

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO DESALINATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to establish a
2 desalination planning task force to determine whether the use of
3 desalination for large-scale water consumption in the State is
4 feasible.

5 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the department
6 of land and natural resources a desalination planning task force
7 for administrative purposes.

8 (b) The task force shall comprise the following members:

9 (1) The director of health or the director's designee;

10 (2) The chairperson of the board of agriculture or the
11 chairperson's designee;

12 (3) The chairperson of the commission on water resource
13 management or the chairperson's designee, who shall
14 serve as chair;

15 (4) The chief executive officer of the office of Hawaiian
16 affairs or the chief executive officer's designee;



1 (5) The chairs of the senate and house of representatives
2 standing committees on water and land or their
3 designees; and

4 (6) The director or manager and chief engineer of each
5 county's department or board of water supply.

6 (c) The task force shall:

7 (1) Conduct a study to determine the water demand for
8 housing, agriculture, and industrial uses throughout
9 the State, including in high-need areas;

10 (2) Examine the feasibility of using desalination as a
11 source of clean and safe drinking water to supplement
12 the State's existing groundwater and surface water
13 resources;

14 (3) Determine the extent to which the use of desalination
15 will:

16 (A) Assist the State in meeting its projected future
17 water needs; and

18 (B) Improve the resiliency of the State's water
19 systems, considering in particular the impacts of
20 the water crisis caused by the contamination at
21 the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility;



(4) Determine whether it is feasible for the commission on water resource management to integrate desalination into its overall water management plans;

(5) Consider the extent to which the construction of desalination plants may affect or interfere with historical sites and Native Hawaiian cultural sites and practices, including burial sites; and

(6) Address environmental concerns associated with the operation of desalination plants, including high energy consumption.

(d) The members of the task force shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

(e) No member of the task force shall be subject to chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of the member's participation in the task force.

(f) The department of land and natural resources shall provide administrative assistance to the task force.

(g) The task force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the



1 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
2 the regular session of 2026.

3 (h) The task force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2026.

4 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "DK" followed by a stylized flourish, written over a horizontal line.

S.B. NO. 848

Report Title:

Potable Water; Desalination; Planning Task Force

Description:

Establishes a Desalination Planning Task Force to examine the feasibility of, and develop a plan and timeline for, the use desalination as a source of potable water in the State.

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