



OFFICE OF PLANNING STATE OF HAWAII

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

LEO R. ASUNCION
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PLANNING

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: <http://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Ref. No. P-

DATE

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,
President
Hawaii State Senate
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Joseph M. Souki,
Speaker
Hawaii State House of Representatives
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro,
Chair
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 222
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Kaniela Ing, Chair
House Committee on Ocean,
Marine Resources, and Hawaiian Affairs
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 427
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Souki, Chair Shimabukuro, and Chair Ing:

I am writing on behalf of the Hawaii Board on Geographic Names (HBGN), a state board established pursuant to Chapter 4E, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), and comprising members from the departments of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Accounting and General Services (DAGS), Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), the University of Hawaii (UH), and the Bishop Museum. Pursuant to HRS §4E-3, HBGN is responsible for designating "the names and spellings of geographic features in Hawaii."

HBGN was recently asked to review a request to correct the spelling of the legal name of the State of Hawaii to the "State of Hawai'i," in effect changing the name of the state. This goes beyond simply correcting a geographic feature name and is outside of HBGN's purview. The US Board on Geographic Names advised HBGN that only Congress or the President can change the name of a state.

The State of Hawaii Attorney General's Office informed the Office of Planning that the Hawaii Revised Statutes is silent on a process to initiate a change in the name of the State. In the absence of a clear process, they suggested that the State act first (e.g., a bill in the State Legislature or an amendment to the State Constitution), then request action by Hawaii's Congressional delegation to introduce the name change in Congress

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
Honorable Joseph M. Souki
Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro
Honorable Kaniela Ing

Date

Page 2

for its approval and recognition or to request a Presidential Executive Order effecting the change. HBGN is forwarding this request to you for your consideration and possible action.

If you wish to pursue this, HBGN members have offered to assist in the effort by reaching out to community, cultural, and educational organizations to gauge their interest and potential support.

If you need more information about this request, please feel free to contact me at (808) 587-2846 or by email at leo.r.asuncion@hawaii.gov.

Mahalo,

Leo R. Asuncion
Director

c: U.S. Senator Brian Schatz
U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono
U.S. Representative Tulsi Gabbard
U.S. Representative Colleen Hanabusa