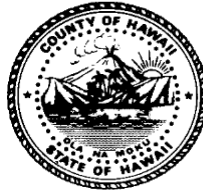


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Mayor



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Stephanie Bath
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County of Hawai'i

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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February --, 2026

Chair Louis Daniele III
and Members of the Windward Planning Commission
County of Hawai'i
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

**SUBJECT: Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee Letter –
Pāhoa Special District Legislative Suite**

Aloha Chair Daniele and Members of the Windward Planning Commission:

The Puna Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee writes to express its strong support for the Pāhoa Special District Legislative Suite, a coordinated package of three bills introduced by Council Member Ashley Kierkiewicz.

This legislation reflects the vision and goals articulated by the community through the Puna CDP, the Kīlauea Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Eruption Economic Recovery Plan, and the Revitalize Puna initiative. Together, these measures represent an important step toward implementing community-driven strategies for recovery, revitalization, and long-term resilience.

Bill No. 126 establishes the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial Special District, recognizing Pāhoa's role as a regional town center. It expands permitted uses beyond those allowed under the existing Commercial Village zoning to include light industrial and economic-support uses such as agricultural processing, co-working spaces, creative media studios, and cultural enterprises. This expansion would support entrepreneurship and broaden economic development opportunities for property owners and local businesses.

Bill No. 124 provides an opt-in rezoning mechanism allowing property owners to transition from Commercial Village (CV) zoning to Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC). This

approach ensures participation is voluntary while enabling interested property owners to immediately benefit from the expanded range of permitted uses.

Bill No. 125 clarifies the application of the Pāhoa Village Design Guidelines and establishes a transparent, sustained, and community-led design review framework. This process will help ensure that future construction and renovations respect and reinforce Pāhoa's distinctive small-town plantation character.

Collectively, this legislative package lays critical groundwork for economic revitalization, stability, and long-term resilience in Puna. It creates flexible, community-informed pathways for growth that align with the vision of the Puna CDP Action Committee: Mālama Puna A Mau Loa!

The Committee extends its appreciation to Council Member Ashley Kierkiewicz and her team for their continued collaboration and engagement throughout the development of this initiative. The Puna CDP Action Committee strongly endorses this legislative suite.

Me ke aloha nui,

Melissa Leilani DeMello, Chair
Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee

JH

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