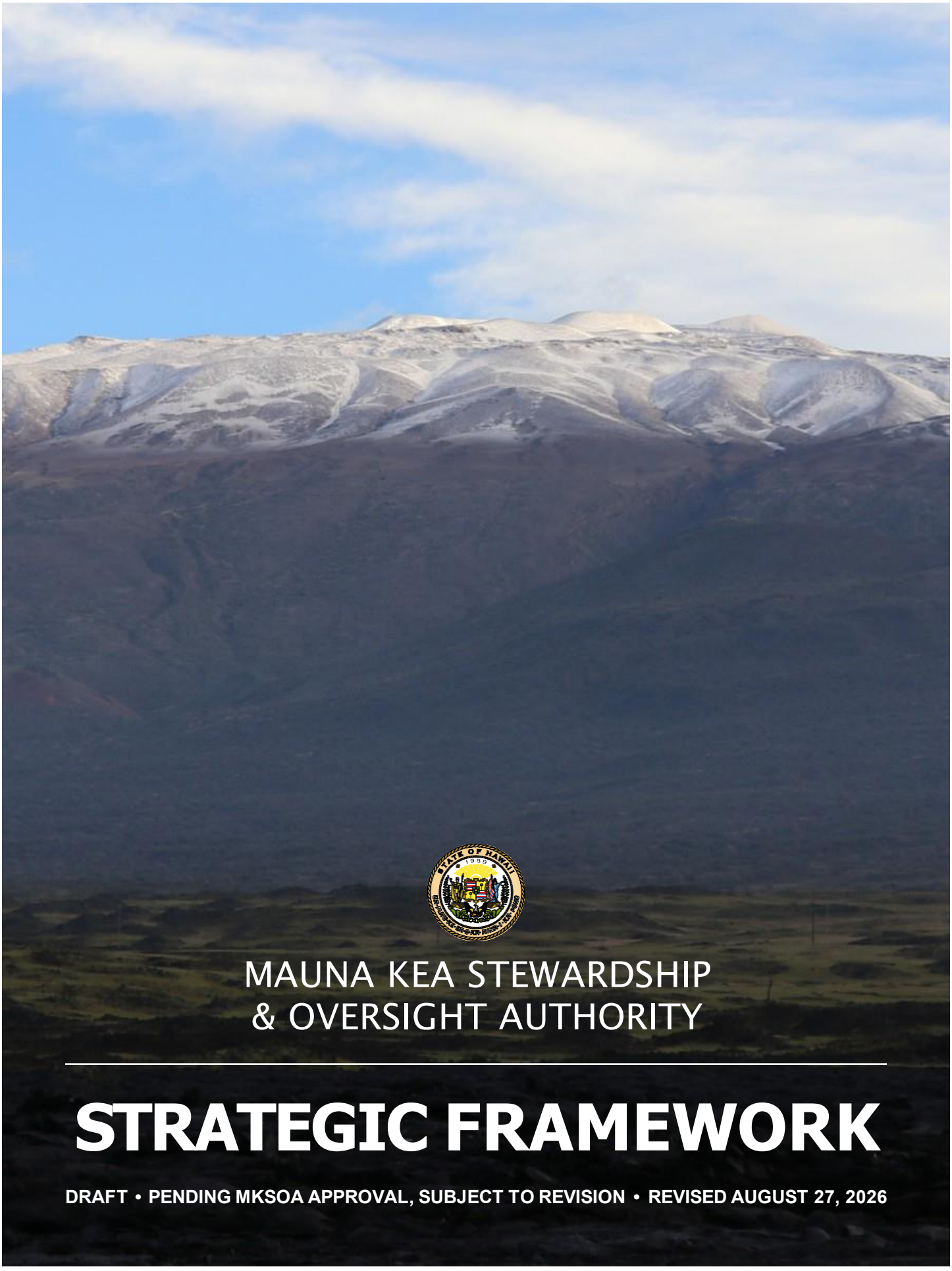

MAUNA KEA STEWARDSHIP
& OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

DRAFT • PENDING MKSOA APPROVAL, SUBJECT TO REVISION • REVISED AUGUST 27, 2026

LEGISLATIVE FINDING AND INTENT

Mauna Kea holds profound spiritual, environmental, and scientific significance. Its summit is home to sacred cultural landscapes, fragile ecosystems, and historic and archaeological artifacts. Rising above the Pacific, Mauna Kea's unique geographic and atmospheric conditions have also made it one of the world's most important locations for astronomical observation and discovery, contributing to humanity's understanding of the universe.

Over time, concerns regarding the increasing use of Mauna Kea and the expansion of astronomy facilities brought great attention to the protection of the mountain's cultural and natural resources, questions of stewardship responsibility, and the need for greater community trust, accountability, and balance in decision-making.

In response, the Hawai'i State Legislature established the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority (MKSOA) through Act 255, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, to guide a new model of governance and stewardship for Mauna Kea. The Legislature intended for the MKSOA to provide balanced oversight that honors the mauna's cultural and environmental significance while responsibly managing educational and scientific uses.

MISSION AND PURPOSE

To steward and protect Mauna Kea for future generations through a balanced and collaborative approach that honors its cultural, environmental, educational, and scientific significance.

The Authority is committed to a stewardship model that honors cultural practices, safeguards natural resources, and supports education and scientific research for future generations.

CORE VALUES

The following were taken directly from the 2022 Mauna Kea Working Group Report, which became Act 255, the founding legislation establishing MKSOA, now codified in Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 195H.

1. **Mauna Aloha** – Understanding the responsibility to reciprocate for the Mauna's value to humanity by making a long-term commitment to maintaining the integrity of Mauna Kea's spiritual significance and extraordinary environmental qualities. HRS 195H-4(1).

2. **ʻŌpū Kūpuna** – Understanding and embracing a duty and accountability to Mauna Kea and the natural environment, as well as perpetuating the Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices embedded in the landscape of the Mauna. HRS 195H-4(2).

3. **Holomua ʻOi Kelakela** – Driven by creativity and innovation, constantly challenging the status quo with a commitment to stewardship of Mauna Kea that is informed by existing wisdom and traditions, as well as expanding knowledge. The Authority shall be mindful and considerate of the impacts generated by current and future needs, trends and research opportunities and shall seek ways to move forward which enhance the ability to serve as responsible stewards without jeopardizing the foundation of ʻāina aloha. HRS 195H-4(3).

Additionally, the Authority is further guided by the natural laws referred to as kānāwai, as defined by Dr. Pualani Kanakaʻole Kanahele.

4. **Kānāwai** – Observing four laws of nature that govern our relationship to our ʻāina that are meant to ensure the health of the ʻāina so that it will continue to nurture all life forms.

    - **Hoʻokikī Kānāwai** – the edict of continuum, cycles that balance and regulate our environment.
    - **Kuaʻā Kānāwai** – the edict of emergency, cycles replete with natural phenomena and elemental activity that forecast impending disaster.
    - **Kaiʻokia Kānāwai** – the edict of boundaries, delineations of the divisions of earth established by lava flows, rivers, valleys, ocean, shoreline, land, sky and forest.
    - **Kīhoʻihoʻi Kānāwai** – the edict of regeneration, reflecting the resilience of land and an ability to recover from destructive actions and reestablish its natural regenerative cycles.

5. **Kaiāulu** – Community. Kaiāulu holds people in kinship and in relationship to place, recognizing the interwoven nature of different needs and desires while focusing on what may be possible together with Mauna Aloha at the center, carrying out responsibilities and possibilities over multiple generations.

6. **Kuleana** – Responsibility. We are accountable to the Mauna itself and to the people of Hawaiʻi. We, the Mauna Kea Authority, are compelled to cultivate

good relationships, respectful dialogue, broad engagement, mutual education and collaborative work.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

(Listed in Alphabetical Order)

Commitment to Community Engagement - Planning and implementing outreach and engagement programs will involve the people of Moku o Keawe (Hawai‘i Island) and across the Pae ‘Āina, including cultural practitioners, community members with expertise in land and natural resource management, education, and the sciences.

Land Use Management - We endorse activities that have a clear and specific purpose, with appropriate regulatory oversight and that operate within the leave no trace model. We will use land-use regulations to manage impacts, support the coexistence of users, reduce ground disturbance, and promote sustainable practices. This includes managing energy use, wastewater, potable water, emissions, and visual impacts.

Preservation & Restoration of Natural Resources - We will carefully manage human activity on the Mauna and embrace preservation and restoration efforts that use an ecosystem approach, the integrated management of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

Protection of Native Hawaiian Rights - As set forth in the Hawai‘i State Constitution, we uphold traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights. We honor and encourage initiatives that increase understanding of Native Hawaiian history and cultural practices related to Mauna Kea.

Significance of the Mauna - We protect Mauna Kea as one of the most significant wahi pana in Hawaiian culture, for the people of Hawai‘i and throughout the Pacific, and as a world-leader in astronomy research and innovation. For these reasons, permitted activities must be held to the highest standards and practices to respect and honor the history and sacredness of Mauna Kea.

Support of Astronomy - Guided by State policy, we are committed to supporting astronomy and its reciprocal relationship with Mauna Kea. We encourage education and research, particularly for student growth and workforce development programs that support empowerment of our local families.

MKSOA BOARD MEMBERS

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MKSOA STAFF

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Interim Executive Director

Bill Stormont
Project Director

Keala Patterson
Administrative Services Officer

Puaʻena Ahn
Program Specialist, Research & Reporting

Sarah Clark
Executive Assistant

Additional Resources

Mauna Kea Working Group Report HR33 SLH 2021

Act 255, Session Laws of Hawaiʻi 2022

Mauna Kea Stewardship & Oversight Authority Website