



# **KAWAIHAPAI (DILLINGHAM) AIRFIELD - HDH**

**THE MOST SPECIAL PLACE IN THE WORLD  
TO SKYDIVE AND SOAR**



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Kawaihapai Airfield is the most special place in the world to skydive and soar thanks to perfect weather, topography and boundless natural beauty. Located on the rural North Shore of Oahu, an island with nearly a million residents and six million annual visitors, it is uniquely positioned to serve these activities and support general aviation in Hawaii.



Kawaihapai Airfield is home to two highly successful skydiving operations and the most active drop zone in the world. The orographic lift provided by the 1000-foot cliffs and reliable trade winds provide for unsurpassed soaring for the popular sail plane operators.

Hundreds of pilots have learned to fly through instruction at this airfield and countless pilots have benefited by practicing their touch-and-goes along the 9000' runway.



## THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Kawaihapai Airfield is the number one drop zone in the world without any coordinated marketing or support efforts whatsoever. Imagine the success that could come from an annual event marketed globally, such as a 2020 skydiving boogie held in the Maldives that generated \$5 million for the local economy.



The Army Garrison Schofield Barracks, Marine Corp Base Hawaii, and Pearl Harbor typically send soldiers, marines and sailors to mainland drop zones for parachute training.

There may be a great opportunity to contract these training services in state at this airfield.



Glider rides and Light Sport Aircraft flights have robust activity and there is an onsite fuel operation. Presently missing and much in need are mechanical services. A mini-mart and food concession may be appropriate. There is plenty of space to accommodate more businesses. A wind tunnel could bring many new customers.



An estimated 52,193 visitors went skydiving in 2019. If we assume that those visitors planned one day for skydiving and attribute one day visitor spending to the airfield, then the total impact is \$12.6 million in direct visitor spending. This does not include local skydiving business and visitor spending from other commercial activity at the airfield including operations of tours and training involving gliders and sailplanes.



## “WORLD-RENOWNED JEWEL OF GENERAL AVIATION”



The airfield has lost substantial rental revenue and tenants over the years due to frustration with DOT-A policies, inconsistent directives, and lack of long-term planning. Multiple companies and individuals have been denied requests to build hangars and other denied vacant spaces. Money has been left on the table by management.

With vision, planning, consistent management, the best weather in the world, and eye-popping beauty of beaches, coastlines and landscapes, there is every reason to believe that Kawaihapai Airfield can be invigorated and become a world-renowned jewel of general aviation.





## KAWAIHAPAI AIRFIELD IS A JOINT-USE FACILITY

The Hawaii Department of Transportation Airports Division (DOT-A) has supported general aviation use of Kawaihapai Airfield since 1964 through leases with the US Airforce and US Army. The State of Hawaii leases 272 acres of the Army's 650-acre Dillingham Military Reservation. Previously known as Dillingham Airfield, the State formally changed the name of the general aviation facility to Kawaihapai Airfield in 2001.

Kawaihapai Airfield is a very long, uncontrolled airstrip with skydiving and sailplane operations located on opposite ends of the 9000' runway. The airstrip is laid out as a 5000' runway with 2000' displaced thresholds at each end. The sailplane operators take off and land within the displaced threshold on the west end, while the other general aviation operations utilize the formal runway. The lease allows general aviation only during daylight hours. A UNICOM tower is staffed from 8:30 am. to 5:30 pm. Nighttime use of the airfield is reserved for military use.

**Kawaihapai is the Hawaiian place name for this area and it means "carried or lifted water" and is said to have been carried here by a cloud in answer to the prayers of two priests after experiencing a drought in ancient times.**

Dillingham Airfield was built during the World War II era. Twenty hangars for fixed wing aircraft and 15 for sail planes, bathrooms and a Unicom Tower were added in 1985-1986.

Master plans in support of general aviation were developed for Dillingham in 1980 and 1993. In 1999, the Navy transferred its airfield at Barbers Point to the state. Plans to expand general aviation at Kalaeloa, as it is now know, have also lagged.

Although the present lease is valid until July 5, 2024, DOT-A has notified the Army and the FAA that it intends to exercise an early termination clause by June 30, 2021. The DOT-A announced three primary reasons for leaving: difficulty to secure a long-term lease, the Army requirement to maintain a private water system, and an annual operating loss.

Supporters of general aviation, both locally and nationally, believe each of these concerns can be addressed and that a new long term lease is will be successful.



Surfing and diving are not exclusive to the ocean—here at Kawaihapi Airfield, guests may surf the skies on FAA approved aircraft or skydive with seasoned jumpers. The skydiving done between the two operations at Kawaihapai Airfield make it the busiest first-time sky diving location in the nation.

## DOT-A CONCERNS

### THE LEASE



DOT-A has managed this airfield for nearly 60 years through a number of leases and extensions. A stated purpose of the existing lease is to provide continuity at the airfield while a long-term lease is negotiated between DOT-A and the Army. DOT-A is now seeking cancellation of the lease rather than negotiation of a long-term lease.

The Army has stated its preference to negotiate only with a state or county agency. With this limiting factor, it is believed a public-private partnership could relieve DOT-A of day to day responsibility and provide better management of the facility.

### WATER SYSTEM

A confounding lease term for DOT-A is maintenance of the private water system. Neither the Army nor DOT-A is willing to serve as a de facto water utility and the public water utility system ends several miles to the east.



Potable water for the airfield comes from an onsite well. Water is distributed free of charge to the City and County of Honolulu for use at Mokuleia Beach Park, Camp Edman YMCA, several private residences, and the Kaena Point Satellite Tracking Station, five miles to the west.

It is believed that a small cooperative water utility could be stood up to continue water service to these users. A joint funding agreement between Federal, State, County and private stakeholders would be an appropriate financing alternative to fund the needed repairs.

### OPERATING LOSS

In announcing its decision to return the airfield to the Army, DOT-A stated an annual operating loss of one million dollars. A substantial amount of this loss is due to a pro-rated soft cost for "Allocation of Statewide Expenses." All small airfields in Hawaii operate at a loss, but none of the others have the economic potential of Kawaihapai, the most special place in the world to skydive and soar.

When economic activity and tax revenues are considered, the state is not losing money at this airfield. Under new management with vision and purpose, there is no reason why this jewel of aviation will not shine and be financially successful in its own right.



**Leveraging Hawaii's natural beauty and the unique features at Kawaihapai Airfield would position the state to be the leading general aviation and skydiving center in the world, generating millions of dollars of revenue by holding world-class events on the North Shore.**



## LEGACY OPERATORS AT THE AIRFIELD

**Acroflight International** - <https://www.acroflighthawaii.com/>

**Honolulu Soaring** - <https://www.honolulusoaring.com/>

**Civil Air Patrol** - <https://hiwg.cap.gov/>

**North Shore Aviation Services (Fuel)** - Email: [kealia@live.com](mailto:kealia@live.com)

**North Shore Flight School** - <https://northshoroahuflightschool.com/>

**Northshore Leasing Aircraft Company**

**Pacific Skydiving Honolulu** - <https://www.pacificskydivinghonolulu.com/>

**Paradise Air** - <https://www.paradiseairhawaii.com/>

**Skydive Hawaii** - <https://skydivehawaii.com/>

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