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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
and  
WATER AND LAND

Monday, March 20, 2023  
3:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1303, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO WATER CONSERVATION

House Bill 1303, House Draft 1, proposes to appropriate moneys to the City and County of Honolulu Board of Water Supply to create a pilot program that incentivizes residential homeowners in certain dry areas to replace landscaping and irrigation with alternatives that reduce water use and requires report to the Legislature. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Department's Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) supports water conservation and efficiency of water use, which is essential because climate change is expected to reduce future freshwater availability in many areas of the State of Hawai'i and may also cause an increase in frequency and severity of drought events. Incentives for residential homeowners to replace water-intensive landscaping with alternatives that use less water may be an effective way to reduce residential water use in Hawai'i. According to the Honolulu Board of Water Supply (HBWS), the average residential household consumes between 6,000 to 9,000 gallons per month, with approximately half of that for outdoor use. A residential HBWS customer who fully eliminated outdoor irrigation could save an average of 45,000 gallons per year of drinking water.

The Commission also acknowledges that each of the four county water departments have existing water conservation programs and that a pilot program offering residents incentives to replace landscaping with less water intensive alternatives could also be established in the dry areas of the Counties of Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
LAURA H.E. KAAKUA  
FIRST DEPUTY  
M. KALEO MANUEL  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER  
AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**HB-1303-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2023 5:56:50 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators!

We need to conserve our fresh water, especially on the dry sides of our islands and especially on Oahu after the Red Hill spill that threatens our aquifer. The pilot program in this bill would fund rebates that incentivize water conservation by residential homeowners who adopt certain landscaping practices, with a priority for the planting of native species and pollinator plants represents a start in the right direction.

Please pass this bill!

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

## BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
630 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET  
HONOLULU, HI 96843  
www.boardofwatersupply.com



March 20, 2023

RICK BLANGIARDI, MAYOR

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EDWIN H. SNIFFEN, Ex-Officio

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

ERWIN M. KAWATA  
Deputy Manager

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair  
and Members  
Senate Committee on Public Safety and  
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
and Members  
Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Wakai, Chair Inouye and Members:

**SUBJECT: House Bill 1303, HD1: Relating to Water Conservation**

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) supports House Bill (HB) 1303, House Draft (HD) 1, which appropriates moneys to the BWS to create a pilot program that incentivizes residential homeowners in certain dry areas to replace landscaping and irrigation with alternatives that reduce water use.

The BWS has found that drought tolerant plants and xeriscaping techniques such as those demonstrated at the BWS Halawa Xeriscape Garden in Halawa Valley can reduce irrigation water demand while creating attractive landscaping.

The funding will help support and expand the BWS Water Sensible rebate program, which currently includes rain barrels and weather-based irrigation controllers in a popular and expanding suite of conservation rebates, including turf replacement.

Reducing potable water use conserves important water resources especially in dry areas subject to severe drought from climate change. Conservation is an inexpensive strategy to increase available water system capacity to meet the needs of expanding communities and to reduce the impacts of reduced source capacity affected by the Red Hill fuel contamination.

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
and Members  
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1303, HD1.

Very truly yours,

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



**Environmental Caucus of  
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i**

To: The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair  
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
The Honorable Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Water and Land

Re: **HB 1303 HD1 – RELATING TO WATER CONSERVATION**

Hearing: Monday, March 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Position: **Strong support**

Aloha, Chairs Wakai and Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs, and Committee on Water and Land:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i and its 7,500 members stand in strong support of HB 1303 HD1. This measure would appropriate moneys to the city and county of Honolulu board of water supply to create a pilot program that incentivizes residential homeowners in certain dry areas to replace landscaping and irrigation with alternatives that reduce water use.

The Hawaii State Constitution, Article XI, Section 7, entitled WATER RESOURCES provides:

**Section 7.** The State has an obligation to protect, control and regulate the use of Hawaii's water resources for the benefit of its people.

The legislature shall provide for a water resources agency which, as provided by law, shall set overall water conservation, quality and use policies; define beneficial and reasonable uses; protect ground and surface water resources, watersheds and natural stream environments; establish criteria for water use priorities while assuring appurtenant rights and existing correlative and riparian uses and establish procedures for regulating all uses of Hawaii's water resources.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Platform plank on the environment provides that its members are to "protect and preserve Hawai'i's environment and achieve energy sustainability, advance measures to re-establish a healthy climate and environment for humans and fellow species, including actions to urgently address climate change, and work towards 100% renewable energy goals.

We believe that all people have the right to live in a clean, healthy and safe environment. We believe that the preservation of our natural environment and its ecological well-being is essential to ensuring a safe, healthy, bountiful life for future generations in Hawai'i. We support policies that create a more sustainable society. We support the restoration, preservation, and protection of native ecosystems.

We believe in the resource management principles outlined in the Public Trust doctrine of [Article XI, Section 1 of] the Hawai'i State Constitution. . . .



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We believe that a key part of a sustainable and self-sufficient future for Hawai'i lies in achieving energy independence through a transition to clean renewable energy sources. We support policy that eliminates our dependence on fossil fuels and other dirty energy sources.” [OUR PLATFORM | DPH \(hawaiidemocrats.org\)](#)

Appropriating moneys to the city and county of Honolulu board of water supply to create a pilot program that incentivizes residential homeowners in certain dry areas to replace landscaping and irrigation with alternatives that reduce water use would be consistent with the state and counties' duties under Article XI, Section 7 on Water Resources; Article XI, Section 1 on the Public Trust Doctrine; and the DPH Platform environmental goals toward creating a more sustainable society.

Please support and pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

/s/ Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

**HB-1303-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 9:34:29 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/20/2023 3:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Tiwanak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB 1303, RELATING TO WATER CONSERVATION, that incentivizes residential homeowners in certain dry areas to replace landscaping and irrigation with alternatives that reduce water use.

I feel this is a long time coming. I live in Kapolei, where we get little rainfall. Since we moved here in 2007, it seemed evident that the community planning gave zero consideration to types of lawns and water conservation. There should also be a rule on types of lawns that can be planted and encourage developers of new projects to seek low water lawns, irrigation, landscaping (xeriscape) and zeroscape alternatives.

There are hundreds of homes in my neighborhood. All which have a type of GOLF COURSE lawn that requires heavy daily watering and high degree of maintenance. This is an oversight by the Villages of Kapolei Homeowners Association and the Developer, in my case Kobayashi. We've always felt this is a grotesque waste of our water resources and time. Also because of HOA covenants, homeowners are forced to use large amounts of water even if they don't want to.

In Ho'opili, they made at least a good choice in grass, using Zoisia which uses less water.

I feel a big hurdle for many of us will be being granted approval from Homeowners Associations for XERISCAPE, PERMACULTURE and ZEROSCAPE alternatives. A home with XERISCAPE will have an efficient irrigation system (ie DRIP SYSTEMS – less risk of evaporation and water right to the target) and low water usage plants and shrubbery in place. XERISCAPE usually chosen by people that want to have a beautiful yard but do not have the time to maintain it, or by people who live in the desert.

A ZEROSCAPE yard will be made up of maybe a token plant here and there, but will mostly be made up of dirt and gravel. PERMACULTURE is **the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems, often creating cool, water rich areas which produces food and nurtures native species.**

Although I consider this measure a late response, it is welcome. We need to conserve and protect our water resource for our future and our survival. We cannot grow our housing market and add additional housing without reducing our water usage while also developing new sources of

water, such as desalinization and atmospheric water generation; extracting water from room air.

It is important to work with developers, especially in the Ewa area and West side of the Islands, and critical that there is buy-in and implementation from HOAs. Even if there is an incentive, it is doubtful that HOAs will follow suite. Also it could be a very long time before an HOA such as Ewa Gentry, or Mililani, is able to adopt an approved list of plants and XERISCAPE styles.

People are rightly concerned about property values. As a Residential Appraisal professional, I can attest that landscaping has an impact on resale and market value appraisals for home loans, refinancing and Equity lines of credit.

Zeroscape yards may be ideal for water usage, but it is important to use Xeriscape principles and native plants to enhance the beauty of our neighborhoods, and also to counteract the heat by planting vegetation that keeps our neighborhoods cool. I know this firsthand living in Reno, Nevada. We were restricted from watering our yards on certain days based on whether our address was odd or even numbered. Also, certain types of lawns and plants were recommended.

HOAs and individual homeowners would be greatly served if there could be some GUIDANCE WITH HOW TO CONVERT LANDSCAPING AND select the appropriate types of plants and vegetation.

I support this Bill, but I think it NEEDS TO GO FURTHER in the area of EDUCATION and INCENTIVIZING DEVELOPERS to maximize WATER EFFICENCY; maybe in the form of a TAX CREDIT for use of low water appliances, fixtures and landscaping.

An incentive to plant more trees in hotter areas to mitigate the heat and incentives for rock gardens and Xeriscaping for homeowners. There are also techniques for using SWALES and BERMS to capture water and reduce runoff with the intent to allow water to seep into the aquifer, and create opportunities for PERMACULTURE, (creating a water reserve, use plants that create a water well and attract water).

Thank you

Sean K Tiwanak