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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Thursday, April 10, 2025
9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 54 SENATE DRAFT 1
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
CONVENE AND PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE TO A DESALINATION
PLANNING TASK FORCE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE USE OF DESALINATION
FOR LARGE-SCALE WATER CONSUMPTION IN THE STATE IS FEASIBLE

Senate Concurrent Resolution 54 Senate Draft 1 urges the Department of Land and Natural Resources to convene and provide administrative assistance to a desalination planning task force to determine whether the use of desalination for large-scale water consumption in the state is feasible. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) offers comments.**

The Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) advocates for the use of feasible alternative water sources to supplement Hawai'i's natural water supplies. Desalination is used in many places around the world to produce fresh water from brackish or seawater. As the Legislature acknowledges, there are challenges to the large-scale implementation of desalination in Hawai'i, including high energy costs and the disposal of byproduct brine water. While desalination for water supply has been previously studied in Hawai'i, it may be constructive to establish a Desalination Planning Task Force to further investigate and understand the opportunities and constraints for statewide use of desalination in Hawai'i.

Given the level of effort to complete a statewide large-scale desalination study, the Department is concerned that the current level of staffing and resources at the Commission would prevent the proposed report to be completed twenty days prior to the convening of the Legislative Regular Session of 2026. The Department notes that Standing Committee Report No. 1428 requests subsequent committees to delay this measure's report deadline to 2027 and concurs with this time extension.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.

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

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April 10, 2025

The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
and Members
House Committee on Water and Land
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 411
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Hashem and Members:

SUBJECT: SCR54, SD1: Requesting the Department of Land and Natural Resources to Convene and Provide Administrative Assistance to a Desalination Planning Task Force to Determine Whether the Use of Desalination for Large-Scale Water Consumption in the State is Feasible

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 54, Senate Draft (SD) 1, which requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to convene and provide administrative assistance to a desalination planning task force to determine whether the use of desalination for large-scale water consumption in the State is feasible.

The BWS was awarded \$18.9 million in federal funding from the U.S. Department of the Interior through the Bureau of Reclamation to fund water recycling and desalination projects. In 2023, BWS awarded a design-build-operate-maintain services contract to Kalaeloa Desalco LLC to build, operate and maintain the seawater desalination facility in Campbell Industrial Park, with a targeted operational start date in 2027. The project is currently in the planning and design phase of building an innovative desalination facility that will use seawater to convert into drinking water. The goal of BWS's Kalaeloa Seawater Desalination Project is to produce 1.7 million gallons of fresh water each day and reduce water transfers from Central Oahu to Ewa.

Demand for fresh water from BWS's Ewa system is approaching capacity, as the district's population is expected to grow by about 30 percent, or 50,000 people, by 2040. So BWS must look for ways to develop new source capacity to meet the demand, especially as the state and county moves toward expanding affordable housing

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statewide. The seawater desalination plant will supplement BWS's ongoing efforts to encourage conservation, use recycled water for non-potable water demands, and leverage brackish and saline aquifer supplies where possible.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 54, SD 1.

Very truly yours,



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



SCR-54-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 6:21:11 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/10/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support