



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES | KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT | KE KAHUWAI PONO
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

STAFF SUBMITTAL

for the meeting of the
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

October 31, 2024
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Approval of Chairperson's Appointment of
Ciara W. K. Kahahane, as first Deputy to the
Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource Management

In accordance with Section 174C-6, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, I am hereby submitting for your approval, my appointment of Ms. Ciara W. K. Kahahane to the position of First Deputy for the Commission on Water Resource Management with the Governor's concurrence (Exhibit 1). She began working as Deputy on October 10, 2024, subject to your approval.

HRS §174C-6(a) states, in relevant part, "The deputy shall have experience in the area of water resources and shall be appointed by the chairperson with the approval of a majority of the commission." HAR §13-167-8(a) contains an identical provision. Exhibit 2 provides Ms. Kahahane's background that shows she is a graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa with a B.A. in Hawaiian Studies, and obtained her J.D. from the William S. Richardson School of Law. From 2019 to 2021, she served as a law clerk to Judge Robert J. Faris, the Chief Bankruptcy Judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Hawai'i.

For the year and a half preceding her appointment as Deputy Director, Kahahane worked in the Complex Litigation Division of the Department of the Attorney General. Her work involved representing the state in several noteworthy cases, including those with legal issues of statewide importance. On behalf of the state, she played a major role in negotiating and drafting the settlement agreement in *Navahine F. et al. v. Department of Transportation, State of Hawai'i et al.* She also coordinated, on behalf of the Attorney General, the comprehensive review and analysis of the Lahaina wildfires of August 2023 and supported the independent team of experts conducting the review.

Prior to that, she worked in the Public Safety, Hawaiian Home Lands and Housing Division of the Department of the Attorney General, where she provided litigation support as well as advice and counsel to the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) on a wide variety of legal issues. In this role, Kahahane also assisted staff with the adoption and

amendment of administrative rules, including rules governing the provision of water service by HHFDC.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission approves the appointment of Ms. Ciara W. K. Kahahane to the position of Deputy to the Commission on Water Resource Management effective as of October 10, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Exhibit 1 – Office of the Governor’s News Release dated August 26, 2024.

Exhibit 2 – Ms. Ciara W. K. Kahahane background.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 26, 2024

GOVERNOR GREEN SELECTS CIARA KAHAHANE AS HEAD OF THE COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

HONOLULU – Governor Josh Green, M.D., has appointed Ciara (pronounced Key-ruh) Kahahane, currently serving in the Complex Litigation Division of the Dept. of the Attorney General (AG), to be the next First Deputy of the state Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM). Her appointment is subject to approval by CWRM.

“Ciara is a dedicated public servant and I’m confident she will help lead the commission through the many complex issues surrounding management of water resources throughout Hawai‘i,” Governor Green said. “As last year’s devastating Maui wildfires demonstrated, how we conserve, manage and allocate water is one of the most critical issues state government faces.”

DLNR and CWRM Chair Dawn Chang added, “Ciara brings unique expertise as the CWRM Deputy. She is proficient in 'Ōlelo Hawai‘i, has lineal and cultural connections to West Maui, and understands the law, including our public trust duties. Her personal and professional experience equips her to address some of the most challenging water issues with cultural sensitivity and adherence to the law.”

For the past year and a half, Kahahane’s work in the AG’s office involved representing the state in several noteworthy cases, including those with legal issues of statewide importance. She continues to coordinate, on behalf of the Attorney General, the comprehensive review and analysis of the Lahaina wildfires of August 2023. This role includes supporting the independent team of experts conducting the review.

Attorney General Anne Lopez stated, “Ciara is a remarkable woman and an excellent attorney. Ciara’s intelligence, understanding of the tensions surrounding water rights

and usage, and ability to lead will serve her and the people of Hawai'i well.”

Prior to that she worked in the Public Safety, Hawaiian Homelands and Housing Division of the Department of the Attorney General, where she provided litigation support as well as advice and counsel to the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) on a wide variety of legal issues. In this role, Kahahane assisted staff with the adoption and amendment of administrative rules, including rules governing the provision of water service by HHFDC.

After graduating from the Kamehameha Schools Maui and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, William S. Richardson School of Law in 2019, she served as a law clerk to Judge Robert J. Faris, the Chief Bankruptcy Judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Hawai'i. In 2016, also at UH Mānoa she earned a bachelor's degree in Hawaiian studies.

To complete ongoing work at the AG's Office, she will not begin her duties at CWRM until October 10. Dean Uyeno who has been serving as Interim First Deputy will continue in that role until then.

“I'm grateful and excited to be selected as the CWRM First Deputy. I look forward to learning from the commission's experienced and dedicated staff as we navigate the complex and sometimes challenging issues related to water in Hawai'i. I am committed to supporting CWRM's mission of protecting and enhancing the benefits of Hawai'i's water resources for present and future generations through thoughtful and responsible management,” Kahahane said.

###

RESOURCES

(Image courtesy: DLNR)

[Photograph](#) – Ciara Kahahane.


Media Contacts:

Erika Engle
Press Secretary
Office of the Governor, State of Hawai'i
Office: 808-586-0120
Email: erika.engle@hawaii.gov

Makana McClellan
Director of Communications
Office of the Governor, State of Hawai'i
Cell: 808-265-0083
Email: makana.mcclellan@hawaii.gov

Dan Dennison
Communications Director
808-587-0396

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE, ESQ.


ciara.wk.kahahane@hawaii.gov

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, STATE OF HAWAI‘I

Deputy Attorney General, Complex Litigation Division

Jan. 2023 – present

Represent the State of Hawai‘i in litigation of high complexity and statewide importance. Served as lead attorney on several noteworthy cases with high damage claims or particularly significant legal issues. On behalf of the Department of the Attorney General, coordinated with and supported a team of experts contracted to conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the Lahaina fire of August 2023.

Deputy Attorney General, Public Safety, Hawaiian Home Lands & Housing Division

Sept. 2021 – May 2023

Provided advice and counsel to the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) on a wide variety of legal issues. Assisted staff with the adoption and amendment of administrative rules, including rules applying to provision of water service to consumers. Represented the State and HHFDC in court proceedings. Drafted, reviewed, and edited development and other agreements with private parties and other governmental organizations. Reviewed pending legislation for legal and constitutional issues and sought opportunities to resolve any issues in collaboration with the legislature.

U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAI‘I

Law Clerk to the Honorable Robert J. Faris

Aug. 2019 – Aug. 2021

Prepared bench memoranda on all bankruptcy court dockets, including dispositive and evidentiary motions and an appeal before the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel. Collaborated closely with Chief Judge Robert J. Faris in drafting and revising decisions.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA, WILLIAM S. RICHARDSON SCHOOL OF LAW

Research Assistant to Professor Mari J. Matsuda

May 2017 – April 2019

Teaching Assistant to Professor Eric K. Yamamoto, Civil Procedure I & II

August 2018 – April 2019

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA

Juris Doctorate, magna cum laude, May 2019

B.A. in Hawaiian Studies, cum laude, August 2016