



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'ŌIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on SCR0118  
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**

SENATOR JOY SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

March 24, 2025, 1:00 p.m.; Room Number: 225

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

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

1 system be considered viable, the drinking water produced from the water catchment system  
2 must meet quality standards and be subject to regulatory control.

3 If this resolution moves forward, and based on testimony specific to agricultural  
4 business activities submitted for a similar bill introduced during this session, the Department  
5 respectfully requests that the Hawai'i State Department of Agriculture be added as a Working  
6 Group member to provide guidance and expertise regarding the U.S. Food and Drug  
7 Administration's Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule and other relevant  
8 regulations when using catchment water for agricultural operations.

9 The Department notes that it lacks the resources to implement this resolution and  
10 would require funding to facilitate the Working Group and develop a legislative report. To fulfill  
11 the requested assessment and recommendations included in the resolution, the Department  
12 respectfully requests \$100,000 to retain a working group facilitator. A facilitator is necessary to  
13 assist the Department in completing the tasks requested.

14 **Offered Amendments:** Additions appear as underlined, and deletions appear as strikeouts.

15 "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to consist of the  
16 following members:

17 ... (3) Director of Health, or the Director's designee;

18 (4) Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, or the Chairperson's designee;

19 [~~(4)~~](5) One representative from each county's board or department of water supply or  
20 department of water;

21 [~~(5)~~](6) One member representing the public, appointed or invited by the President of  
22 the Senate; and

1           ~~(6)~~(7) One member representing the public, appointed or invited by the Speaker of the  
2                           House of Representatives; and ...”

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



1088 BISHOP STREET #408  
HONOLULU, HI 96813  
PH: (808) 597-1216

GREGG S. SERIKAKU  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Via E-File

March 24, 2025

**LATE**

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Chairs San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: SR99/SCR 118 RELATING TO WATER REUSE SYSTEMS**

The Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association of Hawaii is the State's largest association representing contractors in the plumbing, air conditioning, refrigeration, steamfitter, and fire sprinkler trades throughout Hawaii.

PAMCA fully **supports** the intent of SR99/SCR118 to pursue water reuse systems for commercial applications.

Water reuse represents an innovative strategy to conserve our essential water resources. By capturing rainwater for non-potable applications such as landscape irrigation, cooling towers, and toilet flushing, commercial projects can significantly lower their use of our islands' precious water resources. Furthermore, when integrated into commercial structures, these systems mitigate stormwater runoff and reduce the strain on our aging municipal infrastructures. As our islands face the increasing challenges of climate change, these measures are critical in creating resilient, sustainable environments that benefit both commercial activities and the broader community.

We urge this committee to prioritize and incentivize water reuse within commercial projects. Embracing these systems shows progressive thinking that safeguards natural resources, and advances urban sustainability. By taking these steps today, we ensure that our future generations inherit a more sustainable, efficient, and environmentally conscious Hawaii for tomorrow.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our testimony in support of SR99/SCR118.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregg S. Serikaku".

Gregg S. Serikaku  
Executive Director