



**Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau Media Contact:**

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## **Waipi'o Valley Road on the Island of Hawai'i Closed to Visitors Indefinitely, Effective February 25**

**Island of Hawai'i (February 25, 2022)** – Today, the County of Hawai'i issued an Emergency Rule announcing the closure of Waipi'o Valley Road to visitors as a precautionary safety measure and to further assess and mitigate the road's conditions, effective Friday, February 25, 2022.

To limit vehicular traffic, the road remains open to Waipi'o Valley residents, farmers, property owners and lease holders with agricultural businesses in the Valley only. The decision is based on recommendations provided in a geotechnical assessment done on Waipi'o Valley Road, which outlines the immediate need to mitigate rockfall and address slope instability and erosion, for everyone's safety.

"The Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau (IHVB) fully supports the County of Hawai'i's decision to close Waipi'o Valley Road to visitors until further notice," said Ross Birch, Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau executive director. "Understanding the community's concerns about tourism's impacts on this sacred and culturally significant place, we have not promoted traversing into the Valley for more than a decade now. We are distributing this update widely to our visitors and network of industry partners both here on-island and across the globe."

Birch continued, "This road closure supports and accelerates our destination management efforts to address tourism issues surrounding Waipi'o Valley, which was deemed a hotspot by the community as outlined in Hawai'i Island's Destination Management Action Plan. We continue to do all we can to steer the direction of tourism for our island with the community's well-being top of mind."

Read the County of Hawai'i Emergency Rule at

<https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/Home/Components/News/News/3094/720>.

For more information on the report, visit <https://www.dpw.hawaiicounty.gov/about-public-works/roadwork-information>.

### **About the Destination Management Action Plan**

In partnership with the counties and the respective visitor bureaus, HTA developed community-based Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs) that aim to rebuild, redefine and reset the direction of tourism over a three-year period. The focus is on stabilization, recovery and rebuilding to the desired visitor industry for each island. The actions put forth in the DMAPs are guided by an island-based Steering Committee for each island, and includes a collaborative process which encourages participation and vital input from the community, visitor industry and other sectors. The DMAPs identify areas of need as well as actionable solutions for enhancing the residents' quality of life and improving the visitor experience across the islands. View Hawai'i Island's Destination Management Action Plan at <https://www.hawaiitourismauthority.org/media/7040/hta-hawaii-island-action-plan.pdf>.

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### **About the Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau**

The Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau (IHVB) is an island chapter of the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB). HVCB is contracted by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) for destination marketing in the continental U.S. IHVB supports our international marketing partners in Canada, Japan, China, South Korea and Oceania; and collaborates with island partners — government, hospitality and other industries — and the community to implement the island's [Destination Management Action Plan](#) (DMAP). For more information, visit [www.gohawaii.com/island-of-hawaii](http://www.gohawaii.com/island-of-hawaii).

Be safe, responsible and mindful while enjoying and exploring the island of Hawai'i. Please read, sign and share the [Pono Pledge](#) and encourage others to do the same. #PonoPledge

*E 'apo i ke a'o a ho'ohana, a e 'oi mau ka na'auao.*  
Those who apply their teachings increase their knowledge.