

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **576**-24

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16 , 2024

RE: H.B. No. 2690
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Water & Land and Energy & Environmental Protection, to which was referred H.B. No. 2690 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO WATER,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to protect Hawaii's water resources by:

- (1) Establishing a WAI Policy Coordinator and other positions within the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the coordination of Red Hill WAI initiatives; and
- (2) Creating the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Health; University of Hawai'i System; Honolulu Board of Water Supply; one member of the Honolulu City Council; Kūpuna for the Mo'opuna; Wellspring Covenant Church; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; and two individuals. Your Committees received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual. Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of Budget and Finance; We Are One, Inc.; and four individuals.

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Your Committees find that this measure takes an important step toward protecting Oahu's sole source groundwater aquifer for the present and future generations.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Department of Land and Natural Resources will serve as the State's policy lead on WAI initiatives through the position of the WAI Policy Coordinator;
- (2) Requiring the WAI Policy Coordinator to submit to the Legislature by December 1, 2024, a report regarding the potential organizational structure, responsibilities, duties, and powers of a proposed Red Hill Remediation Authority, based on the provisions of House Bill No. 2691, introduced during the Regular Session of 2024, as the starting point;
- (3) Specifically requiring the federal government to bear the cost of the actual remediation of the Red Hill aquifer, including pumping and treating the water, rather than allowing the use of monies from the Red Hill Remediation Fund for this purpose;
- (4) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committees respectfully request your Committee on Finance, should it choose to deliberate on this measure, to appropriate:

- (1) \$750,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025 for Red Hill WAI policy coordination; and
- (2) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025 for ecosystem monitoring.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Water & Land and Energy & Environmental Protection



that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2690, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2690, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committees on Water & Land and Energy & Environmental Protection,



NICOLE E. LOWEN, Chair



LINDA ICHIYAMA, Chair



