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District 7 - North Kona, South Kohala, North Kohala

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM Representative David A. Tarnas

June 2019

## *Aloha, friends and neighbors!*

I am very grateful to be your State Representative, and to be writing now to report on my work in the 2019 State Legislature.

It was a challenging yet successful session: many important bills were passed, including several addressing my top legislative priorities. The Legislature approved funding for stakeholder engagement around the Marine 30x30 Initiative to improve management of our near-shore waters, appropriated funds to study and combat Rapid 'Ohia Death, passed legislation supporting suicide awareness and prevention, appropriated funds for services to address homelessness, and more. We were also successful in funding several important

projects in District 7, including planning and design for restroom and parking facilities at Pololū, and cesspool replacement at Puakō.

Much also remains to be done. I was disappointed in the Legislature's inability to pass legislation on many important issues, including addressing sea level rise, protecting sharks, raising the minimum wage, increasing teacher pay, and expanding public trail access. There is definitely more work to do, and

we will have to continue to work on these and other important issues next session.

Please read inside for more information, and contact me at (808) 586-8510 or [reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov) to further discuss the 2019 session and my plans for next session. I thank you for your input and for the opportunity to represent you!

*Mahalo,*

**Right:** Rep. Tarnas, accompanied by House Majority Floor Leader Dee Morikawa (second from left) and House Speaker Scott Saiki (far right), congratulates Waimea Middle School teachers Shelby Loo (center) and Nau'i Murphy (second from right) for completing their National Board Certification.



**Left:** The Hawai'i State House of Representatives on Opening Day, January 16, 2019.

**Right:** Representatives join together to sing "Hawai'i Aloha" following the session's adjournment on May 2, 2019.





# 2019 Bill Highlights

**PASSED**

Here are just a few highlights of the more than 300 bills which the Legislature passed this session. You can read more about these bills on the Capitol website, [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov), or contact my office for more information.

\*\* - Rep. Tarnas is first primary introducer \* - primary introducer

Key funding and legislation for **social services** includes:

- **Kupuna care programs** (HB465\*, SB1025, HB468\*, and SB366)
- Programs and services to address **homelessness** (SB471, SB398, and HB1312)
- **Suicide prevention, awareness, and intervention** (HB330\*, HB383\*, and HB655)
- **Opioid** access regulation and increased access to overdose reversal medication (SB536, SB535)

In addition to CIP and Grant-in-Aid projects (see facing page), legislation supporting **local agriculture** includes funds for:

- The development of a plan to **double local food production and increase food exports by 2030** (SB375)
- **Loans** to support local producers (SB1148)
- A **Food Safety Certification Training Program** (HB463)
- A revitalized **Aquaculture Development Program** (SB753)
- A dollar-for-dollar matching program for use of SNAP benefits to purchase Hawai'i-grown produce (SB390)

In response to the post-eruption devastation, the Legislature approved **\$60 million for disaster relief, recovery, mitigation, and remediation activities for Hawai'i County** (HB1180\*).

HB1383\* **decriminalizes**, and expunges criminal records pertaining solely to, the **possession of three grams or less of cannabis**.

**Mosquito-borne illness** is a threat to both human health and native wildlife. This session, the legislature passed HB297\*\* to review the potential use of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito with *Wolbachia* bacteria for landscape-scale **mosquito control**.

In an important success for safer ocean recreation, \$480,000 was appropriated to fund **lifeguards at Kua Bay** (HB116). The Legislature also appropriated \$250,900 for stakeholder consultation to support planning for the **30x30 Marine Initiative**, which targets effective management of 30% of near-shore waters by 2030 (HB2).



**Above:** Releasing a wedge-tailed shearwater after it has undergone rehabilitation at the Hawai'i Wildlife Center in Kohala. HCR168\*\* requires the Department of Health to recommend funding sources for the Hawai'i Wildlife Center's work to rehabilitate injured native birds and bats.

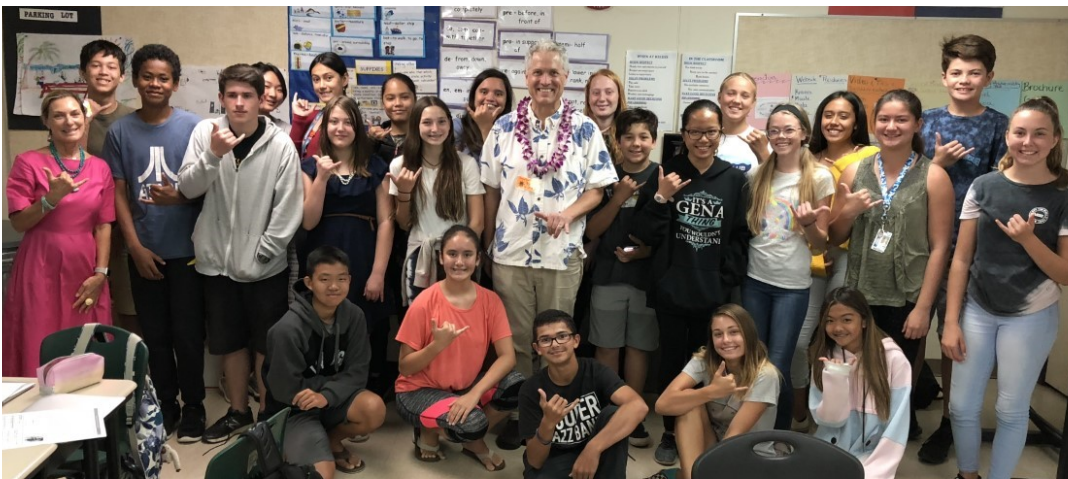
Upgraded **wastewater treatment** is crucial for protecting near-shore water quality. In addition to funding the first steps for cesspool conversion at Puakō (facing page), the Legislature also extended the work of the **Cesspool Conversion Working Group** and development of a statewide Comprehensive Cesspool Conversion Plan (HB551\*), and asked the Department of Health to adopt rules for on-site non-potable water reuse systems (HB444).

Numerous bills addressed **energy**, including:

- HB401\* requires **vehicle fleet energy efficiency programs** at all public agencies
- HB556\* requires the institution of **appliance efficiency standards**
- HB560 institutes **energy systems and technology training** for county construction planning employees
- HB1585 and SB661 support **electric vehicle infrastructure**, including designated parking spaces, prioritization in State and County vehicle purchases, and rebates for charging station installation.

Among many bills relating to **education**, HB1276\* supports the development of best practices for **collaborative planning by teachers and expanded learning time for students**, and two bills now allow public schools and libraries to generate **additional revenue** by leasing their lands (SB976, SB1303).

**Left:** Meeting with Waikoloa Middle School students in Ms. Sylvie Bright's 7th grade Global Scholars class, who conducted community advocacy projects about impacts of sunscreen on coral reefs.





# Funding and Appropriations Highlights

## Funded Capital Improvement Projects

### **Puakō Sewer System - \$1,500,000**

Plans and design for a sewer system to replace cesspools

### **Pololū Trailhead, \$500,000**

Plans and design for parking, restrooms, and trail restoration

### **N. Kohala Agricultural Exploratory Well - \$2,500,000**

Plans, design, and construction for an exploratory well for increased agricultural water supply

### **Lalamilo Reservoir in Waimea – \$8,750,000**

Construction for a 10-million-gallon water reservoir for the Lalamilo Water System

### **Waimea Middle School STEAM Building - \$1,200,000**

Plans, design, construction, and equipment for weather-proofing and safety upgrades

### **Waimea Elementary School - \$376,000**

Re-roofing and ceiling repairs for Building B

### **Pu‘uwa‘awa‘a Forest Reserve - \$600,000**

Removal of degraded structures and hazardous materials (\$200,000), and for a 92-acre fence to protect endangered dry forest plant species on the cindercone (\$400,000)

### **Kealakehe High School Synthetic Track - \$3,000,000**

Construction of an all-weather synthetic track

## Ongoing Projects

### **Waimea School Parking - \$1,200,000 Funding Released**

Funding to purchase the gravel lot adjacent to Waimea Elementary and Middle Schools was released in May.

### **Waikoloa Library - \$1,900,000 Funding Released**

Funding to purchase land for a new library in Waikoloa was released by the Governor in April.

### **North Hawai‘i Community Hospital - \$500,000 Released**

Funding for construction of an expanded Emergency Department was released by the Governor in March.

### **Small Boat Harbors (North and South Kawaihae; Puakō)**

In March, the Governor released **\$1,100,000** for design and construction of drainage improvements at North Kawaihae SBH. I am continuing to track this and other ongoing harbor improvement projects - please contact me for more information!



**Above:** Pololū Valley is a very important place in the Kohala community, and I am grateful that the Legislature supported a \$500,000 appropriation for design of trailhead improvements.



**Above:** Touring the Waimea Middle School STEAM Building with school staff and House leadership provided the opportunity to share the importance of safety and weatherproofing upgrades with fellow legislators.

**Below:** Visiting the Hawai‘i Institute of Pacific Agriculture demonstration farm.



## Grant-in-Aid Funding

### **Hawai‘i Institute of Pacific Agriculture - \$100,000**

*Farm-to-school and ag & nutrition education in Kohala*

### **Hāmākua Harvest - \$30,000**

*Supporting farmers’ market, orchard, education programs*

### **Hawai‘i Floriculture and Nursery Association - \$200,000**

*Developing pest management practices and farmer education in floriculture and ornamental agriculture*

### **Hawai‘i Wildfire Management Organization - \$175,000**

*Expanded wildfire prevention and preparedness programs*

### **Hawai‘i ‘Ulu Producers Cooperative - \$150,000 GIA +**

**\$1,200,000 CIP - Developing Honalo Marshaling Yard to operate as a local food aggregation hub for West Hawai‘i**

### **Kanu o ka ‘Aina Learning ‘Ohana - \$100,000**

*A USDA-approved commercial kitchen at Halau Ho‘okipa*

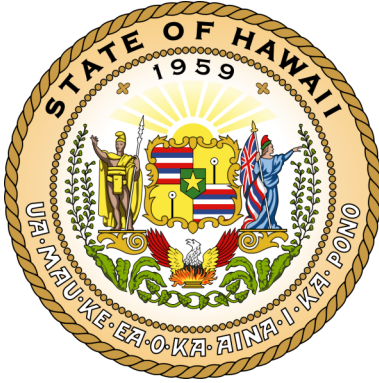
### **Waimea Outdoor Circle - \$200,000**

*Paved roadway at Ulu La‘au (Waimea Nature Park)*

### **Habitat for Humanity Hawai‘i Island - \$100,000**

*Affordable homes for low-income families*

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## Your District Office at the Capitol

As your District 7 Representative at the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, I work for you. Please contact me to discuss any legislation, questions, or concerns. I value your feedback and look forward to hearing from you!

## Email Updates

District 7  
Updates

If you would like to receive email updates from me, please email [reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov) to be added to our mailing list.



*Rep. Tarnas and his wife,  
Carolyn Stewart*