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## Hawaii News

# State Ethics Commission fines DLNR agent \$1,000

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Posted March 02, 2017

March 2, 2017

A Hawaii island harbor agent is being fined \$1,000 and ordered to repay a parasailing company \$238.45 after he arranged free trips from the company, while appearing to offer the company unspecified favors.

The State Ethics Commission ruled on Feb. 16 that William Nahale, a harbor agent for the state Department of Land and Natural Resources who oversees the Kailua-Kona small boat harbor, likely violated laws that prohibit state workers from receiving improper gifts and using their government position to gain unwarranted advantages or benefits.

“Respondent’s regulatory authority over the company providing the rides is particularly significant in this case,” wrote the commission. “For employees whose official duties include law enforcement or regulation, the acceptance of any gifts from persons subject to their authority is prohibited.”

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The commission didn't bring formal charges against Nahale, however, citing his full cooperation in the investigation.

Nahale used his state email address to arrange for the free parasailing rides, which occurred last October, according to a copy of the Ethics Commission's resolution.

"He informed UFO Parasail's staff that he wanted to go parasailing with 'close friends,' and in response, UFO Parasail offered the free parasailing rides," the commission wrote. "Nahale then sent emails from his state email account stating that 'I will find some way of giving back to you guys for sure' and that 'I'll be sure to kick down some specialties for you and your staff as compensation ...' "

It's not clear what the "specialties" were in reference to.

Nahale did not return a call requesting comment on the case.

As a Kailua-Kona harbor agent, Nahale's duties include issuing use permits, collecting fees from businesses operating in the harbor, helping enforce ocean and permitting laws and working on rules regulating harbor activities, according to the Ethics Commission.

UFO Parasail operates in the Kailua-Kona harbor.

The commission said it had received an inquiry about Nahale's parasailing trips in November, at which time he offered to pay UFO Parasail for the rides. But as of the date of the resolution, Nahale hadn't paid the company.

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