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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT  
KAWAINUI MARSH ON THE ISLAND OF OAHU.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The Kawainui marsh, encompassing approximately  
2 eight hundred thirty acres of land in Kailua, Oahu, is the  
3 State's largest remaining wetland and an ecological and cultural  
4 treasure of statewide interest. The marsh has been identified  
5 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as a primary  
6 habitat for a number of endemic and endangered Hawaiian birds.  
7 In 2005, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands designated the  
8 Kawainui marsh as a wetland of international importance, in part  
9 due to the marsh's relationship to surrounding cultural sites.

10           The legislature finds that the Kawainui marsh, apart from  
11 its cultural and ecological significance, provides critical  
12 benefits for the Kailua region. First, the marsh acts as a  
13 sediment trap for runoff entering into the marsh from the  
14 streams of the Kailua watershed, thereby keeping harmful  
15 nutrients and pollutants out of Kailua Bay. The National  
16 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that runoff from



1 land-based pollution is the primary cause of coral reef  
2 degradation, causing poor water quality in the reef and  
3 increased algae growth that can crowd out coral colonies.  
4 Further, sediment deposited from streams can literally smother  
5 coral. By acting as a trap for sediment that might otherwise  
6 harm the reef, the Kawainui marsh is critical in protecting the  
7 health of the fragile offshore marine ecosystem. This role has  
8 become even more important as the Kailua region has urbanized.

9 The legislature further finds that the marsh acts as a  
10 flood control basin, ponding 6.8 to 9.5 million gallons per day  
11 of freshwater runoff from area streams each day. Unfortunately,  
12 due to increased soil erosion caused by the urbanization of the  
13 Kailua region, sediment has begun to clog the marsh's waterways.  
14 Over the past century, this has resulted in a steady decrease in  
15 the volume of the marsh's basin and water storage capacity. In  
16 addition, the practice of discharging partially treated,  
17 nutrient-rich wastewater directly into the marsh during the  
18 1960s stimulated the rapid growth of exotic vegetation in the  
19 waterways, causing previously open water channels to close,  
20 decreasing the flow of water through the marsh. This has caused  
21 even more sediment to be trapped in the marsh, even further



1 decreasing the storage capacity of the basin. In fact, research  
2 has shown that a four hundred fifty acre portion of the marsh  
3 that was historically kept clear by native Hawaiians to be used  
4 as a fishpond has shrunk to a fraction of its former size, due  
5 largely to sediment accumulation and increased vegetation  
6 growth. This overall reduction in capacity has increased the  
7 likelihood of flooding in the Kailua region, as has been seen a  
8 number of times in recent history, including a particular severe  
9 flood on New Year's Eve in 1987 in Coconut Grove that was  
10 attributed in large part to saturation of the Kawainui basin.

11 The legislature believes that it is essential that the  
12 State make improvements to the ponds at the Kawainui marsh to  
13 ensure that the marsh continues to act as an effective flood  
14 basin, protecting surrounding property owners, and as an  
15 important habitat to threatened endemic species both within the  
16 marsh itself as well as offshore in Kailua Bay.

17 The purpose of this Act is to authorize the director of  
18 finance to issue general obligation bonds to fund the Kawainui  
19 water management infrastructure and flood mitigation project to:

- 20 (1) Install water management infrastructure for wildlife  
21 ponds; and



1 (2) Contour stream banks and overflow channels to manage  
2 flood waters.

3 SECTION 2. The director of finance is authorized to issue  
4 general obligation bonds in the sum of \$ or so much  
5 thereof as may be necessary and the same sum or so much thereof  
6 as may be necessary is appropriated for fiscal year 2017-2018  
7 for the purpose of financing the following capital improvement  
8 project for the department of land and natural resources:

9 1. To be expended by the department of land and natural  
10 resources:

11 A. Kawainui water management infrastructure and flood  
12 mitigation  
13 Install water management infrastructure for wildlife  
14 ponds and contour stream banks and overflow channels  
15 to manage flood waters.

16 Plans \$  
17 Design  
18 Construction  
19 Total funding \$

20 SECTION 3. The appropriation made for the capital  
21 improvement project authorized by this Act shall not lapse at



1 the end of the fiscal biennium for which the appropriation is  
2 made; provided that all moneys from the appropriation  
3 unencumbered as of June 30, 2020, shall lapse as of that date.

4 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

CIP; Kawainui Marsh

**Description:**

Authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds and appropriates moneys for a capital improvement project by DLNR to install water management infrastructure for wildlife ponds and contour stream banks and overflow channels to manage flood waters at Kawainui Marsh. (HB1218 HD1)

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