



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Monday, February 24, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Vassilis L. Syrmos, Vice President for Research and Innovation
University of Hawai'i System

HB 505 HD1– RELATING TO RED HILL

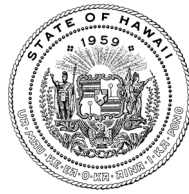
Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports HB 505 HD1, which seeks to establish a Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (Red Hill WAI) policy coordinator in the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and creates a Red Hill remediation special fund.

While the imminent threat of future leaks has been minimized through the defueling of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, years of clean up, monitoring, research and policy making will be needed for remediation of the aquifer and the surrounding ecosystem. This will require proper coordination between DLNR, the Department of Health, Honolulu Board of Water Supply, U.S. Navy, Environmental Protection Agency, UH, community organizations, and other state, federal and county agencies.

The Red Hill WAI coordinator and related positions are critical to this effort and the remediation special fund will enable this group to fund necessary efforts in monitoring, research, remediation, public outreach and education, and evaluation.

Thank you.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 505, H.D. 1

February 24, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO RED HILL

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill (H.B.) No. 505, H.D. 1, adds a new chapter that: 1) establishes the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) Policy Coordinator within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to coordinate WAI initiatives; 2) creates the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund (RHRSF) that would generate revenues through legislative appropriations, gifts, donations, grants, and interest to address contamination resulting from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility; 3) requires State and county agencies to provide all information and data requested by the WAI Policy Coordinator within 30 calendar days; and 4) specifies annual reporting requirements.

As a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special fund, which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work, and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and

charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding H.B. No. 505, H.D. 1, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed RHRSF would be self-sustaining as there does not appear to be any significant, recurring source of revenues to support the fund.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 505 HD1
RELATING TO RED HILL**

House Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 24, 2025

2:00 PM

Conference Room 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB505_HD1, which establishes the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) Policy Coordinator and creates the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). This measure is an important step to ensure continued coordination of State and County efforts to monitor and oversee remediation and mitigation of jet fuel leaks into O'ahu's primary aquifer from the now-drained Navy fuel tanks at Kapūkakī (Red Hill).

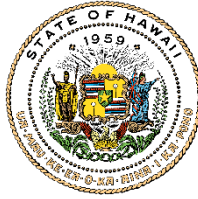
OHA has a vested interest in the stewardship and restoration of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources, particularly water. Since time immemorial, water in Hawai'i has been considered a public trust resource to be managed and administered for the benefit of present and future generations. Traditional Hawaiian laws and land use practices revolved around the sharing and beneficial management of water as a community good necessary to meet a range of social and ecological needs. Water is also the physical embodiment of the god Kāne, and integral to a range of traditional cultural and spiritual practices. Indeed, "Ola i ka wai" (Water is life). Without clean water, life in Hawai'i is not possible.

The creation of the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund will enable sustained water quality monitoring and public transparency regarding ongoing cleanup efforts. While the federal government should bear the full cost of remediation, this fund ensures that state-led efforts to protect public health are adequately funded, an important safeguard given the federal government's documented history of neglect at Red Hill. HB 505_HD1 also mandates cooperation between state and county agencies, ensuring shared access to all relevant data within a timely manner, and a common forum to focus government advocacy efforts in one place. Ideally, this will enable greater transparency and public access to decisionmakers as it was the community that raised the alarm over the ongoing leaks occurring at Kapūkakī for years prior to the 2021 crisis that precipitated the defueling of the Navy's tanks and current remediation efforts.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HB 505 HD1 to enhance efforts to protect Hawai'i's water resources for future generations.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Monday, February 24, 2025
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 505 HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO RED HILL

House Bill 505 House Draft 1 proposes to establish a Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) policy coordinator and other positions within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to support the Red Hill WAI, and creates the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure and provides comments.**

As stewards of Honolulu's sole source groundwater aquifer and Hawai'i's ecosystems, the Department recognizes the WAI's important role in ensuring that post-defueling remediation efforts restore the mauka to makai health of the aquifer. Our precious aquifer not only provides drinking water to hundreds of thousands of Honolulu residents but is also critical for the environment under the stewardship of the Department.

The Department supports the establishment and use of the Red Hill Special Remediation Fund for monitoring, applied research, public outreach and education, and evaluation.

The Department notes that following the 2024 Session, three full-time positions to support the WAI were funded within the Department's Office of the Chairperson:

- Policy Coordinator
- Outreach Coordinator
- Administrative Support Specialist

The Department completed its reorganization within the Office of the Chairperson and established the positions in late 2024. Currently, the Department is interviewing applicants for all three positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY
KA 'OIHANA WAI
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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February 24, 2025

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
and Members
Committee on Finance
House of Representatives
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 308
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members:

SUBJECT: House Bill 505, HD1: Relating to Red Hill

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) is in strong support of House Bill (HB) 505, House Draft (HD) 1. The purpose of the bill is to create a new chapter in Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to establish within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to serve as the State's policy lead through the position of the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) policy coordinator and to place the coordinator in the office of the DLNR chairperson. The WAI coordinator shall facilitate implementation, monitoring and interface with federal entities on WAI initiatives outlined in the WAI's November 2023 report among other responsibilities.

It is important that we look at establishing government structures that can help to oversee remediation in the long term as this effort can extend well into the future. This bill also establishes a special fund to be administered by the WAI coordinator and be able to receive federal funds, appropriations by the Legislature, or gifts, donations, grants from public agencies, and private persons.

The WAI policy coordinator proposed in HB 505, HD1, is required to facilitate implementation and monitoring and interface with federal entities on WAI initiatives outlined in the WAI's November 2023 report, which includes remediation of the contamination resulting from the Red Hill Fuel Facility. Here the duties of the coordinator will serve to provide a framework that gives the officials from the State

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
and Members
February 24, 2025
Page 2

and City and County of Honolulu a clear understanding of the WAI Initiatives, its mission, expectations, objectives, and reporting requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support HB 505, HD1.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ernest Y. W. Lau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "Y".

ERNEST Y. W. LAU, P.E.
Manager and Chief Engineer



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

February 21, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB 505 HD1 - Relating to Red Hill

To: Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance

From: The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Date: February 24, 2025

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

Subject: Support for HB 505 HD1 - Relating to Red Hill

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of HB 505 HD1. This bill establishes a WAI Policy Coordinator for the coordination of Red Hill WAI initiatives and creates the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund, effective July 1, 3000.

The Red Hill fuel storage facility has posed significant environmental and health risks to our community. Establishing a WAI Policy Coordinator and creating a special fund for remediation are critical steps in addressing these issues and ensuring the long-term safety and well-being of our residents.

Key Points of Support:

1. WAI Policy Coordinator:

- Establishes a dedicated coordinator for Red Hill WAI initiatives.
- Ensures efficient and effective coordination of remediation efforts.

2. Red Hill Remediation Special Fund:

- Creates a special fund to support remediation activities.
- Provides necessary resources for the cleanup and mitigation of contamination.

We believe that HB 505 HD1 aligns with our commitment to environmental protection and public health. This bill represents a proactive approach to addressing the environmental hazards posed by the Red Hill fuel storage facility and ensuring the safety of our water supply.

We urge the Committee on Finance to pass HB 505 HD1. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your positive response.

Thank you for your dedication to environmental stewardship and public health.

Mahalo nui loa,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

Co-chairs, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

HB-505-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 11:36:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ilima DeCosta	Hui Malama Pono Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair and Committee members for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB505 HD1, which would establish a Red Hill WAI Policy Coordinator.

As an elected member of the Red Hill CRI, established by the EPA, I see how important it is to have an individual who is paid to act as a coordinator to interface with the federal, state and county agencies, as well as legislative leaders, as it relates to the clean up of Red Hill.

Native Hawaiians have long seen water as a valuable resource that is to be protected and shared equally. Enabling the public to be better represented by a person who is compensated to engage with various entities - instead of relying primarily on unpaid volunteers - would go a long way toward restoring the public's confidence in the process.

Mahalo for placing a priority on protecting our water sources, as well as enabling productive public engagement and input around our most precious resource - water; please pass HB505 HD1 on for a full floor vote.



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

HB 505, HD1, RELATING TO RED HILL

POSITION: SUPPORT

Coalition Earth **supports** HB 505, HD1, which establishes a WAI Policy Coordinator for coordination of Red Hill WAI initiatives and creates the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund.

Ola i ka wai. Water is life.

The United States Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility consists of 20 steel-lined underground storage tanks that were built from 1940 to 1943, each of which can store 12.5 million gallons of fuel. In total, the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility can store up to 250 million gallons of fuel. The tanks are located only about 100 feet above the United States Environmental Protection Agency's designated sole-source groundwater aquifer that provides drinking water to approximately 4,000 residents of the island of O'ahu.

Over the past eighty years, numerous spills have occurred at Red Hill. Most dramatically, on November 20, 2021, about 93,000 individuals served by the Navy's potable water system for Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam were directly affected when the Navy's Red Hill shaft was contaminated by the release of up to 19,000 gallons of fuel, including JP-5 jet fuel, older fuels stored at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, and any additives used. Over 6,000 individuals sought medical attention, and 1,000 were forced to leave their homes due to the contamination. Much of the fuel released from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility remains in the environment, trapped within the complex geological formations that surround the tanks. Notably, this leak also caused the restriction and diversion of Honolulu's water sources to cover losses from contaminated fuel, temporarily endangering the ability of the state and the county to perform vital public services, such as increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Subsequently, On May 9, 2023, officials from the state and City and County of Honolulu signed a unified statement on Red Hill, recognizing the stewardship responsibility to ensure that there is clean water on Oahu for future generations. The Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI), a working group, met regularly in 2023 after the signing of the unified statement, posing questions, conducting research, listening to subject-matter experts, and formulating policy recommendations to address the Red Hill contamination and prevent future leaks. The working group strived to preserve and protect public trust resources, including water resources that are essential for life to flourish in our island home.

Members of the Red Hill WAI working group focused on the remediation needs after the defueling of the tanks and removal of residual fuel and contaminants from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The working group expressed ongoing concerns about fuel contaminants already in the ground, as well as the residual supply of fuel plume in local aquifers because of the spill that occurred on November 20, 2021. The group found that there may be as many as 1,940,000 gallons of fuel constituents in the ground that have leaked over eight decades.

Accordingly, the group believes that remediation is necessary for the future well-being of the aquifer to contain the risk to current and future water sources, including the Halawa Shaft, Halawa wells, and Aiea wells; the water distribution system; and local ecosystems. For the sake of the public trust and future generations of Hawai'i's people, we must adopt the recommendations of the Red Hill WAI working group, coordinate an ongoing multiagency response to the crisis, and empower remediation efforts to proceed with haste.

Coalition Earth is a nongovernmental organization that works to preserve the well-being of people and our planet. We champion policies that advance climate resilience, clean energy, public health, and economic fairness for working families. Contact us at info@coalitionearth.org.

HB-505-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:56:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melinda Healani Sonoda-Pale	Ka Lahui Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Finance Committee,

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i is a native initiative for Hawaiian self-governance and self-determination formed by and for Kanaka Maoli who was part of the movement to successfully call for the Shut Down of Red Hill.

For nearly 80 years, the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility has posed a significant threat to our sole-source groundwater aquifer—essential for nearly 400,000 O‘ahu residents. Past spills, including the November 20, 2021 incident, highlight the urgent need to address contamination and protect public health.

We support the creation of a Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) Policy Coordinator and a Red Hill Remediation Special Fund. These steps will:

- **Coordinate Efforts:** Ensure state, county, and federal agencies work together to monitor and remediate environmental hazards.
- **Enhance Transparency:** Provide a public dashboard with up-to-date water quality data.
- **Fund Remediation:** Secure resources for research, public education, and long-term environmental protection.

Water is life. O'ahu has one aquifer and upon which all life on this island depends. Help protect our collective future and vote yes to pass HB 505 out of your committee.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Ka Lahui Hawai'i

HB-505-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:13:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dianne Deauna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I submit this testimony in support of HB 505 - relating to Red Hill, and present the following points for consideration by the committee.

1. Clean Water is non-negotiable

The 2021 Red Hill fuel spill contaminated O'ahu's primary drinking water source, affecting 93,000+ residents and forcing over 1,000 people to evacuate their homes. The damage is ongoing, and we must act now!

2. Toxic Legacy Must End

With millions of gallons of fuel leaked over 80 years, contamination remains in the groundwater. SB150 prioritizes remediation and long-term solutions to prevent future disasters.

3. Protecting Public Health

Over 6,000 people sought medical attention due to the fuel leak's toxic effects. This bill ensures monitoring, research and public outreach to safeguard our communities.

4. Holding Polluters Accountable

The bill creates the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund to ensure clean-up efforts continue, while pushing the federal government to take full responsibility for remediation costs.

5. Transparency & Action

SB150 establishes a Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative to monitor, report, and engage with the public, ensuring accountability and science-driven solutions.

HB-505-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 12:48:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of this measure!

HB-505-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:13:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB505 HD1 that would establish a WAI Policy Coordinator for coordination of Red Hill WAI initiatives and create the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund. Our water security is already at risk because of global heating. Add in the Navy's criminal negligence at Red Hill, and it is clear we must do more to protect our precious wai from further harm.

This measure would aid in the protection and restoration of O'ahu's sole source aquifer, by establishing a WAI Policy Coordinator to facilitate the remediation of the 'āina and wai contaminated by the Red Hill Fuel Facility. It is critical we ensure that steps are taken for the full remediation of our lands and waters contaminated by the Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.

Please pass this very important measure.

HB-505-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:05:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosalie Luo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB505 HD1, which establishes a Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) Policy Coordinator and creates the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund to coordinate remediation efforts following the catastrophic contamination caused by the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. This bill is a crucial step toward ensuring long-term stewardship and protection of O'ahu's sole-source aquifer, which serves nearly 400,000 residents. The November 2021 fuel spill at Red Hill, where up to 19,000 gallons of fuel, including JP-5 jet fuel, contaminated the Navy's potable water system, left over 6,000 individuals seeking medical attention and forced 1,000 residents to evacuate their homes. Much of the fuel remains trapped within the complex geological formations beneath the facility, posing ongoing risks to public health and the environment.

Given that as much as 1.94 million gallons of fuel constituents may have leaked into the ground over the past eight decades, a comprehensive and well-coordinated remediation strategy is essential. HB505 provides the framework for such coordination and transparency by: Establishing a WAI Policy Coordinator within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to lead efforts across state, county, and federal agencies.

Developing a public-facing test results dashboard for transparency and real-time updates on remediation efforts, helping to restore public trust. Implementing a 36-month public information and education campaign to inform and engage the community on the progress and phases of remediation. Creating the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund to support monitoring, applied research, public education, and environmental evaluation, ensuring a well-resourced and sustainable response to the ongoing crisis.

The WAI Policy Coordinator will play a critical role in bringing together multiple agencies and stakeholders to ensure that remediation is science-based, transparent, and timely. Coordination with federal entities, such as the U.S. Navy and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is essential to hold responsible parties accountable while safeguarding public health and water resources. Transparency and public participation are at the core of this bill. The test results dashboard and public outreach program will empower residents with timely and accurate information about remediation efforts, fostering greater public understanding and engagement. This is vital for rebuilding the trust that was lost in the wake of the Red Hill disaster.

contamination at Red Hill is a stark reminder of the ongoing threats to Hawai'i's water supply, and this bill provides the proactive measures necessary to ensure future generations have access to clean, safe water. I respectfully urge you to PASS HB505 to protect O'ahu's aquifer, promote transparency, and secure the long-term remediation efforts needed to restore our water and environment.

Mahalo for your consideration and leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Rosalie Luo

HB-505-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:43:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine McClanahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a family member of those impacted by the May and November 2021 fuel leaks and 2 out of my 4 family members being diagnosed w/ life altering diagnoses whose symptoms began when we drank fuel, I strongly urge the state to pass this bill and ensure no family in Hawaii ever experiences what many Red Hill families have endured including babies, children, teens and adults. The bill ensures:

Defendability: the island's Sacred Water: Protects Oahu's sole-source aquifer, the lifeblood of our community, from further contamination and harm.

Accountability for Generations: Ensures that the Navy and government fulfill their responsibility to restore and protect our water for future generations.

Healing the Land: Addresses decades of contamination by cleaning up 1.94 million gallons of leaked fuel, safeguarding ecosystems and public health.

Transparency and Action: Establishes leadership for community-centered solutions, public education, and transparent progress reporting.

Empowering Our Future: Creates resources to monitor and rehabilitate water systems, prioritizing the health of our people and the environment.

United Stewardship: Calls for federal, state, and community collaboration to honor and protect water as a sacred trust and prevent future disasters.