



Bob Hood
 HEMA President

The HEMA Golf Tournament was a great success on April 1st, 2024. On behalf of HEMA, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your participation in and support of the 2024 annual HEMA golf tournament held at the beautiful Oahu Country Club. Your presence and support made this event truly memorable.

To all our attendees, your passion and sportsmanship added an extra layer of enjoyment to the tournament. It was wonderful to see so many people come together to share in the joy of the game and the camaraderie it brings. We hope you enjoyed the amazing views and challenging course as much as we did.

A special note of appreciation goes out to all our sponsors. Your generosity in financial support and in-kind donations helped make the tournament a success. Your contributions made the event better for everyone involved but also helps us keep growing the sport of golf in our community. Our participants particularly enjoyed the wonderful treats they received in all the golf goodie bags.

Once again, mahalo for being a part of this incredible event. Your ongoing support means the world to us, and we look forward to welcoming you back next year for another fantastic tournament.



Mahalo to Our 2024 Golf Sponsors!

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'24 Legislative Session

Hawaii's state legislature has reached the halfway point of its 2024 session. This means lawmakers have had several months to introduce bills on a wide range of issues, from education and healthcare to environmental protection and economic development.

The coming weeks will be crucial as lawmakers debate, refine, and vote on these bills. The first critical period is often referred to as "crossover," where bills passed by one chamber are sent to the other for consideration. In early April, a second crossover will occur, and key decisions will be made about which bills advance, which are stalled, and which require amendments to address concerns.

The August Lahaina wildfire continues to have profound impacts on state finances. The House lawmakers unanimously approved a draft state budget that includes \$1 billion to help finance the recovery effort for Maui this year and next while maintaining state operations without widespread budget cuts or tapping into the Emergency and Budget Reserve Fund. However, the Senate has taken a much more dire view of the budget situation in recent weeks, instructing state departments to prepare for potentially painful cuts of 10% to 15%.

While state finances play out, it has worked out in retailers' favor with respect to a proposal to impose a ban on flavored tobacco products. The estimated tax revenue losses were up to \$90.7 million if flavored tobacco and vape products were banned. This measure is no longer considered for passage this year.

One bill that, until recently, had been making its way through the legislative session would have provided for extended family leave insurance benefits to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. HEMA and other state organizations provided written testimony of opposition to this bill, and it also is no longer being considered for passage this year.

From the recovery efforts in Maui to the potential cuts in state departments, each decision carries weight and consequence. The shelving of the flavored tobacco ban and the ongoing debate over family leave insurance benefits are indicative of the complex and multifaceted issues at hand.

Finally, there are also two related measures Relating to Harbor Safety, which would require that the securing of mooring lines from vessels to the State's commercial docks, wharves, piers, quays, and landings be performed by the harbors' stevedores. The bills claim that any stevedoring job, mooring operations carry significant risks, and accidents can have devastating consequences, even death. While HEMA originally provided written testimony of opposition to the original bill given: (i) potential interruptions to barging scheduling, (ii) anticipated higher costs, and (iii) because it was deemed unnecessary, a subsequent amendment was drafted that no longer garnered full support by HEMA Members. As such, HEMA is no longer providing comment to this legislation. It is currently progressing through the legislature.

Maui Wildfire

Maui County and Hawaii State Officials in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency have announced temporary modular home group housing projects to provide an estimated 4,000 interim housing

units for wildfire survivors. This total includes 169 units being provided by FEMA, and 450 units being provided by the State of Hawaii. The development will occur in land that has long been planned for residential neighborhood development. Many of the Lahaina residents displaced by the wildfire still reside in either hotels or condominiums arranged by local organizations.

The on-going removal and disposal of the fire debris/rubble is continuing within dedicated zones and is expected to take up to another 12 months to complete. The prioritization of areas for clean-up is partially determined on the results of the inspections of city infrastructure services, in addition to what patterns are most efficient for the contracting crews.

The Maui County Mayor has requested \$401.75MM over the next three years to support Lahaina's rebuilding and recovery. During a State Senate Ways and Means Committee hearing, the mayor stated, "*Never has Maui come to this body with a more urgent, critical and justified need, and while I fully recognize you are faced with many priorities this session, none are of a higher priority than the people and town of Lahaina.*" The mayor further stated, "*Every day, our people are leaving, and this is a consequence that I cannot make peace with.*" He added "*We must make our people whole again, and we cannot do it without the support of the state.*"

In all, rebuilding and recovery estimates would cost the state and county \$600.5MM, which would target critical infrastructure, housing, and emergency response.

Finally, Maui County officials plan to open an office that will speed up their self-acknowledged slow process of reviewing building permits, which will help the town of Lahaina recover and rebuild as expeditiously as possible. They plan to open this new permitting review service in April of '24, and it will be managed by a third-party Vendor.

