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U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$1.8 Million to Support Business Retention and Growth in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced that the Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$1.8 million grant to the Natural Energy Lab of Hawaii (NELHA), Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, to support business retention and growth initiatives at a sustainable technology park. The EDA grant, to be matched with \$459,658 in local investment, is expected to create 250 jobs and spur \$40 million in private investment.

“The eruption of the Kilauea Volcano had a devastating impact on Hawaii’s economy,” said **Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo**. “This project will support the Big Island’s recovery through the creation of well-paying, quality jobs and the establishment of green technology industries.”

“EDA is committed to helping communities across Hawaii build back stronger following natural disasters,” said **Dennis Alford, Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development**. “This EDA investment will allow the NELHA-administered Hawaii Ocean Sciences and Technology Park to extend its Aquaculture Accelerator program and develop an associated aquaculture incubator program, helping attract new businesses and industries.”

“This project builds on the success of a three-year pilot aquaculture program and aims to transform that program into a self-sustaining long-term effort to attract significant investment and increase job creation in Hawaii,” said **Governor David Ige**.

“Hawaii has a deep history of aquaculture – one that dates back hundreds of years and continues today, blending traditional practices with modern technology,” said **Senator Brian Schatz**. “This investment will give NELHA more resources to grow Hawaii Island’s aquaculture industry and build on Hawaii’s rich tradition of sustainable fish farming.”

“Federal investments like today’s announcement by EDA are critical to helping Hawaii Island continue its road to recovery following the 2018 Kilauea eruption,” **said Senator Mazie Hirono**. “These funds will not only continue the accelerator program at NELHA, maintaining Hawaii as a key global player in bringing sustainable aquaculture research and technology development to market, but will expand that effort by supporting the creation of an incubator while along the way supporting hundreds of jobs and leveraging millions of dollars.”

“NELHA’s Hawaii Ocean and Science Technology Park (HOST) serves as the premier site for ocean-related research and education in the U.S.,” **said Congressman Kaiuli‘i Kahele (HI-02)**. “Funding from the EDA allows HOST to continue its work on renewable, clean energy technologies while expanding job growth and green economic development in Hawai‘i.”

This project is funded by the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019 ([Pub. L. 116-20](#)), which provided EDA with \$600 million in additional Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Program funds for disaster relief and recovery for areas affected by Hurricanes Florence, Michael, and Lane, Typhoons Yutu and Mangkhut, wildfires, volcanic eruptions, and other major natural disasters occurring in calendar year 2018, and tornadoes and floods occurring in calendar year 2019, under the [Robert T. Stafford Act](#). Please visit EDA’s [Disaster Supplemental webpage](#) for more information.

About the U.S. Economic Development Administration (www.eda.gov)

The U.S. Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation’s regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA makes investments in economically distressed communities to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.

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