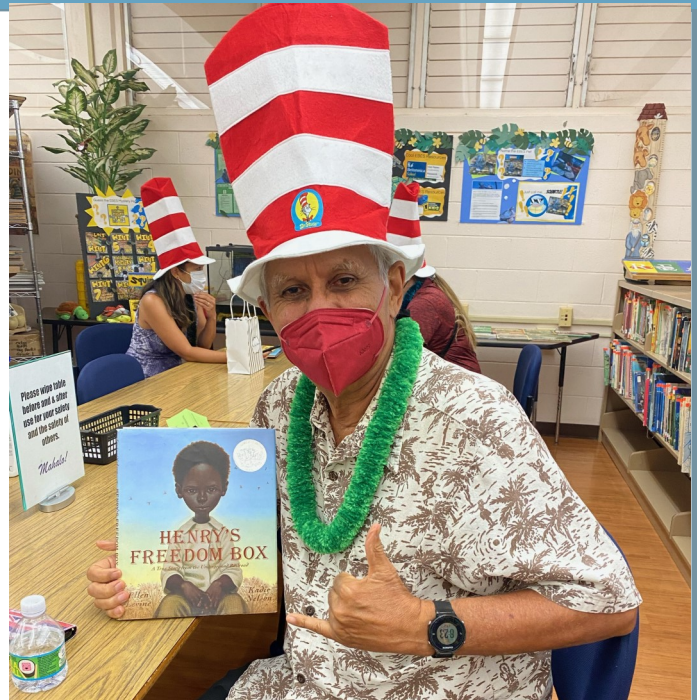
FDR Ave. is two very skinny lanes right now, and a bit unnerving when a huge truck is coming in the opposite direction. So, please drive with care.

Kapolei Roadway Rehabilitation Project

I received notice that the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) has contracted with Grace Pac LLC to rehabilitate the roads and sidewalks as indicated on the map below. Paving work on Kapolei Parkway, east bound, is scheduled to begin on March 14, 2022, and anticipated to continue through March 30, 2022. Work will proceed between the hours of 8:30 am and 3:00 pm Monday through Friday, excluding State holidays. Partial road or lane closures will be necessary, so motorists and pedestrians should proceed with caution, observing and obeying all posted traffic control signs, pedestrian detours and safety directives. On-street parking will be prohibited in active construction areas during working hours. "No Parking" signs will be posted in advance. Please observe the dates and times on the posted roadway signs as illegally parked vehicles will be towed, if necessary, at the owner's expense. The paving work is anticipated to take approximately three weeks to complete. GP's paving schedule is subject to change due to inclement weather or unforeseen conditions.



Kapolei Roadway Rehabilitation Project March 2022



Sen. Gabbard at Read Across America - Ewa Beach Elementary, March 4, 2022 (Pictured L-R: Sen. Gabbard; Ewa Beach Elementary Principal, Shayne Greenland, and Rep. Matt LoPresti.)



Public Access Room

The Public Access Room is an awesome resource. To attend their workshops, click on the registration links to their March line up below:

The Budget Bill's Journey, Wednesday, 3/16, 6 p.m.

[Register](#)

Floor Sessions & Orders of the Day, Wednesday, 3/23, 6 p.m. [Register](#)

Odd Things Happen: Unlikely Scenarios, Wednesday, 3/30, 6 p.m. [Register](#)