



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

April 24, 2006

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Clyde W. Namu'o
ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Members of the Native Hawaiian Coalition:

In February 2004, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs convened an advisory group that later decided to call itself the Native Hawaiian Coalition. The group was tasked with determining the steps to form a nation.

As time progressed, the Coalition was slow in determining the steps to form a nation. At each meeting, hours upon hours were wasted with haggling over the agenda, refusing to agree to an agenda, and re-raising issues that had been decided at prior meetings.

Finally, after ten months and five meetings, the Coalition agreed to six (6) main components to creating a nation. Ironically, they were the same six steps that OHA proposed to the advisory group in January 2004 before the meetings started.

Coalition members then decided they wanted more time to flesh out the details of each component. OHA funded more meetings to give Coalition participants time to do that. However, again, the Coalition wasted many hours and meetings haggling over the same kinds of things: agendas, rules of order, and decisions made at prior meetings.

For the past year and three months, the Coalition has been stuck on organizing itself. The group has not been able to agree on a leadership structure, an election process, or permanent leadership. As a result, the task of refining the steps has fallen by the wayside and no progress has been made.

More importantly, the Coalition seems to have lost sight of the fact that it is a *temporary* entity tasked only with determining the steps to nationhood. It is not the nation itself nor are its members duly elected delegates of the Hawaiian community as a whole.

Based on all of this, we have reached a point where OHA needs to make a decision about moving the Hawaiian community toward nation-building absent the Coalition's ability to move forward and complete its assignment. This is what we observe:

1. The Coalition has completed its task of determining the steps to form a nation.

2. The Coalition has started to refine the steps to forming a nation but has not completed it.

3. The Coalition is stuck on organizational structure and appears unable to elect permanent leadership or move toward completion of refining the steps to forming a nation.

In addition, the Coalition has cost OHA more than \$200,000. This sum could be an acceptable amount if the Coalition was moving forward, but it is not.

At the same time, OHA has a fiduciary duty to all Hawaiians, not just the 200 or so people who have been participating in Coalition meetings. OHA has an obligation to move nation-building forward in a timely manner as legal threats against Native Hawaiian assets continue at a fast pace.

OHA recognizes that Coalition participants may need an opportunity to bring closure to the work they started. Based on that, OHA will pay for one more large group discussion that Coalition members are welcome to attend. It is not a Coalition meeting. It is a discussion at which Coalition members and others will be given a final opportunity to refine the steps. You may wish to meet on your islands beforehand to discuss refinement of the steps, then share that refinement with everyone else at this final meeting. We will invite 'Aha Hawai'i 'Ōiwi (AHO) and similar groups who have made significant progress in nation-building to attend the meeting, react to the steps, and participate in refinement of the steps.

The sole item on the agenda at this meeting will be refinement of the steps to building a nation. OHA will facilitate the meeting. The rules of order will be by consensus. The meeting facilitators will follow a timed agenda. If the group is unable to follow the agenda and complete its task by the end of the day, OHA will look to other community organizations to complete the task on behalf of the entire Hawaiian community.

We recognize the Coalition may want to continue organizing itself. That is fine. However, OHA will not pay for those meetings as a matter of course. The Coalition is encouraged to apply for an OHA grant like other community organizations do and be subject to standard grant prerequisites and requirements.

We hope you will agree this is a way we can move forward as one people toward nation-building.

Native Hawaiian Coalition
April 24, 2006
Page 3

If you have signed up with OHA as a participant at Coalition meetings, you will receive a meeting notice shortly as soon as the logistics for this meeting are determined. We will mail materials beforehand so you can read them and be prepared to make decisions. We humbly suggest that everyone leave their personal agendas at home and come prepared to vote and decide on the steps and their details.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me or our Hawaiian Governance staff. We welcome your feedback on this plan, and we look forward to a productive meeting in coming weeks.

As a people we need to move forward quickly to a process that will allow *all* Hawaiians to elect delegates to an 'Aha where governing documents can be drafted and put to vote for ratification. We must do this quickly as time is of the essence.

'O wau iho nō,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clyde W. Nāmu'o". The signature is written in a cursive style with some stylized flourishes.

Clyde W. Nāmu'o
Administrator

cc: BOT