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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

LATE

Monday, March 17, 2025
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 54 / SENATE RESOLUTION 36
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
ESTABLISH A DESALINATION PLANNING TASK FORCE TO DETERMINE WHETHER
THE USE OF DESALINATION FOR LARGE-SCALE WATER CONSUMPTION IN THE
STATE IS FEASIBLE**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 54 and Senate Resolution 36 urges the Department of Land and Natural Resources to establish a desalination planning task force to determine whether the use of desalination for large-scale water consumption in the state is feasible. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) offers comments.**

The Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) advocates for the use of feasible alternative water sources to supplement Hawai'i's natural water supplies. Desalination is used in many places around the world to produce fresh water from brackish or seawater. As the Legislature acknowledges, there are challenges to the large-scale implementation of desalination in Hawai'i, including high energy costs and the disposal of byproduct brine water. While desalination for water supply has been previously studied in Hawai'i, it may be constructive to establish a Desalination Planning Task Force to further investigate and understand the opportunities and constraints for statewide use of desalination in Hawai'i.

Given the amount of effort to complete a statewide large-scale desalination study, the Department is concerned that the current level of staffing and resources at the Commission would prevent the proposed report to be completed twenty days prior to the convening of the Legislative Regular Session of 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.

**BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY
KA 'OIHANA WAI
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March 17, 2025

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
and Members
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 229
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Inouye and Members:

SUBJECT: SCR54 / SR 36: Requesting the Department of Land and Natural Resources to Establish a Desalination Planning Task Force to Determine Whether the Use of Desalination for Large-Scale Water Consumption in the State is Feasible

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 54 and Senate Resolution (SR) 36, which requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to establish a desalination planning task force to determine whether the use of desalination for large-scale water consumption in the State is feasible.

Desalination is an important source of reliable freshwater supply as part of a diversified portfolio of watershed management, water conservation, reuse, ground water and surface water supply. BWS is developing the Kalaeloa seawater desalination facility for Campbell Industrial Park with Federal and BWS funding. We can share our experience in planning, procurement, financing, permitting, energy savings devices, environmentally safe brine injection and enhanced water quality standards to ensure no detrimental impacts and a reasonable match to the existing water system.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify in support of SCR54, SR 36.

Very truly yours,

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