

Resolution

No. 24-107

CELEBRATING THE 13TH FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS AND CULTURE HOSTED BY HAWAI'I, JUNE 6-16, 2024

WHEREAS, for the first time, Hawai'i is hosting the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, or FestPAC, June 6-16, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i will welcome more than 2,200 delegates from 27 Pacific Island nations for 10 days of cultural exchange, appreciation, and celebration; and

WHEREAS, the 13th FestPAC Commission chose the theme Ho'oulu Lāhui: Regenerating Oceania, meaning "to grow the nation"; and

WHEREAS, this year's FestPAC intends to bring attention to several urgent issues facing the Pacific region, including rising sea levels, climate change, sustainability, coral-reef death, and widening social inequality; and

WHEREAS, FestPAC is the world's largest celebration of indigenous Pacific Islanders and was launched in 1972 by the South Pacific Commission, now known as the Pacific Community (SPC), to halt the erosion of traditional practices through cultural exchange by:

- showcasing vibrant and unique cultural heritage;
- exchanging knowledge and skills; and
- fostering greater understanding and appreciation among diverse communities; and

WHEREAS, FestPAC is held every four years in a different Pacific Island location and was hosted by Guam in 2016 but postponed in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, after more than 40 years since its inception, FestPAC has developed into a unique forum where cultural sharing and learning

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have enhanced the appreciation of traditional arts, crafts, music, dance, and oral traditions with the world; and

WHEREAS, FestPAC provides free access to the public for most events to celebrate the importance of culture and the arts in the Pacific; and

WHEREAS, FestPAC will include the following events:

- a canoe arrival ceremony to initiate the festival and symbolize unity as cultural representatives from various Pacific Island nations arrive in traditional canoes;
- an opening ceremony to launch the festivities with performances, speeches, and a parade of nations;
- an ecumenical service to unite attendees in reflection and prayer;
- the Festival Village at the Hawai'i Convention Center, where artisans will feature traditional and heritage art demonstrations, including kapa making, weaving, jewelry crafting, chanting, and dancing;
- a symposium including panel discussions, educational forums, masterclasses, workshops, and conferences that enhance cultural understanding, sustainability, and the preservation of Pacific heritage; and
- a closing ceremony to celebrate with performances and expressions of gratitude; and

WHEREAS, the 27 Pacific Island nations confirmed to attend the 13th FestPAC are: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Easter Island (Rapa Nui), Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawai'i, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Island, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna, and Taiwan; and

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WHEREAS, the agenda will focus on the shared challenges Pacific Island nations face, including sustainable economies, geopolitical dynamism, environmental-sustainability issues, Indigenous rights, the growing diaspora of Pacific Island peoples, and other critical issues; and

WHEREAS, every Pacific Island nation attending FestPAC is on the front line of the climate crisis; from rising sea levels that threaten their very existence to extreme weather events that disrupt their economies and livelihoods, climate change significantly impacts all the people of Oceania; and

WHEREAS, building political relationships with Pacific Island nations began under Kamehameha III, and by the time of Kamehameha V the Hawaiian Kingdom had established diplomatic relationships throughout Polynesia; and

WHEREAS, during his reign, King Kalākaua furthered diplomatic ties to strengthen and secure the kingdom's independence and leadership position among Asian and Pacific Island nations following his 1881 worldwide voyage; and

WHEREAS, at its diplomatic height in 1887, the Hawaiian Kingdom's government had 103 embassies and other diplomatic posts worldwide, including several throughout the Pacific; and

WHEREAS, King Kalākaua's administration envisioned a Polynesian Confederacy, sharing its cultural and ethnic heritage and promoting the cultural and political similarities among nations and its peoples; and

WHEREAS, in February 1887, Sāmoa's King Malietoa Laupepa signed a Treaty of Confederacy with Hawai'i, but a civil war in Sāmoa and the forced signing of Hawai'i's Bayonet Constitution prevented King Kalākaua's vision of a politically unified region; and

WHEREAS, a delegation will be visiting Maui County, including the Young Pacific Leaders participating in activities at the University of Hawai'i Maui College; and

WHEREAS, with FestPAC held only every four years and hosting honors rotated among many nations, Hawai'i hosting this celebration will be a once-in-a-lifetime for some participants; now, therefore,

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BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it celebrates the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture hosted by Hawai'i, June 6-16, 2024; and
2. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i; the Honorable Sylvia Luke, Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i; the Honorable Ronald Kouchi, Senate President, State of Hawai'i; the Honorable Scott Saiki, Speaker of the House, State of Hawai'i; Aaron J. Salā, Festival Director, FestPAC; Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Chair, 13th FestPAC Commission; and the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui.

INTRODUCED BY:



KEANI N.W. RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ