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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FISHPONDS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that before Western  
2 contact, researchers estimate that there were approximately four  
3 hundred eighty-eight loko i'a (fishponds) in Hawaii. An  
4 inventory conducted in 1901 found around three hundred sixty  
5 loko i'a across the State, with about ninety-nine of them in  
6 active use at the time.

7           Over the past two centuries, a range of factors, including  
8 changes in economic and social systems, land use and  
9 development, tsunamis, sedimentation, climate change, and the  
10 introduction of invasive species, have impacted loko i'a to  
11 varying degrees. While some loko i'a remain relatively intact,  
12 others have fallen into disrepair, are in ruins, or have been  
13 destroyed to make way for development.

14           In recent years, a statewide movement to restore and  
15 revitalize fishponds has gained momentum, with around forty-nine  
16 fishponds currently managed by local community organizations and  
17 kia'i loko (fishpond guardians).



1 Loko i'a are not only essential for preserving traditional  
2 native Hawaiian culture and practices, but also play a vital  
3 role in enhancing the State's ecological well-being and offer  
4 opportunities to protect cultural resources and expand food  
5 security and community-based resource management.

6 Many fishponds in Hawaii are publicly owned. However, no  
7 comprehensive database exists to inventory these fishponds,  
8 assess their conditions, or evaluate their potential for  
9 restoration. To fulfill its responsibility as a steward of the  
10 'āina and ensure that future generations can benefit from the  
11 opportunities fishponds provide, the legislature believes that  
12 the State must have more complete data on these important  
13 resources and deems this Act to be a law of statewide concern.

14 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a  
15 working group within the university of Hawaii sea grant program  
16 to develop an inventory of state-owned fishponds.

17 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the university  
18 of Hawaii sea grant college program a fishpond inventory working  
19 group for administrative purposes.



1 (b) The working group shall create an inventory of all  
2 state-owned fishponds that includes the following information  
3 for each fishpond:

4 (1) The traditional name;

5 (2) The type or style;

6 (3) The approximate acreage, including submerged lands  
7 within the fishpond;

8 (4) The tax map key, if available;

9 (5) An analysis of the current and historical condition,  
10 including sites in ruin or destroyed;

11 (6) Historical uses and permits associated with the  
12 fishpond;

13 (7) The surrounding land uses; and

14 (8) Any other relevant data as determined by the working  
15 group.

16 (c) The working group shall create:

17 (1) A map of all state-owned fishponds; and

18 (2) A literature review that includes any relevant sources  
19 used for collecting the inventory data.

20 (d) The working group shall consist of:



1 (1) The director of the university of Hawaii sea grant  
2 college program, or the director's designee, who shall  
3 serve as the chair of the working group;

4 (2) The administrator of the office of conservation and  
5 coastal lands of the department of land and natural  
6 resources, or the administrator's designee; and

7 (3) The administrator of the land division of the  
8 department of land and natural resources, or the  
9 administrator's designee.

10 (e) The chair of the working group shall invite the  
11 following individuals to serve as members of the working group:

12 (1) One representative from Hui Mālama Loko I'a; and

13 (2) Others as invited by the chair.

14 (f) Members of the working group shall serve without  
15 compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including  
16 travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

17 (g) The working group shall submit an interim report of  
18 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
19 legislation, to the legislature no later than November 1, 2026.



1 (h) The working group shall submit a final report of its  
2 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
3 legislation, to the legislature no later than November 1, 2027.

4 (i) The working group shall be dissolved on June 30, 2028.

5 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$250,000 or so much  
7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
8 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
9 2026-2027 to create an inventory of all state-owned fishponds.

10 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the university  
11 of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

12 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY: 

JAN 16 2025



# H.B. NO. 309

**Report Title:**

UH; Fishponds; Working Group; Inventory; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all state-owned fishponds and conduct a literature review. Appropriates funds.

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

