

Today August 7, 2020 it was announced that beaches on Oahu will be closed starting tomorrow due to the highly contagious wildfire-spread of Covid-19 in recent weeks. The 300+ of you receiving this message will recall our petition in July (see link below) urging a 6-month closure of Laniakea's Turtle Beach to lessen the spread of Covid-19 from people packing in there to see the turtles.

<https://www.change.org/p/state-of-hawaii-prepping-for-tourism-re-opening-and-covid-19-at-laniakea-beach>

Our petition has received over 1000 signatures to date. Sixty-one of those signing chose to leave comments so we felt it informative to share those with you. The comments are attached to this message as a pdf. The closure of all Oahu beaches announced today provides for the exception of access to the ocean- an important element for those that obtain sustenance from the sea, especially Hawaiian cultural practitioners, and other ocean users such as surfers, swimmers, etc. Please see the link below to today's Civil Beat article about the closure efforts to contain the spread of this disease.

We applaud the closure to human use of Laniakea's Turtle Beach. The turtles will be fine on their own for a change. And we encourage all parties with interests in and responsibilities for Laniakea to speak up in endorsement of this positive move.

Please note that our Petition is still open for signatures (click on the link above).

Respectfully,
George Balazs <www.GeorgeHBalazs.com>
and
Gavin Lamb PhD

https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/08/the-interisland-travel-quarantine-is-coming-back-oahu-beaches-and-parks-to-close-again/?utm_source=Civil+Beat+Master+List&utm_campaign=65b192a918-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_08_06_09_22&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_51c2dd3cf3-65b192a918-401958846&mc_cid=65b192a918&mc_eid=9d5d3fe013



At 1,500 signatures, this petition is more likely to get picked up by local news!



Prepping for Tourism Re-Opening to Avoid a COVID-19 Hotspot at Laniakea Beach

1,134 have signed. Let's get to 1,500!



At 1,500 signatures, this petition is more likely to get picked up by local news!



[Gavin L](#) started this petition to State of Hawaii

When tourism re-opens in Hawai'i on September 1st, many hundreds of people a day will again crowd and mix at Laniakea Beach close together from all over the USA to watch sea turtles sleeping on the sand. The influx of tourists to the small cove at Laniakea Beach, often referred to in tourism advertising as "Turtle

Sign this petition



At 1,500 signatures, this petition is more likely to get picked up by **local news!**

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should be flagged officially to keep people out. Officials must spread the word of the closure in the interest of public health using social media via state, county, and federal agencies, and especially to the tourism industry. There must be a marked right-of-way path provided to and from the sea for surfers and other ocean users, but the rest of the beach should be kept as a "Turtles-Only Zone."

[Report a policy violation](#)



Start a petition of your own

This petition starter stood up and took action. Will you do the same?

Updates

1,000 supporters

3 years ago

Gavin L started this petition

3 years ago

Reasons for signing



Antya Miller · 3 years ago

Thank you for this petition! I grew up at Laniakea and have been recently advocating that we make this beach a turtle sanctuary. It is NOT a safe beach for visitors and they need to be redirected to beaches that are safe, have parking and life guards and where they can also see turtles. The best location is Puaena, which I know will upset some ... [Read more](#)

♡ 6 · Report



Marina Whyte · 3 years ago

This is a great idea. Thank you for starting this petition. Please know that the turtle viewing has also been happening in front of the residential houses at Laniakea. When

Hawaii

The Interisland Travel Quarantine Is Coming Back, Oahu Beaches And Parks To Close Again

Oahu crackdown begins Saturday, with partial interisland travel quarantine to follow on Tuesday. Gov. David Ige says an announcement on schools and colleges is coming soon.



100

By Christina Jedra    / August 6, 2020

 Reading time: 9 minutes.



Following record new cases of COVID-19 statewide, Hawaii's governor and the Honolulu mayor are bringing back sweeping restrictions that were in place at the beginning of the pandemic and creating a special police unit to cite and arrest violators.

Starting on Tuesday, anyone arriving in Kauai, Hawaii, Maui or Kalawao counties will be required to quarantine for two weeks. The quarantine requirement does not apply to those arriving on Oahu.

Gov. David Ige said at a press conference Thursday afternoon that the quarantine rule would apply to all interisland travel, but his office later sent out a press release saying it will only affect travelers arriving in Kauai, Hawaii, Maui and Kalawao – not Oahu.

“Because of the surge in cases on Oahu, all the county mayors agree that additional measures are necessary to make sure cases do not spread uncontrolled across all counties,” Ige said.



Mayor Kirk Caldwell is once again ordering the closure of island beaches and parks.

On Oahu, where coronavirus cases have surged, Mayor Kirk Caldwell has issued a new order called “Act With Care – Do Not Gather.” It takes effect Friday at midnight and will be in effect until Sept. 5, he said.

All city and state beaches and parks will be closed again. They were previously closed from mid-March [through mid-May](#).

“There will be no activities allowed on the beach or in the parks,” Caldwell said. “You can traverse the parks to get to the water to surf, to swim, to

paddle, to dive, fish and do other Native Hawaiian gathering rights – but in the water. Not in the parks, not on the beaches.”

Hiking trails in city and state parks will also be closed, although [trails run by the Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife](#) will remain open, the Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources said on Friday. Spokesman Dan Dennison said the state park closures are necessary because many are adjacent to beaches, “which are the areas where large groups have been congregating.”

“You don’t typically see 100 people at a party out on the trail,” he said in an email. “I would add that if there’s evidence of crowding and large gatherings on trails, additional closures would be considered. I remember State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park saying that people who keep six feet apart on a trail, mask-up when passing, and limiting group numbers are likely at low risk.”

Public restrooms and showers will remain open. Parking lots for parks where vote by mail deposit boxes are located will remain open through Saturday’s primary election but will be closed after, Caldwell said.

Campgrounds and botanical gardens will be closed. All team sports are banned. City and private pools, including hotel pools, will be shuttered. Indoor businesses including bowling alleys, arcades and mini-golf facilities must cease operations. Private tennis clubs will be closed.

The park closures include the shuttering of playgrounds, tennis courts, dog parks, skate parks, the Koko Crater Tramway and the People’s Open Markets, according to the Honolulu Parks and Recreation Department. Parking lots for scenic lookouts will be closed.

The goal is to eliminate “large, uncontrolled gatherings,” such as groups who congregate under tents at beach parks, Caldwell said.

“I’m sure you’ve seen it when you’ve gone to the beach on the weekend,” he said. “So, bright line, easy to enforce. Parks are closed.”



Hawaii Department of Health Director Bruce Anderson said officials believe large outdoor gatherings may be contributing to the rise of cases, although he didn't cite any specific clusters.

Honolulu Police Department Chief Susan Ballard said dozens of police officers will be looking for COVID-19 rulebreakers.

“We think that’s one of the most likely sources of exposure for a lot of the cases where we aren’t able to identify other sources,” he said.

The federal [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) say the risk of COVID-19 transmission is much higher when indoors where space is tighter and ventilation is limited.

But some indoor businesses on Oahu will be allowed to stay open. Gyms, where [contact tracers have identified COVID-19 spread](#), can continue to operate except for group classes, Caldwell said.

Restaurants can remain open, although staff members, including those in the kitchens, must wear masks. Hair salons, massage parlors, tattoo shops, spiritual services, museums, art galleries and movie theaters can stay open. Golf courses and the Koko Head Shooting complex will remain open, Caldwell said.

“What’s open are things that we can control,” Caldwell said. “Where there is compliance and not uncontrolled gatherings, we feel we should not punish those folks and crack down where the problem resides.”

Oahu’s new wave of closures follows last week’s [shutdown of Oahu’s bars](#) for three weeks. They had just reopened on June 19. Caldwell added that the city will shutter bars that are “posing as restaurants.”

The most important part of the order is enforcement, Caldwell said.

Honolulu has created a “COVID enforcement team” of 160 sworn police officers who will respond to reports of violations and patrol islandwide seven days a week, said Police Chief Susan Ballard, who also spoke at the press conference. Starting Sunday at 10 a.m., people can report violations to a new hotline at 808-723-3900 or online at HPDCOVIDenforce@honolulu.gov.

“At this point, we’re probably going to do very few warnings,” she said. “It’s going to be either citations or arrests.”

“I’m just begging you, please,” Ballard said.

“We need to get our island open,” she said. “We need to get back to normal.”

The chief noted that homeless people are not exempt from most of the mayor’s order. Anyone found in a closed city park can be ticketed or arrested, she said. [A review of emergency proclamation citation data by Hawaii News Now](#) found that prosecutors have been dismissing thousands of citations given to homeless people during the pandemic.

Nonetheless, Ballard said her officers will continue to issue them.

“If they’re in the parks and they’re not supposed to be, they could get cited and possibly arrested,” she said.

Ige said the new wave of restrictions is necessary so that COVID-19 patients don’t flood the islands’ hospitals.

“While our health care system has managed and can manage the current level of cases, the hospitals have warned that if the trend continues, we will begin to reach a critical point that can overwhelm the health care system,” he said.

Anderson said it is “alarming” to see the spike in cases, including two deaths on Wednesday and 152 new cases Thursday. With the new cases come more hospitalizations and more patients in intensive care, he said.



Department of Health Director Bruce Anderson said more COVID-19 deaths and hospitalizations are inevitable.

“We are approaching a health care crisis and bold measures are needed now to stem the increase and the spread of COVID-19 in Hawaii,” he said. “The current situation is actually much more serious than we projected when we anticipated increases as the state reopened.”

Hilton Raethel, president and CEO of Healthcare Association of Hawaii, said Oahu hospitals are poised to run out of ICU bed capacity by the end of this month, a dire situation he said the state has never faced before.

Hawaii hospitals have contingency plans for dealing with a major health crisis. They include converting acute care beds – which are usually used for people recovering from surgery or disease – into ICU beds, which are designed for complex, specialized care. But no Hawaii hospital has ever had to put one of these plans in effect, Raethel said.

“The problem is if the infection rate continues to grow we will not only exceed our current capacity, but we will blow through our expansion capacity as well,” he said.

“Then we will run the risk of facing those incredibly difficult challenges of who gets a bed, who gets a ventilator, who gets the drugs, who gets the care. We do not want to get to that point where we are literally facing life or death decisions about who gets care and who doesn’t get care.”



Cory Lum/Civil Beat/2020

People gather near the Kapahulu Groin in Waikiki on Thursday. Beaches and parks as well as other outdoor venues will be closed beginning Saturday morning for the next four weeks in an effort to control the spread of the coronavirus.

All the ICU beds at Kaiser Permanente's Moanalua Medical Center were full yesterday, according to Raethel. The only way to turn this trajectory around is for the public to work together to slow down the infection rate, he said.

Efforts to hamper the spread of the virus will not yield lower hospitalization rates for another two weeks because of the time it takes for symptoms to develop. Neighbor islands are not in such dire circumstances right now because the infection rate is much lower, Raethel said. But he noted that the public health resources on neighbor islands are more limited.

As of Thursday, 117 people were hospitalized with COVID-19 in Hawaii – 115 of them on Oahu – and 54% of ICU beds are filled, Anderson said. About 10% of overall cases end up in the hospital, according to Anderson.

Community spread of the coronavirus on Oahu has already stressed public health infrastructure, including contact tracing efforts, Anderson said.

“There will be more deaths and more hospitalizations in the weeks to come because of gatherings and other activities from crowding that occurred in

previous weeks,” he said.

Anderson noted it is especially tough to limit the spread of the virus in large, multigenerational households where it’s hard for people to isolate and stay home from work when they’re sick.

The governor did not provide any clarity on the plan to reopen schools or the University of Hawaii saying only that officials are working through the details.

“We are looking at a number of things,” he said.

Board of Education Chairwoman Catherine Payne said Thursday she expects more clarity in the next few days or by early next week about how the increase in COVID-19 case numbers will impact schools, particularly on Oahu.

The new school year is set to begin Aug. 17, through a mix of virtual learning and in-person instruction across the state. Teachers reported back to work on July 29.

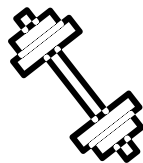
“I do not think we can afford to shorten learning any more,” Payne said.

“Even if we do not have a perfect setup for distance learning for all students.”

What You Can and Can't Do On Oahu As Of Aug. 8

You CAN:

- work out at the gym



- attend a real estate viewing



- buy a new car



- go shopping at the mall



- attend religious services



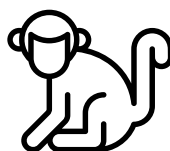
- dine at a restaurant



- visit a water park



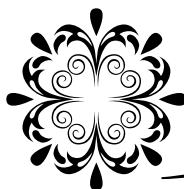
- go to the zoo



- get your hair cut in a salon



- get a tattoo



- get your nails done



You CANNOT:

- sit on the beach

- hike in city parks

- play any team sports

- swim in a public pool

- go bowling

- play in an arcade

- play mini golf

- go to a bar

- get a massage



- get your pants tailored



We appreciate gifts of any amount

- bake in a tanning bed

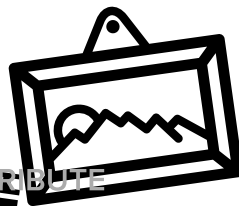
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- visit a museum



Every little bit helps. [Will you join us?](#)

- visit an art gallery



About the Author



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