

**BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY
KA 'OIHANA WAI
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

630 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96843
Phone: (808) 748-5000 • boardofwatersupply.com



RICK BLANGIARDI
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MEIA

ERNEST Y. W. LAU, P.E.
MANAGER AND CHIEF ENGINEER
MANAKIA A ME KAHU WILIKI

ERWIN KAWATA
DEPUTY MANAGER
HOPE MANAKIA

NĀ'ĀLEHU ANTHONY, Chair
JONATHAN KANESHIRO, Vice Chair
LANCE WILHELM
JEFFREY LAUPOLA
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN, Ex-Officio
GENE C. ALBANO, P.E., Ex-Officio

February 4, 2026

The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair
and Members
House Committee on Housing
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 430
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Evslin and Members:

Subject: House Bill 1923: Relating to Residential Housing Utilities

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) respectfully opposes House Bill (HB) 1923, which requires county boards of water supply to publicly disclose through its website service connection, availability for residential permitting and construction.

HB 1923 proposes to add a new section to part II of Chapter 54, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) requiring all county boards of water supply to make available its geographic information systems (GIS), reference maps to the public the availability of domestic water service, including specificity of any limitations and supporting analysis explaining deficiency of water service. If a parcel owner disagrees with any map or analysis, the owner may appeal the decision under HRS section 91-9.

Posting GIS information about the water system is problematic for the following reasons:

1. Confidentiality: Water systems are considered critical infrastructure information, protected from disclosure by the federal Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002 (CII Act). The term "critical infrastructure information" means "information not customarily in the public domain and related to the security of critical infrastructure or protected systems" According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the Department of Homeland Security, water systems are vulnerable to a variety of attacks, including contamination and deadly agents; physical attacks, such as the release of toxic gaseous chemicals; and cyberattacks. GIS layers of the water system are therefore, not publicly disclosed.

2. Water availability for residential and other land uses are generally adequate within water service areas because water systems are designed to accommodate the underlying zoning. However, there are site specific conditions, development features and water system limitations and deficiencies that if generalized could mislead the public. For example, while adequate supply may be available, fire protection and minimum water pressures may be inadequate, because parcels are land locked, too far from the nearest fire hydrant, or are above the elevation service limit.
3. BWS already offers free parcel specific water availability assessments that can be used for planning, engineering and financing for new and renovated developments. The case by case evaluations are based on best available information and could be subject to change.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose advancing HB 1923.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1923.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ernest Y. W. Lau', is positioned above the printed name.

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

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February 4, 2026

The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair
and Members
House Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 430
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Evslin and Members:

Subject: House Bill 1923: Relating to Residential Housing Utilities

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) respectfully opposes House Bill (HB) 1923, which requires county boards of water supply to publicly disclose on their websites geographic information systems (GIS) maps identifying the availability of domestic water service for residential permitting and construction.

HB 1923 proposes to add a new section to part II of Chapter 54, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) requiring all county boards of water supply to publish GIS reference maps depicting the availability of domestic water service, including the specificity of any limitations and supporting analysis explaining any deficiency that would disallow a service connection. The bill further provides that any parcel owner who disagrees with the map or analysis may appeal the decision under HRS section 91-9, and that the residential building permit applicants and permitting agencies may rely upon the maps.

Posting generalized GIS information regarding the water system required by HB 1923 is problematic for the following reasons:

1. Protection of Critical Infrastructure Information.

Water systems are designated critical infrastructure. The federal Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002 (CII Act) protects from public disclosure "information not customarily in the public domain and related to the security of critical infrastructure or protected systems" According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the Department of Homeland Security, water systems are vulnerable to a variety of attacks,

including contamination and deadly agents; physical attacks, such as the release of toxic gaseous chemicals; and cyberattacks. Publication of detailed GIS layers depicting system capacities and limitations could expose sensitive information and conflict with federal and state security guidance.

2. Generalized Maps Could Mislead the Public.

Water availability determinations are highly site-specific. Although adequate supply may exist within a service area, individual parcels may be unable to receive service due to fire-flow requirements, minimum water pressure standards, distance from existing mains or hydrants, elevation service limits, or the need for developer-funded improvements. A static map cannot reliably capture these variables and may create false expectations regarding the ability to obtain a water meter.

3. Conversion of Planning Information into Appealable Agency Decisions.

The bill treats each map depiction as an “agency decision” subject to contested case procedures under chapter 91. This would transform planning-level information into quasi-regulatory determinations, requiring formal findings, recordkeeping, and hearings for potentially thousands of parcels – an outcome not contemplated in current water availability processes.

4. Administrative Burden and Fiscal Impact.

Preparing and annually updating system-wide GIS analyses with “sufficient supporting analysis” would divert existing engineering resources required to assess new water availability, which may delay review periods and potentially require the need for new staff and ongoing appropriations. Defending chapter 91 appeals would further divert resources from core mission functions such as system maintenance and development of new water sources.

5. Liability Risk from Statutory Reliance.

Subsection (d) allows permit applicants and agencies to rely on the maps. Water system conditions change due to drought, contamination events, equipment failures, or updated standards. Reliance on generalized maps could expose counties to claims when actual conditions differ from published depictions.

6. Existing Process Provides More Accurate Information.

BWS already offers free, parcel-specific water availability assessments that can be used for planning, engineering and financing for new and renovated developments. The case by case evaluations are based on best available information and can account for site-specific conditions. Together with professional review, they can provide a more reliable and responsible method than generalized GIS maps.

The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair
and Members
February 4, 2026
Page 2

For these reasons, BWS respectfully opposes advancing HB 1923.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1923.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ernest Y. W. Lau".

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



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAII

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LATE

February 3, 2026

TESTIMONY OF KEITH K. OKAMOTO, MANAGER-CHIEF ENGINEER
DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY, COUNTY OF HAWAII

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026

TIME: 9:00 AM

PLACE: Videoconference, Conference Room 430

HB 1923 - RELATING TO RESIDENTIAL HOUSING UTILITIES

Honorable Chair Evslin, Vice-Chair Miyake, and committee members,

Firstly, the County of Hawaii, Department of Water Supply (DWS) sincerely appreciates the time spent with Chair Evslin to discuss this matter. However, as currently written, we respectfully submit testimony in **opposition** of House Bill (HB) 1923.

DWS operates and maintains 23 public water systems on Hawaii island that provide potable water service to approximately 46,000 accounts. DWS currently has a process to provide information regarding the availability of domestic water service for new residential dwellings in residentially zoned areas upon request.

HB 1923, as currently drafted, has language that is of significant concern to DWS. First, if a parcel owner disagrees with the information on the map, the parcel owner may appeal the decision under HRS 91-9. This would be very burdensome to our Department and Water Board. DWS is already challenged with limited resources (personnel and funding) and this bill would add further workload for DWS's staff. Second, having a parcel owner and permitting agency rely on the online map could result in litigation against DWS, the Water Board, and permitting agency as the water availability information is parcel specific should the map not be 100% accurate.

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your dedication and commitment to serving our State.

Please feel free to contact me at (808) 961-8050 or via email at dws@hawaiidws.org with any questions you may have regarding DWS' comments. Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony on HB 1923.

...Water, Our Most Precious Resource...Ka Wai A Kāne...

The Department of Water Supply is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



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808-737-4977

February 4, 2026

The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair

House Committee on Housing

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 1923, Relating to Residential Housing Utilities

HEARING: Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawaii and its over 10,000 members. HAR **supports** House Bill 1923, which requires county boards of water supply to publicly disclose through its website service connection availability for residential permitting and construction.

Reliable access to water is one of the most basic requirements for housing, yet uncertainty about water service availability continues to delay or halt residential construction and permitting across the state. This measure promotes transparency by requiring clear, publicly available information on water service availability for residential dwellings, which would help homeowners and builders plan more effectively and with greater certainty.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.





Hawai'i YIMBY

Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.org

info@hawaiiyimby.org

February 4, 2026

House Committee on Housing

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 1923 - RELATING TO RESIDENTIAL HOUSING UTILITIES

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 1923**, which is an important step toward more responsible and timely housing development by improving transparency around water infrastructure capacity. Access to clear, publicly available information about water service availability helps communities better understand where new homes can realistically be built and where constraints exist.

In the midst of a severe housing shortage and affordability crisis, uncertainty around infrastructure can add unnecessary delays, costs, and risk to housing projects. When builders, homeowners, and permitting agencies lack clear information, projects are often stalled late in the process or redesigned after significant time and money have already been spent. HB 1923 helps address this problem by making water availability information accessible upfront.

By allowing homebuilders to identify parcels where water capacity already exists, this bill helps target housing production to areas that are ready to support growth. This can shorten development timelines, reduce carrying costs, and lower overall project expenses, all of which are critical to producing housing that people can afford. Clear information also allows public agencies to coordinate permitting more efficiently and plan infrastructure investments more strategically.



Hawai'i YIMBY

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Transparency in infrastructure capacity does not weaken protections. Instead, it strengthens planning, accountability, and trust. HB 1923 supports smarter growth by aligning housing development with real-world infrastructure conditions, helping ensure that new homes are built where they make the most sense and can be delivered more quickly to the people who need them most.

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Damien Waikoloa

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Huey Kwik

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY



February 4, 2026

TO: Chair Evslin and Members of the House Committee on Housing
RE: HB 1923, Relating to Residential Housing Utilities

Dear Chair Evslin and Committee Members,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We urge the House Committee on Housing to advance House Bill 1923.

Without transparent information about our infrastructure capacity, we can't plan for future housing opportunities.

By requiring county boards of water supply to publicly disclose service connection availability, this bill empowers prospective homeowners, developers, and community stakeholders with timely and essential information. This is tremendously beneficial for planning purposes.

Currently, uncertainty regarding water service connection can create bottlenecks in the permitting process, leading to project delays and increased costs. Enhanced transparency can help streamline residential construction timelines by allowing applicants to make informed decisions early in the planning process.

We are grateful for your careful consideration of House Bill 1923.

Thank you,



Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org



Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai'i's Future
perry@hawaiisfuture.org