

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

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February 11, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
and Members
Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
The Senate
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 016
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Wakai and Members:

Subject: Senate Bill 1634: Relating to Water Resources

The Board of Water Supply (BWS) strongly supports Senate Bill (SB) 1634, which appropriates general obligation bonds to the BWS for planning, design, and construction of two monitoring wells.

The BWS has a suggested amendment on page 4, line 8 – 13, to read as follows:

“The purpose of this Act is to authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds for the board of water supply to install ~~two~~ up to six monitoring wells for the purpose of collecting important data to understand the condition of the groundwater aquifer underneath and surrounding the Red Hill facility and its implications to the drinking water supply in Oahu.”

Releases of fuel and fire suppressant chemicals from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (Red Hill Facility) pose a threat to groundwater aquifer and drinking water sources in the area. State and county agency officials and elected leaders who signed the unified statement on the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) Report (November 2023), emphasized this contamination must not be present in our water resources and be fully remediated. A Red Hill working group was formed and after listening to subject matter experts (SME), it was the conclusion of the Red Hill WAI group and SMEs that between 644,000 and 1.94 million gallons of fuel leaked or spilled at the Red Hill Facility. This is a significant hazard to the environment.¹

¹ Red Hill Water Alliance (WAI) Report, November 2023. Governor Josh Green, M.D., Rep. Scott Saiki, Speaker, State of House of Representative, Senator Ronald D. Kouchi, Mayor Rick Blangiardi, et al.

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and Members
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It is the recommendation of the Red Hill WAI to establish a “sentinel” monitoring grid of shallow and deep wells to fully characterize the nature and extent of underground contamination – what contaminants are there, how it is moving in the underground aquifer and how it can be remediated. Siting the monitoring wells may depend on the geological features, accessibility, and compatibility with surface activity, etc. The Red Hill WAI believes there is a need for a comprehensive grid of up to 122 monitoring wells at various sites; the latter to be determined when site-level assessments are established.²

The BWS is doing its part in to protect O’ahu’s sole source aquifer and provide safe drinking water. The BWS shut down Halawa Shaft, and the Halawa and ‘Aiea wells to protect the main source of water – the aquifer. The Halawa Shaft formerly supplied most of the water to metropolitan Honolulu. Under Act 164, (2023, Session Laws of Hawaii) the State Legislature authorized the issuance of 10 million dollars in general obligation bonds for the BWS to install monitoring wells and an exploratory well to meet future potable water requirements for the metropolitan area on O’ahu for fiscal year 2023-2024. The legislature appropriated the funds to the City and County of Honolulu and graciously did not impose a match by county funds. Most of these funds have been awarded and encumbered for two monitoring wells and an exploratory well. The details are as follows:

- I. \$3,258,418 (State Funds & BWS Funds) \$: Exploratory Well –Job No. 24-001 Newtown 550' Exploratory Well. Contract Awarded.
- II. \$2,960,696 (State Funds): Monitoring Well – Job No. 24-002A Monitoring Well Site A. Contract Awarded.
- III. \$3,237,612 (State Funds): Monitoring Well – Job No. 24-002B Monitoring Well Site D. Contract Awarded.
- IV. Monitoring Well – Job No. 24-002C Monitoring Well Site S. Solicitation & Contract Award Pending

The BWS respectfully request your favorable support to continue the WAI goals and efforts needed to protect our sole source aquifer, remediate the environment, and provide safe, dependable and affordable water to the people of O’ahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 1634.

Very truly yours,



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

² Ibid.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

February 10, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB1634: Relating to Water Resources

To: Chair Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair Stanley Chang, and Members of the Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

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

Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 3:20 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Subject: Support for SB1634 - Relating to Water Resources

Aloha Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs,

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i is pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of SB1634. This bill is a critical step towards ensuring the sustainability and safety of our water resources, which are vital to the health and well-being of our communities.

Key Points:

1. Appropriation of Bonds for Monitoring Wells:

- SB1634 proposes the appropriation of general obligation bonds to the Board of Water Supply (BWS) for the planning, design, and construction of two monitoring wells.
- These monitoring wells are essential for collecting data on groundwater levels and quality, which will inform our water management strategies.

2. Ensuring Water Sustainability:

- By investing in monitoring wells, SB1634 aims to ensure the sustainability and safety of Hawaii's water resources.
- The collected data will help address potential contamination issues and support effective water management.

3. Support for Board of Water Supply:

- The bill provides financial support to the BWS, enabling them to carry out the necessary work to protect water resources.
- It demonstrates a commitment to proactive measures to safeguard water resources for future generations.

4. **Alignment with Environmental Stewardship:**

- SB1634 aligns with the goals of environmental stewardship and sustainable resource management.
- It emphasizes making informed decisions based on scientific data and prioritizing the health of ecosystems.

Arguments in Support:

1. **Protecting Public Health:**

- Monitoring wells will help detect any emerging threats to groundwater early, ensuring a reliable and clean water supply for residents.
- This proactive approach reduces the risk of contamination and protects the health and well-being of communities.

2. **Environmental Conservation:**

- By closely monitoring groundwater, SB1634 promotes the conservation of natural resources.
- It helps in understanding and addressing the impacts of environmental changes on water quality and availability.

3. **Sustainable Water Management:**

- The collected data from monitoring wells will inform water management strategies, ensuring sustainable use of water resources.
- This supports long-term planning and decision-making for water resource management in Hawaii.

4. **Economic Benefits:**

- Investing in monitoring wells can prevent costly water contamination incidents and the need for extensive remediation efforts.
- It ensures the efficient use of financial resources by addressing potential issues early.

5. **Community Engagement:**

- SB1634 demonstrates a commitment to the well-being of the community by prioritizing clean and safe water.
- It encourages community support and trust in government efforts to protect essential resources.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to favorably consider SB1634 and support its passage. This bill represents a significant investment in the future of our water resources and the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

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

LATE

SB-1634

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:56:12 AM

Testimony for EIG on 2/11/2025 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Testifying for 350 Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

350Hawaii strongly supports SB1634, which aims to appropriate general obligation bonds to the Board of Water Supply for the planning, design, and construction of two monitoring wells. This bill is a crucial step towards ensuring the sustainable management of our water resources. Our drinking water supply has already been impacted by climate change. Add on the contamination to our precious sole-source aquifer on Oahu as the result of the Navy's negligence at Red Hill. It is critical we support efforts towards collecting important data to understand the condition of the groundwater aquifer underneath and surrounding the Red Hill facility and its implications to the drinking water supply in Oahu.

We urge the committee to pass this very important measure.

Mahalo.