
Negotiating Paradise: Looking forward after 65- year military leases



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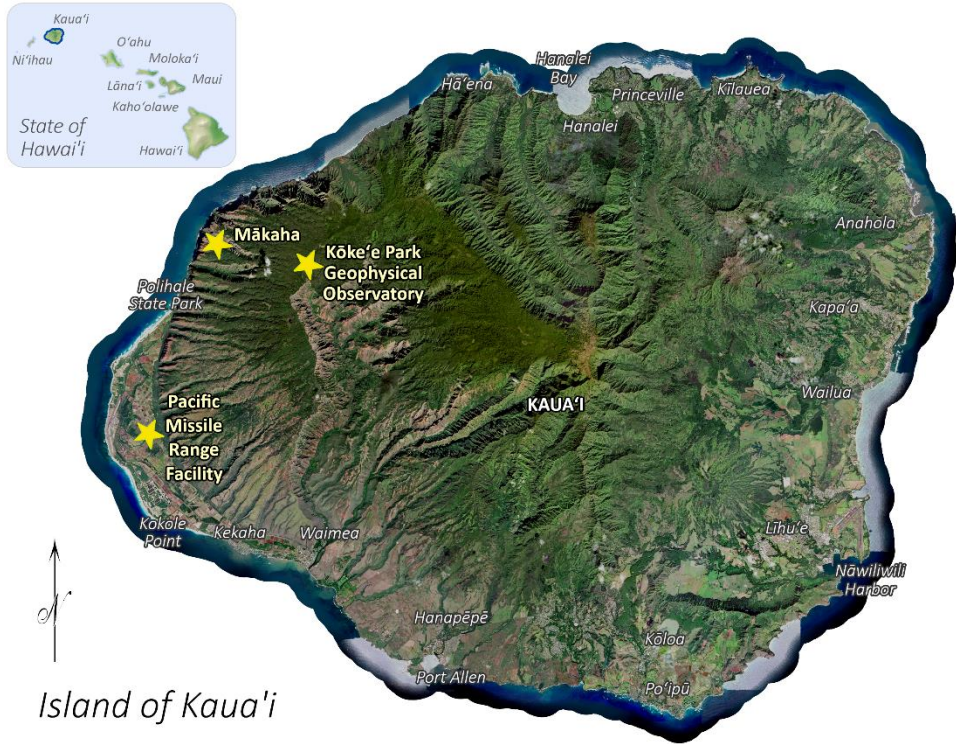
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Outline

1. EIS Project
2. Historic Context
3. Mixed Regulatory Environment
4. Existing Environment and Socioeconomic Tensions
5. EIS Challenges and Lessons Learned



Island of Kaua'i

The EIS Project

- Who? Navy and NASA
- What? Combined NEPA and HEPA EIS for new real estate agreements
- Where? West Kaua'i, HI
- When? Project began in 2022; Scoping 2024; Draft EIS 2025; Final EIS 2026
- Why? Real estate agreements with the State of Hawai'i are expiring, and combined EIS due to the overlapping Navy and NASA real estate agreements



History Between Native Hawaiians and U.S. Military

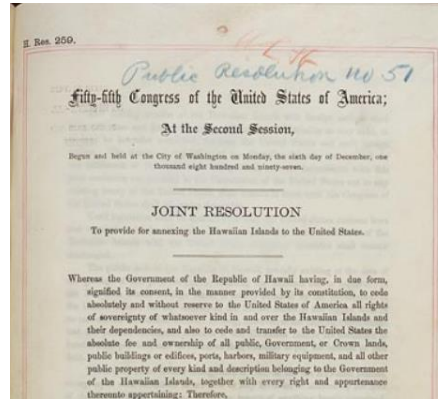
Overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani, Kingdom of Hawai'i, 1893



Republic of Hawai'i, 1894-1898



Hawai'i annexed as a U.S. territory, 1898



Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Hawaii



Seaward-facing aerial view of Ford Island, Naval Station Pearl Harbor, in June 1941. Note the three battleships moored at left (NH 6 47800 21)

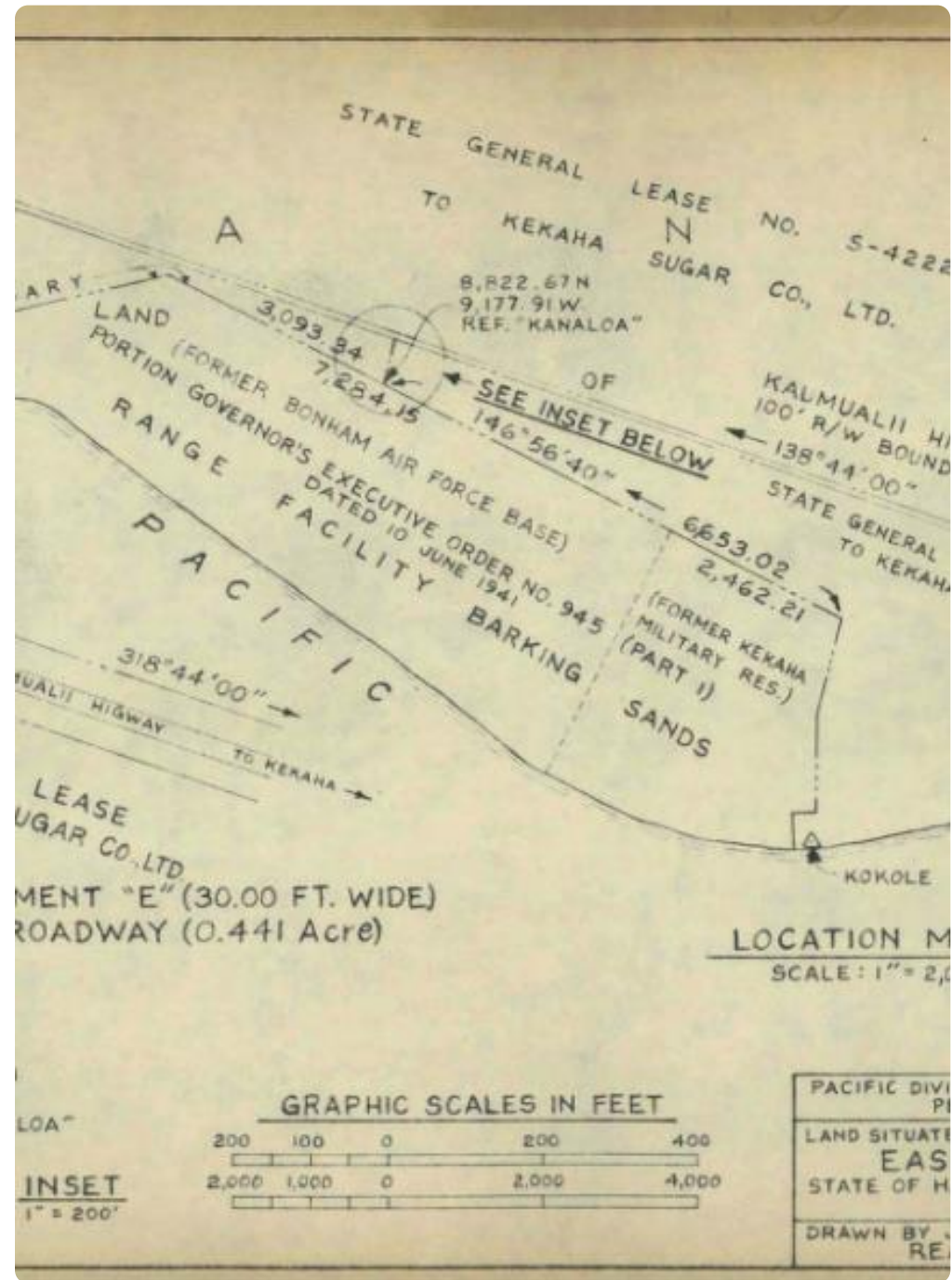
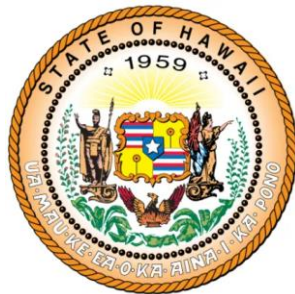
Source: <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/organization-and-administration/installations/naval-station-pearl-harbor.html>

Photo Sources (L to R): <https://ags.hawaii.gov/archives/about-us/photograph-collection/queen-liliuokalani-photograph-exhibition/>; <https://picryl.com/media/members-of-the-constitutional-convention-republic-of-hawaii-pp-28-7-023-cropped-0c09b0>; <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/joint-resolution-for-annexing-the-hawaiian-islands>



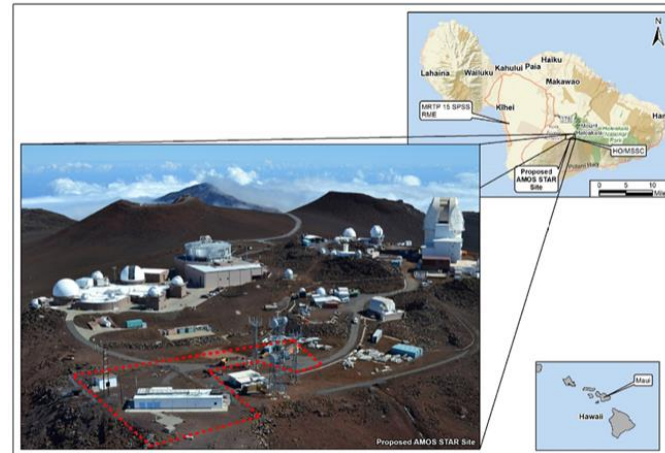
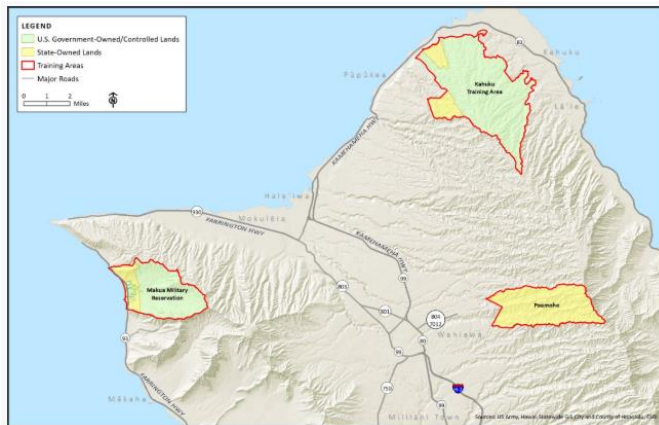
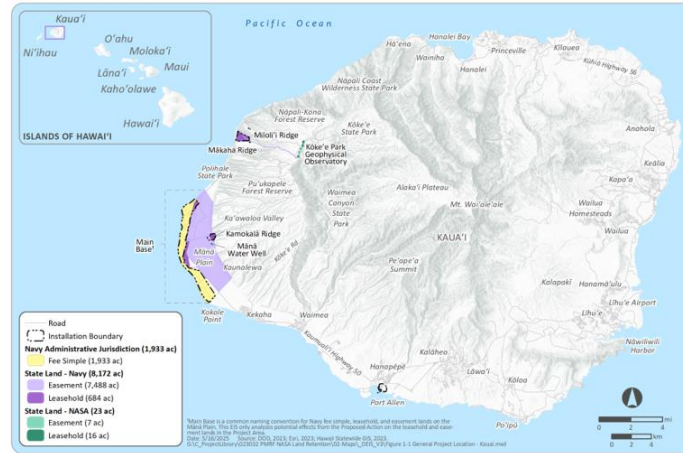
Military Real Estate Agreements

- Hawai'i admitted as a U.S. state in 1959
- 1960s: Military branches entered into 60-year+ real estate agreements with the State of Hawai'i, some valued at \$1
- 2020s: Real estate agreements expiring





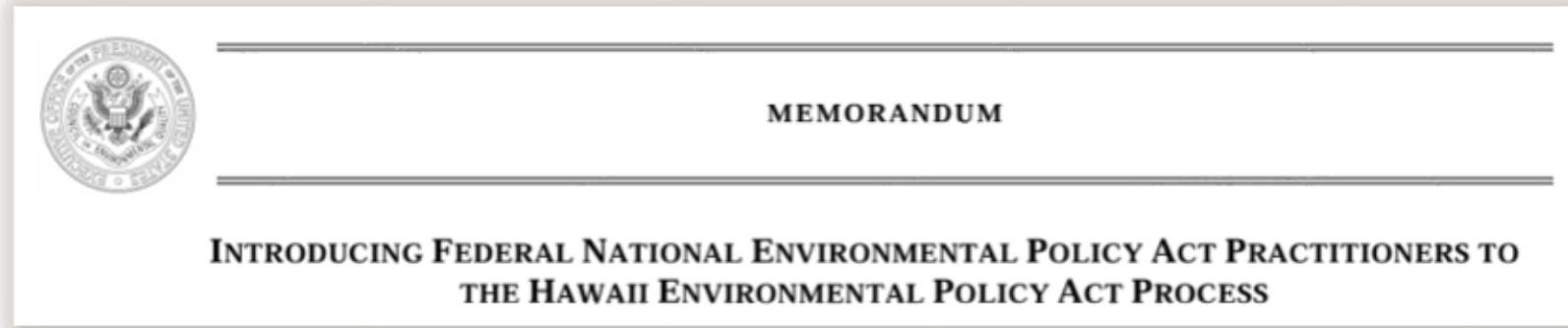
Other Military Facilities, Similar Process



Sources: <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/04/the-days-of-the-army-leasing-land-in-hawaii-for-1-are-likely-over-but-whats-next/>; <https://kawaiola.news/cover/to-cede-or-to-seed-has-the-election-changed-the-state-of-hawaiis-approach-to-the-expiring-military-leases/>; <https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/OHA-AI-BOT-25-18-signed.pdf>; <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/ptaeis/project-overview>; <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/OahuEIS/project-overview>; <https://pmrf-kpgo-eis.com>; <https://www.amosstareis.com/home>



Mixed Regulatory Framework: Joint HEPA and NEPA EIS



← CEQ Memo
Published in 2015

NEPA:

- Federal action
- U.S. Navy is lead agency
- At completion – ROD



HEPA:

- Use of State lands
- U.S. Navy is applicant, approving agency is BLNR
- At completion – Acceptance/Rejection of EIS
- Procedural and content requirements





Economic Values vs Public Perception

Economic value

- Direct military contributions account for 9% (\$10.2 B) of the State of Hawai'i's GDP
- Direct, indirect, and induced contributions account for approx 16% (\$17.4 B) of Hawai'i's GDP

- PMRF is third largest employer on Kaua'i, largest high-tech
- PMRF employs 900 people, contributes \$150 M annually to local economy
- Stable, technical employment
- PMRF supplies critical emergency services to community



Economic Values vs Public Perception

Public perception

- Historical injustice continues to be relevant
- Hawaiian sovereignty movement
 - Originated in 1890s
 - Focused on anti-military activism in the 1970s
 - Centers on land as ancestor
- Protests and activism against the military
 - Generally peaceful, lots of emotion
- Comments on EIS overwhelmingly negative



The upside-down Hawaiian flag is used to symbolize the sovereignty movement. Credit: Brendan George Ko



Challenges with this EIS



<https://kainownews.com/2025/11/27/first-major-winter-swell-expected-this-weekend-along-north-west-shorelines/>



1. Challenges with Public Input

- Creating productive meetings →
- Welcoming, safe, homemade dinner
 - Changing oral comment format

- Processing negative comments →
- Staff risk communication training
 - Don't dismiss emotional comments as non-substantive

- Handling misinformation →
- Be respectful
 - Provide accurate information



2. Challenges with Analysis

- Historical feelings of injustice vs socioeconomic and community benefits
- Where to discuss in EIS, and how to analyze?
 - Land Use** → changing terminology around land ownership
 - Cultural Practices** → Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) interviews and careful description to honor opinions
 - Socioeconomics** → can't quantify, cost of lease negotiated after EIS complete
- Navy analysis vs NASA analysis
 - Subsections by geographic location
 - Multiple contractors



Prayer at the Lua Kupapa'u O Nohili Crypt at PMRF. Source: PMRF Installation.



3. Challenges with Regulatory Environment

HEPA – No changes

NEPA – Changes!

Sea level rise → Reword, clarify

Environmental Justice → Redistribute

Length of document → Add to clarify

State's role → Facilitate

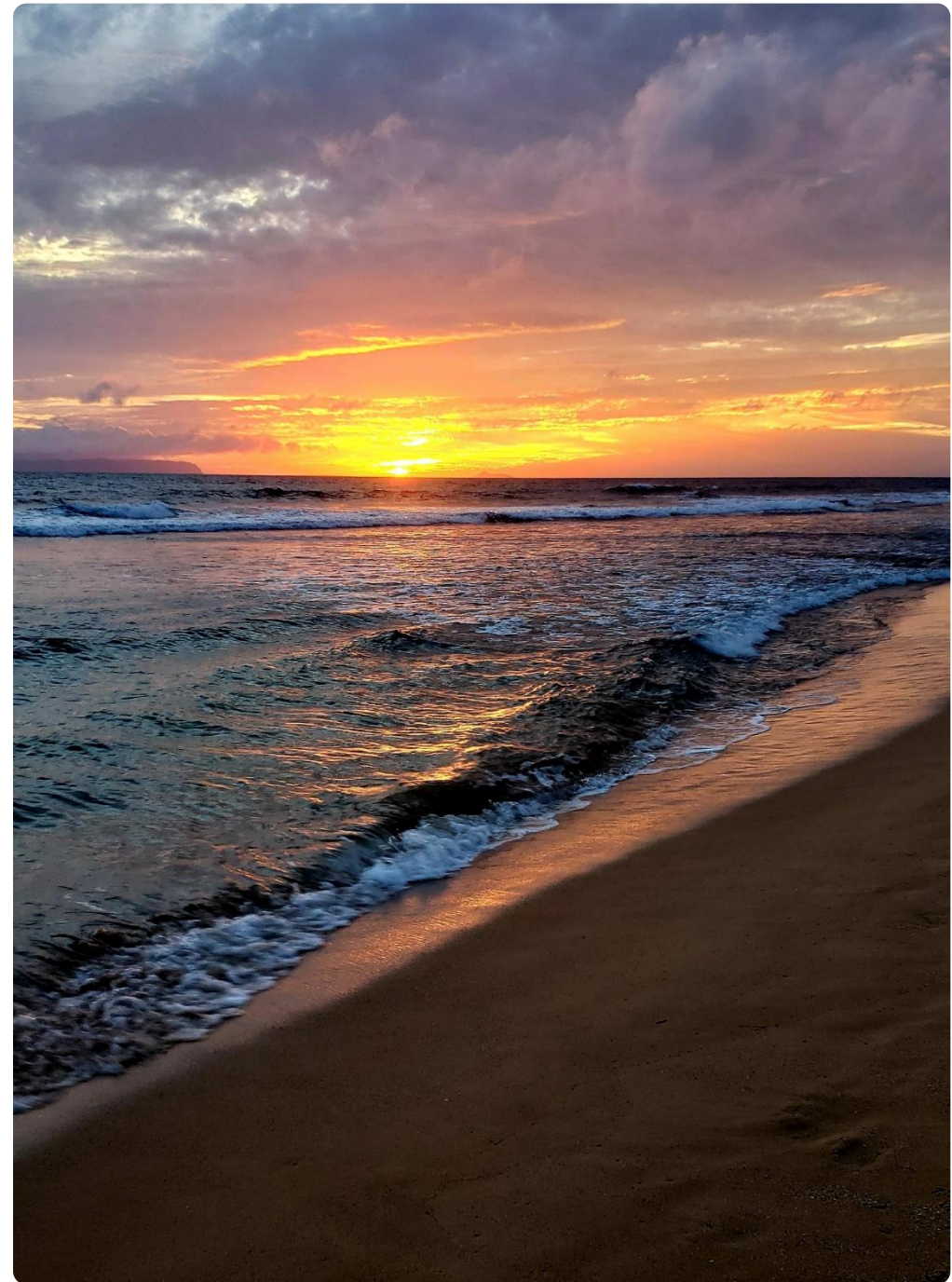


Conclusion: Go Slow to Go Fast

- **Slowing down** and seeking high-value sources of information improved the quality of our document and the relationship with the public
- In turn, this **streamlines and speeds up** the overall EIS process

How?

- **Changing public meeting format** meant more public engagement, better public relations, and improved perception of the project and EIS
- **Quality Input:** Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) interviews and encouraging Local Team input resulted in-depth conversations and feedback



Thank you

