



March 20, 2025

State of Hawai'i Congressional Delegation

Aloha e Senators Hirono and Schatz and Representatives Case and Tokuda

On Friday, March 14, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order aimed at significantly reducing or eliminating the staff and programs of the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS). As the nonprofit partner of the Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS), Friends of the Library of Hawai'i is strongly opposed to this drastic elimination of federal support for public library services.

The HSPLS receives around \$1.5MM annually in IMLS funding through the Library Services and Technology Act – Grants to States Program. These funds are critical to providing parity in library services across our fifty-one branch library system across six islands. More than half of Hawai'i's public library branches serve rural areas where library services provide necessary technology, programming, and access for their communities. In many rural neighbor island communities, public libraries are often the only government resource available. Libraries are free, welcoming, safe, and cherished places.

The programs and services provided through IMLS funding assist all library users but keiki, seniors, job seekers, and students will be disproportionately affected. Programs focused on digital literacy, learning and teaching resources, and workforce training will be lost. The libraries are a hub for government and non-profit services, both digital and physical, and ensure that these services are available across all branches. IMLS funds help our public libraries provide access to all to read, learn, and connect.

Friends of the Library of Hawai'i has championed library services in Hawai'i for 146 years but it cannot replace IMLS funding. Over their history, our libraries have been assisted, celebrated, and utilized by all, no matter their age, income, education, or other backgrounds. Public libraries are a pillar of a successful democracy and should be supported by all levels of government. Investment in public libraries is an investment that extends to every member of the community.

Please protect our public libraries and publicly oppose the reduction and elimination of the IMLS. In 2024, the IMLS granted \$295MM to support libraries, museums, and cultural institutions in all 50 states and in U.S. territories. This small investment leverages millions of state and local dollars to build programs and services that generate billions in economic impact and help our communities succeed. Please stand with library staff, Friends, and patrons and fight for the IMLS' federal support of libraries.

Sincerely,

Nainoa Mau
Executive Director