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March 20, 2022

# Aloha!

Aloha, Friend.

In this Congressional e-newsletter, I update you on the worsening tragedy in Ukraine and impacts back home, report on solid results for Hawai'i in Congress' just completed annual federal funding measure, ask for your help in preventing our two beautiful Hawai'i national parks from intrusion by commercial tour helicopters, and invite you to join another of my live Tele-Talk Stories this Wednesday, March 23rd, at 6:30PM Hawai'i time.

## **Standing with Ukraine.**

Last Wednesday, March 16th, I joined my colleagues in the U.S. Capitol at a rare joint session of Congress to hear directly from Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. President Zelenskyy said what we all know, that Russia's February 24th unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine was an attack not just on a sovereign, independent country and its

people, but on its democracy, on our democratic world. He graphically presented the tragedy of purposeful Russian attacks on civilians, of mounting death and injury, and of a humanitarian crisis in encircled cities and among a now-estimated 6.5 million displaced Ukrainians. He asked for our continued help, with assistance including weapons and a no-fly zone over Ukraine.

We have joined the rest of the democratic world in imposing the toughest and broadest sanctions on any country ever. Last week Congress passed and the President signed into law \$13.6 billion in emergency assistance, including weapons and other defense supplies which are already reaching Ukraine. I have joined other colleagues in supporting much more defense assistance; [here](#) is the statement of my bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus. Earlier this week, I joined my U.S. House colleagues in moving to revoke Russia's favored nation trading status. President Biden and Congress are pursuing further actions, both ourselves and together with our partners around the world, to make the consequences to Russia and Putin of continuing with this invasion far worse than any gains they hope to achieve.

Thus far President Biden and our NATO allies have declined to pursue a no-fly zone. This is because a fully-enforced no-fly zone would require direct attacks by us and our allies on Russian aircraft and ground missiles both in Ukraine and in Russia, a far greater and riskier expansion of the conflict. I support the President's decision, as deeply frustrating as that is, though like the President I do not believe we can rule that or any other action out under all circumstances. For now, we must pursue and expand all current efforts to isolate Russia and help Ukraine, with our goal of inflicting such a price on Russia that it withdraws.

These actions all come at a cost back home as we correctly ban imports from and exports to Russia. But while Russian oil only accounts for less than 2% of our country's total supply, it has been around 25% of Hawaii's total. The great majority of Hawaii's oil comes from foreign rather than domestic supply largely because it costs fully 3-4 times more to ship domestic oil to Hawai'i than from farther distances overseas. That huge cost difference is because of the Jones Act, a century-old federal law that prevents us from bringing in our own country's oil on plentiful and affordable international tankers. As we look to replace 25% of our oil supply, we shouldn't be effectively prevented from accessing our own country's supplies. I therefore asked the President for a limited, targeted waiver of the Jones Act to allow international shipping to bring domestic oil to Hawai'i during our ban on Russian oil. [Here](#) is my full press release

detailing my request to the President, as well as legislation I introduced in the U.S. House to mandate a similar exemption.

## **Obtaining Solid Fiscal Year 2022 Federal Funding Results for Hawai'i.**

Whether or not we face emergencies like Ukraine or COVID-19, our federal government and its assistance to our states for ongoing programs and other efforts must continue and must be funded from year to year. That funding must come from Congress and is directed by our House and Senate Appropriations Committees. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I begin focusing on federal funding for what our country and Hawai'i need each fiscal year about a year before the fiscal year begins. I then follow the process all the way through our Appropriations Committee's and Congress' deliberations and decisions to passage and signature by the President, and then I follow the appropriated funds through the federal distribution phase to be sure they are received and applied as intended back home.

This past Tuesday, March 15th, the President signed into law the \$1.5 trillion Consolidated Appropriations Act 2022 [here](#), our current fiscal year appropriations measure. Besides being a solid result for our country, the Fiscal Year 2022 funding measure was a great result for our Hawai'i, with billions funded for necessary and worthy programs and needs across the board.

Just some of the provisions I was able to include in the measure are: another \$736 million to address Red Hill, to go with \$403 million in emergency funding we obtained in an emergency measure just weeks ago; \$38 million for Native Hawaiian education; \$34 million for invasive species prevention; \$19.7 million for the East-West Center; \$235 million for military construction projects; \$1.187 billion (nationally) for the two main federal programs assisting local police forces; and \$2.2 billion (nationally) for homeless veterans. I also obtained approval of all ten of my Community Project Funding (CPF) requests for specific community needs, including \$2 million to assist the Blood Bank of Hawai'i to construct its new headquarters in Kapolei, \$1.05 million for Kookia Kalihi Valley to assist with a new health and learning center, \$975,000 for the State of Hawai'i Workforce Development Council for digital skills literacy training, and \$415,000 for the Waikīkī Marine Life Conservation District site restoration project.

[Here's](#) a full summary of our measure as it affects Hawaii specifically. I'm grateful to my staff and our local government and community partners for

a very successful appropriations year (although we are all already fully focused on the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023 bill).

## **Preserving and Protecting Hawaii's National Parks From Tour Helicopter/Small Aircraft Disruption.**

Throughout our Hawai'i, excessive unregulated commercial helicopter/small aircraft tour operations have heightened safety concerns in the air and on the ground and severely disrupted our communities and special places. This has been especially true in our two treasured national parks, Hawai'i Volcanoes and Haleakalā, with pre-COVID overflights of 16,500 per year for Hawai'i Volcanoes and 5,000 per year for Haleakalā, some of the very highest in the entire National Park System. These flights disrupt communities on the way to and from the parks, destroy the serenity of these natural treasures, have significant impacts on the natural environment and soundscape, inhibit perpetuation of cultural connections to our landscapes, impede the preservation of endemic Hawaiian ecosystems and diminish visitors' abilities to learn about and enjoy the parks' resources.

In 2000, Congress passed the National Parks Air Tour Management Act to require the National Park Service (NPS) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to work together to set up specific air tour management plans (ATMP) for each national park, but the agencies, especially the FAA, dragged their feet for over a decade. It took a lawsuit from a Hawai'i community group for the federal courts to order FAA and NPS to implement either ATMPs or voluntary agreements for the most heavily-impacted parks including Hawaii's. The NPS is now proceeding with development of ATMPs for Hawai'i Volcanoes and Haleakalā and is requesting public comment on alternatives: (1) no action/status quo/historic levels; (2) maximum protection/no air tours under 5,000 feet above ground within a half mile of the parks; (3) specific routes through the parks with caps on total flight per day and annually; and (4) (for Hawai'i Volcanoes) more limited routes with caps. The Honolulu Civil Beat article [here](#) summarizes the process.

I will be submitting comments urging maximum protection for both of our parks. I will be saying basically that no company or person has the right to destroy our national parks for any reason, including tourism, that we have many other opportunities for different people of different abilities to enjoy our national parks, and that air tours are fundamentally inconsistent with the reasons for which we established our national parks to start with.

We need your help with your own comments in your own words and from your own experiences. The deadline for submission is April 1st. The NPS is asking for "substantive comments," meaning more than just that you support an alternative, but why and why the other alternatives won't work. To review the ATMP proposals and comment: [here](#) for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and [here](#) for Haleakalā National Park.

### **Talking Story With You Again This Wednesday, March 23rd.**

In these difficult times and with so many challenges and opportunities facing us, I believe it is more important than ever that I stay in touch with you to report on my activities, listen to your concerns and input and answer your questions. To that end, I'm hosting another of my Live Tele-Talk Story Community Meetings this coming Wednesday, March 23rd, 6:30-8:00PM Hawai'i time. Many in my First Congressional District (Honolulu from Makapu'u to Mililani and 'Ewa/Kapolei) will receive a call from me at 808-650-6688 right before we start; to join please just stay on the line. If you don't get that call but want to join, please call 855-274-9528 or go to my web site [here](#).

As always, my office and I welcome your questions and comments and stand ready to assist you and yours wherever and however we can. Please go to our website at <https://case.house.gov>, email us at [ed.case@mail.house.gov](mailto:ed.case@mail.house.gov), or call us at (808) 650-6688.

Be safe and be well.

*Mahalo nui loa,  
Ed Case*

P.S. Please sign up for my regular e-newsletter [here](#).

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