

---

---

# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FRESH WATER SECURITY.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawaii Community  
2 Foundation's Fresh Water Council defined water security for  
3 Hawaii as a "sustainable, plentiful, and cost-effective fresh  
4 water supply for all of Hawaii's agricultural, cultural,  
5 domestic, economic, and ecosystem needs by 2030." Over a  
6 century ago, Hawaii's plantation agricultural enterprises  
7 supported and created water infrastructure. Those historic  
8 investments established the water infrastructure that is used  
9 today, but the industry has since left the State along with the  
10 money necessary to maintain the State's water infrastructure.  
11 Further, this infrastructure is expected to deliver an even  
12 greater set of water values and benefits than before.

13           The legislature further finds that the State has been left  
14 with dams and reservoirs that have become liabilities rather  
15 than assets; insufficient watershed protection that threatens  
16 Hawaii's natural fresh water sources; and outdated, inefficient,  
17 and leaky water transmission systems. Climate change is rapidly



1 altering Hawaii's water supply, and the State's ongoing  
2 responsibility to provide water to satisfy the increasing needs  
3 of multiple beneficial uses requires increasing capital  
4 investment.

5       The legislature further finds that the Fresh Water Council  
6 distilled nearly two years of water security research and  
7 analysis into a single goal: to create one hundred million  
8 gallons per day in additional, reliable fresh water capacity for  
9 the State by 2030. To achieve this goal, water experts and  
10 evidence suggest that significant investments are needed in the  
11 forms of system upgrades, new source development, improved  
12 conservation, watershed restoration and protection, relocated  
13 wastewater treatment plants, decentralized and scaled water  
14 recycling, storm water capture, and more efficient water  
15 transmission.

16       The legislature further finds that new and innovative  
17 investment partnerships and community engagement are needed to  
18 mobilize large-scale investment in Hawaii's fresh water  
19 security. This will require partners from multiple sectors,  
20 including county, state, and federal governments, as well as



1 private philanthropic and corporate entities, to work together  
2 to leverage funds and provide matching opportunities.

3 The legislature finds that the risks of doing nothing to  
4 address the State's water security are enormous. The Red Hill  
5 Bulk Fuel Storage Facility fuel leak and the climate  
6 change-induced water crisis unfolding around the globe offer  
7 important reminders of the human, economic, and environmental  
8 harms associated with a dramatic reduction in fresh water  
9 supply. These alarming circumstances demand innovative  
10 strategies that combine streams of capital to make long-needed  
11 water security projects viable.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish within  
13 the commission on water resource management a water security  
14 working group to study and recommend, for legislative  
15 consideration and approval, priority capital improvement  
16 projects, including funding and financing strategies for each  
17 project, that leverage public-private investment to increase  
18 Hawaii's water security.

19 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the commission  
20 on water resource management a water security working group to  
21 study and recommend, for legislative consideration and approval,



1 priority capital improvement projects, including funding and  
2 financing strategies for each project, that leverage  
3 public-private investment to increase Hawaii's water security.

4 The working group shall consider projects that:

- 5 (1) Protect and manage Hawaii's forested watersheds;
- 6 (2) Renovate dams and reservoirs;
- 7 (3) Improve the efficiency of water transmission and  
8 irrigation systems;
- 9 (4) Reduce the use of potable water for landscape and  
10 other nonfood irrigation;
- 11 (5) Encourage water re-use;
- 12 (6) Monitor the quality and quantity of the water supply;  
13 and
- 14 (7) Are considered appropriate by the working group.

15 (b) The working group shall establish criteria for  
16 evaluating potential capital improvement projects and priority  
17 based on but not limited to:

- 18 (1) The public and private benefits of the project;
- 19 (2) The level of community support for, or opposition to,  
20 the project;



1 (3) The cost estimates and timetable for the completion of  
2 the project;

3 (4) The potential for receiving financial and in-kind  
4 contributions from funding partners for the project;  
5 and

6 (5) The amount of water conserved, recharged, or re-used  
7 by the project.

8 (c) The working group shall consist of but not be limited  
9 to the following members:

10 (1) A manager and chief engineer, manager-chief engineer,  
11 or director of a county water utility;

12 (2) The deputy director of the commission on water  
13 resource management of the department of land and  
14 natural resources, or the deputy director's designee;

15 (3) The administrator of the division of forestry and  
16 wildlife of the department of land and natural  
17 resources, or the administrator's designee;

18 (4) The deputy director of the department of health, or  
19 the deputy director's designee;

20 (5) A member having knowledge of agricultural water  
21 storage and transmission systems;



1 (6) A member from a private landowning entity that  
2 actively partners with a watershed partnership, who  
3 shall be invited to participate;

4 (7) A member having knowledge, experience, and expertise  
5 in Native Hawaiian cultural practices; and

6 (8) A member representing a philanthropic organization,  
7 who shall be invited to participate.

8 (d) The working group may request assistance and feedback  
9 from the city and county of Honolulu and the counties of Maui,  
10 Kauai, and Hawaii; department of land and natural resources;  
11 department of agriculture; and any other department that the  
12 working group deems appropriate, to provide expertise to the  
13 working group in conducting the water security study. The  
14 working group shall further consult with industry stakeholders,  
15 private landowners, and other environmental organizations that  
16 are encouraged to cooperate and provide information or input.

17 (e) The working group shall submit a report of its  
18 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
19 legislation, relating to the water security study to the  
20 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
21 the regular session of 2024.



1 (f) The members of the working group shall serve without  
2 compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including  
3 travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

4 (g) No member of the working group shall be subject to  
5 chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of the  
6 member's participation in the working group.

7 (h) The working group shall be dissolved on June 30, 2024.

8 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 for the  
11 water security working group's administrative support, travel,  
12 meeting, and operational costs; provided that all moneys from  
13 the appropriation that are unencumbered as of June 30, 2024,  
14 shall lapse to the credit of the general fund as of that date.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the commission on  
16 water resource management for the purposes of this Act.

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



**Report Title:**

Water Security Working Group; Commission on Water Resource Management; Study; Capital Improvement Projects; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes within the Commission on Water Resource Management a water security working group to study and recommend, for legislative consideration and approval, priority capital improvement projects, including funding and financing strategies for each project, that leverage public-private investment to increase Hawaii's water security. Makes an appropriation. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

