



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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LATE

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB0958
RELATING TO WATER**

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

February 7, 2025, 2:00 pm; Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health ("Department") offers comments and
3 amendments.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Management Division ("EMD") provides the
5 following testimony on behalf of the Department.

6 The Department acknowledges the intent of this proposed measure. To clarify, gray
7 water is wastewater. Recycled wastewater from gray water will still need to comply with Hawaii
8 Administrative Rules Title 11 Chapter 62. Per Section D.3. on page 10 of the Department's
9 Reuse Guidelines, Volume II: Recycled Water Projects¹, the R-3 suitable uses for R-3 drip or
10 subsurface drip irrigation is allowed for: 1) Non-edible vegetation in areas with limited public
11 access; 2) Fodder, fiber, and seed crops not consumed by humans; and 3) Timber and trees not
12 bearing food crops.

¹ https://health.hawaii.gov/wastewater/files/2021/10/V2_RWPProjects1.pdf

1 **Offered Amendments:** The Department respectfully offers the following revisions to
2 the measure. Additions appear as double-underlined.

3 SECTION 2, Page 2, lines 3-9: "The department may authorize any county to implement
4 a gray water recycling program within its jurisdiction. The gray water recycling program shall be
5 limited to the use of gray water for the purpose of irrigating lawns~~[-and]~~, gardens~~[-]~~, and farms
6 of less than ten square acres that produce non-edible vegetation in areas with limited public
7 access; fodder, fiber, and seed crops not consumed by humans; and timber and trees not
8 bearing food crops. All use of gray water shall conform to the state plumbing code, chapter
9 3-183, Hawaii administrative rules."

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura & Gabbard, Vice Chairs Aquino & Richards, and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports SB513.**

By allowing farms under ten acres to utilize gray water for irrigation, the bill addresses the critical need for water conservation while supporting the productivity and viability of local agriculture. Small farms are integral to Hawaii's food systems and economy, and providing them with the means to responsibly manage water resources strengthens their capacity to thrive despite environmental challenges such as drought.

Furthermore, implementing gray water recycling aligns with broader sustainability goals by reducing the burden on existing freshwater resources and wastewater treatment facilities. By facilitating small farms in adopting innovative water reuse practices, this bill helps ensure that these farms can maintain their operations efficiently and sustainably, thereby contributing positively to food security and the ecological health of the islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



LATE

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February 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 513
RELATING TO WATER

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Aquino and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 513, which authorizes the Department of Health to allow any county to implement a gray water recycling program that permits small farms of less than ten acres to use gray water for irrigation. As Hawai'i faces increasing concerns over water availability and conservation, this bill represents a practical and environmentally responsible solution to maximize water use efficiency while supporting small-scale agriculture.

Hawai'i faces persistent drought conditions and freshwater scarcity, making it essential to find alternative water sources for irrigation. Allowing small farms to use gray water helps reduce reliance on potable water, ensuring a more sustainable and efficient use of resources. Many small farms struggle with the rising cost of water, particularly in regions with limited water access. By allowing gray water for irrigation, this bill can help small farmers reduce operational expenses, making agriculture more economically viable.

The Department of Health has established clear guidelines for gray water use, including subsurface irrigation methods and restrictions on certain crop types to prevent health risks. SB 513 ensures that gray water recycling is implemented responsibly and safely, in alignment with DOH standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.