

Assistant Secretary John Berry
C/o Document Management Unit
Dept. of Interior
1849 C St., NW Mail Stop-- 7229
Washington D.C., 20240

January 6, 2000

Dear Sirs,

Mahalo for taking the time to listen to our concerns. I believe that you are both sincere in attempting to right the injustices of the past.

On behalf of the native Hawaiian organization, Kealihooneaina: The Dallas Mossman Vogeler 'Ohana, I am writing to offer a few immediate steps for the Interior and Justice Departments, that would greatly improve our condition as Hawaiians and level the playing field for this reconciliation process.

To provide a context for the options below, I offer the history and purpose of our nonprofit organization, Kealihooneaina. In 1993 my mom, Dallas Mossman Vogeler, directed the reenactment of the overthrow at 'Iolani Palace, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian government. Over three days, this reenactment brought close to 40,000 people to 'Iolani Palace, drew national attention from CNN broadcasts of the event and won The American Association of State and Local History award for historical reenactments. Two years later my mom held a vigil in memory Queen Liliuokalani's imprisonment, a vigil intended to last from January to September 1995. However, during this vigil, my mom contracted leukemia and eventually passed away on February 28th, 1996.

Before she passed away, however, my mom wanted to complete a spiritual journey. The journey she envisioned was a traditional tour of the islands to bring ho'okupu (offerings) to all of the Hawaiian gods. In David Bray's book, *The Kahuna Religion of Hawai'i*, he writes of three kahuna (priests) who asked Queen Lili'uokalani to make such a trip. Daddy Bray also explains that the Queen started this journey but never finished. My mom saw this pilgrimage as very important to the Hawaiian people, and she asked a few friends and me to see this through to completion. After her passing, her friends and I formed the nonprofit organization Kealihooneaina: the Dallas Mossman Vogeler 'Ohana to fulfill this spiritual journey.

Because of our work on this pilgrimage, we have found a few options for the Interior and Justice Departments that would aid our people and guide us toward our own destiny. The difficulty with the Interior and Justice Departments attempting to reconcile the sovereignty issue is that Hawaiians need to decide their own future without interference. The U.S. government cannot and should not give us sovereignty: it isn't theirs to give. Nor should we ask you for sovereignty or government handouts. The best that the

Interior and Justice Departments can do is to take away the governmental and judicial restrictions that attempt to limit our destiny.

1. Redefinition of Ka'ula—As it stands, Ka'ula, an islet off the coast of Ni'ihau, is the target for Naval military exercises. It is also a bird sanctuary. To Hawaiians this island is considered sacred and one of the few known places where Hawai'i's last queen visited. By reclassifying this islet under the department of interior, the missiles will stop, the ground will be cleared and we will one day be able to visit this sacred island.
2. Guaranteed Access to Religious Sites—Hawai'i is covered with *heiau* (temples) and *ahu* (shrines). Often, however, access to these sites, as in the case of Ka'ula, is limited by federal and state agencies and private ownership. The Native American Religious Freedom Act doesn't go far enough to protect these sites. I've seen many of these sites bulldozed for development or access just plain denied. By guaranteeing access to these sites, Hawaiians will define their own religious future.
3. Legal Standing—As far as I understand it, Hawaiians, as a people, have no legal standing. They cannot sue the federal government for anything, much less the overthrow of our island nation. Legal standing empowers Hawaiians to choose their own legal battles and levels the playing field with the U.S. government.

Through these changes, Hawaiians will determine their own destiny. When Hawaiians are freed from the restrictions that The U.S. government places on us, it will become clear that sovereignty already exists.

Mahalo for your efforts.



Stephen Kuhio Vogeler

President

Kealiihooneaina:

The Dallas Mossman Vogeler 'Ohana