



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
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WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on SCR0118 SD1  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS  
THE FEASIBILITY OF ALLOWING BUSINESS OWNERS IN THE STATE TO UTILIZE FILTERED  
WATER COLLECTED BY WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS FOR BUSINESS ACTIVITIES**

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date, Time, and Room Number: April 11, 2025, 10:00 a.m.; Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This resolution will impact the priorities identified in the Governor's  
2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and  
3 personnel priorities.

4 **Department Position:** The Department offers the following comments.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Health Services Division ("EHSD"), Food and Drug  
6 Branch ("FDB") provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department:

7 SCR0118 SD1 requests that the Department convene the Business Activity Water  
8 Catchment System Working Group (Working Group) to assess the feasibility of allowing  
9 business owners in the State to utilize water collected by water catchment systems and filtered  
10 for business activities.

11 The Department recognizes that the State's water resources are fragile and have been  
12 recently subjected to significant stressors after the petroleum leaks at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel  
13 Storage Facility on O'ahu and the Kula and Lahaina wildfires on Maui. Climate change will also

1 affect these resources. Assessing and implementing novel ideas to protect and diversify the  
2 State's water resources is vital.

3 Regulation of drinking water sources in Hawai'i involves multiple agencies and  
4 overlapping federal and State regulations. At present, water catchment systems serving  
5 individual residential units are privately owned and not regulated under State statute, rule, or  
6 County ordinance. Resources providing guidance to individual homeowners using catchment  
7 systems are implementable best management practices and are not a prescription to produce  
8 water quality levels equal to federal standards or for broader public use.

9 Water quality from water catchment systems can vary greatly, as demonstrated by a  
10 2024 University of Hawai'i, Hilo pilot study that collected samples from twenty water  
11 catchment systems located at residences ranging from Pahoia to Volcano to Honoka'a.  
12 Exceedances in arsenic, mercury, and other chemicals were identified in most of the systems,  
13 and the presence of *Angiostrongylus cantonensis* DNA, which is the DNA of the parasite that  
14 causes rat lungworm disease, was detected in eight systems. However, the Department notes  
15 that transmission of avian influenza through contact with, or consumption of, catchment water  
16 has never been documented and is an unlikely mode of transmission.

17 To safely use a water catchment system for a commercial enterprise may necessitate  
18 the implementation of enhanced filtration and treatment processes to ensure that the  
19 catchment water is free of pathogens, parasites, and any other public health threats. For  
20 example, catchment water is not allowed for use by food establishments, unless the source is  
21 approved as equivalent to drinking water. However, this level of treatment typically employs  
22 higher levels of chlorine disinfectant which may impart taste and odor qualities that could  
23 negatively impact food products prepared using catchment water. Unfortunately, these  
24 unwanted characteristics may be counterproductive to the use of catchment water for certain  
25 business activities. Ultimately, strict water quality testing requirements, multiple barrier water  
26 treatment and filtration equipment and supplies, and other potential expenses such as reliance

1 on water hauling to supplement demand may negate any possible cost benefits when  
2 compared with importing potable municipal water. For water collected from a water catchment  
3 system be considered viable, the drinking water produced from the water catchment system  
4 must meet quality standards and be subject to regulatory control.

5 The Department notes that it lacks the resources to implement this resolution and  
6 requires resources to facilitate the Working Group and develop a legislative report. To fulfill the  
7 assessment and recommendations included in this resolution, the Department previously  
8 requested \$100,000 to retain the professional services of a working group facilitator. However,  
9 given that an appropriation is unable to be included in this resolution, the Department has  
10 concerns about being able to fulfill the requests included in this resolution at this time.

11 **Offered Amendments:** None.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2025**  
**10:00 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 329**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 118 SD1**

**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF ALLOWING BUSINESS OWNERS IN THE STATE TO UTILIZE FILTERED WATER COLLECTED BY WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS FOR BUSINESS ACTIVITIES**

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SCR118 SD1 that requests the Department of Health to convene a working group to assess the feasibility of allowing business owners in the state to utilize filtered water collected by water catchment systems for business activities.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) supports the collection and utilization of filtered water by water catchment systems provided that public health and safety can be assured. Allowing business to use filtered catchment water would greatly support business that do not have access to municipal water systems such as in many rural areas of the Big Island.

The Department appreciates the testimony of the Department of Health that added the HDOA to the working group as this recognizes that solutions require interagency collaboration to address water quality, food safety, liability and the diversification of water sources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions.



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

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MAYOR  
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ERNEST Y. W. LAU, P.E.  
MANAGER AND CHIEF ENGINEER  
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ERWIN KAWATA  
DEPUTY MANAGER  
HOPE MANAKIA



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GENE C. ALBANO, P.E., Ex-Officio

April 11, 2025

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair  
and Members  
House Committee on Health  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 329  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Takayama and Members:

Subject: SCR 118, SD 1: Requesting the Department of Health to Convene a Working Group to Assess the Feasibility of Allowing Business Owners in the State to Utilize Filtered Water Collected by Water Catchment Systems for Business Activities

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The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) strongly supports Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 118, Senate Draft (SD) 1.

This resolution requests the Department of Health (DOH) to convene a working group to study the feasibility of allowing businesses owners to use filtered water from water catchment systems for business activities. The use of water from catchment systems for non-potable purposes will help to extend our limited drinking water resources through reuse. The working group would also study the feasibility of establishing a program to test the catchment water to ensure the safety of the water. We recommend the working group also evaluate the need to treat the catchment water with disinfectants, such as chlorine, to further enhance the safety of the water. This resolution will help to greatly extend our limited groundwater supplies and preserve our water resources for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify is strong support of SCR 118, SD 1.

Very truly yours,

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



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAII

345 KEKŪANAŌ'A STREET, SUITE 20 • HILO, HAWAII 96720

TELEPHONE (808) 961-8050 • FAX (808) 961-8657

April 9, 2025

TESTIMONY OF KEITH K. OKAMOTO, MANAGER-CHIEF ENGINEER  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY, COUNTY OF HAWAII

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

DATE: Friday, April 11, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 329

**SCR 118 SD1- REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF ALLOWING BUSINESS OWNERS IN THE STATE TO UTILIZE FILTERED WATER COLLECTED BY WATER CATCHMENT SYSTEMS FOR BUSINESS ACTIVITIES.**

Honorable Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Keohokapu-Lee-Loy, and committee members,

The County of Hawaii, Department of Water Supply (DWS) submits this letter in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 118 SD1 which requests the Department of Health to convene a working group to assess the feasibility of allowing the use of filtered catchment system water for business use.

Due to Hawaii Island's large geographic size, a municipal water system to service the entire island is not feasible. As such, rainwater catchment systems are currently used for a significant portion of our island community. Besides individual residential use, we understand there are at least two larger scale facilities using water catchment: Kulani prison, and Volcanoes national park. Although this resolution does not have a direct impact on our department, we feel that it is prudent to evaluate other options for the potable water needs in areas DWS do not serve.

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your dedication and commitment to serving our State.

Please feel free to contact me at (808) 961-8050 or via email at [dws@hawaiidws.org](mailto:dws@hawaiidws.org) with any questions you may have regarding DWS' comments. Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony on SCR 118 SD1.

*...Water, Our Most Precious Resource...Ka Wai A Kāne...*

The Department of Water Supply is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Health  
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair  
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair**

**Friday, April 11, 2025, at 10:00AM  
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference**

**RE: SCR118 SD1 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A  
WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF ALLOWING BUSINESS OWNERS IN  
THE STATE TO UTILIZE FILTERED WATER COLLECTED BY WATER CATCHMENT  
SYSTEMS FOR BUSINESS ACTIVITIES.**

Aloha e Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 118 Senate Draft 1 (SCR118 SD1), which requests the Department of Health to convene a working group to assess the feasibility of allowing business owners in the state to utilize filtered water collected by water catchment systems for business activities.

SCR118 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Business Services. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

According to the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), small businesses—making up 99.2% of all businesses and employing nearly half the state's workforce—are especially vital to rural communities, where they drive business expansion and economic development. Expanding the use of rainwater catchment systems offers one promising way to conserve natural resources while supplementing municipal water supplies.

Currently, state law limits captured rainwater to personal use, preventing its use in business operations. This resolution proposes forming a Business Activity Water Catchment System Working Group to study the safe expansion of filtered catchment water for commercial use. The group will evaluate regulations, safety standards, and potential state-county partnerships to support adoption. The Chamber supports this effort as a means to promote rural business growth and economic opportunity, while strengthening Hawai'i's long-term water resiliency.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution 118 Senate Draft 1 (SCR118 SD1). Thank you for the opportunity to testify.