



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water & Land
Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

By

Tao Yan, PhD

Director, Water Resources Research Center

and

Brennon Morioka, PhD

Dean, College of Engineering

and

Vassilis L. Syrmos, PhD

Interim Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1926 – RELATING TO RED HILL

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

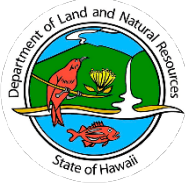
The University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center (UH WRRC) and College of Engineering (UH Engineering) support the intent of HB 1926. This measure proposes to appropriate funds for studies on remediation of substances released from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility; environmental monitoring and testing; research on groundwater modeling and sampling; and independent testing and verification of water data, to be published on a public dashboard.

The UH WRRC and UH Engineering are committed to coordinating with other UH units to support the studies should adequate funds be appropriated. Groundwater is the most important drinking water resource for Hawai'i, and its protection is at core of UH WRRC's missions. UH Engineering has extensive research expertise on soil and groundwater remediation and works closely with Hawai'i's environmental engineering communities. UH WRRC and UH Engineering welcome the opportunity to support the remediation and long-term stewardship of the precious groundwater resource of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these measures.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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CHAIRPERSON
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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, February 3, 2026
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1926
RELATING TO RED HILL

House Bill 1926 proposes to appropriate funds to the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund to support studies on remediation, environmental monitoring and testing, groundwater modeling and sampling, and independent testing and verification of water data related to substances released from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The measure also requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to seek reimbursement from the United States Department of Defense for these costs. **The Department supports this measure and offers the following comments.**

The State of Hawai'i (State) has a constitutional duty to conserve and protect its natural resources, including wai. As stewards of Hawai'i's groundwater aquifers and ecosystems, the Department recognizes that while defueling the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility marked a significant milestone, decades of research, remediation, and monitoring remain necessary to restore 'āina and rebuild public trust.

Act 197, Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH) 2025, codified as Section 174E, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), directs the Department to facilitate implementation and monitoring of the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) initiatives identified in the WAI's November 2023 report. This measure supports that work by funding coordinated research and monitoring to inform post-defueling remediation, assess ecosystem health in the surrounding ahupua'a, and strengthen public information throughout remediation phases. The approach developed through these projects may also inform place-based, multi-stakeholder responses to other complex, multi-jurisdictional contamination impacts to the environment statewide.

If funded, the Department will implement this work in collaboration with stakeholders and research teams from the University of Hawai'i (UH), including the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) Departments of Oceanography and Earth Sciences; SOEST research institutes and centers such as the Hawai'i Institute of Geophysics and Planetology (HIGP), Pacific Biosciences Research Center (PBRC), and Hawai'i Sea Grant Ulana 'Ike Center of Excellence; the UH Departments of Civil, Environmental and Construction Engineering (CECE), Geography, and Natural Resources and Environmental Management (NREM); the UH Water Resources Research Center (WRRC); UH Community Colleges (Leeward and Honolulu); and the U.S Geological Survey Pacific Islands Water Science Center.

The Department also appreciates the measure's reimbursement requirement that reinforces federal responsibility while allowing the State to proceed without delay on priority initiatives.

For these reasons, the Department respectfully supports House Bill 1926.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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

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February 3, 2026

The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
and Members
House Committee on Water and Land
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 411
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Hashem and Members:

Subject: House Bill 1926: Relating to Red Hill

The Board of Water Supply (BWS) is in strong support of House Bill (HB) 1926, which appropriates funds for studies on remediation of substances released from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.

Based on the Red Hill Water Alliance Initiative (WAI) Report published in November 2023, it was estimated that up to 1.94 million gallons of fuel have spilled into the environment at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (Facility) over its 80 years of operation. This estimate does not even include the known and unknown hazardous materials that have been released, such as the 1,300 gallons of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) concentrate that contains per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances on November 29, 2022.

BWS is deeply grateful to the past and current administration, in which under Act 164 (2023, Session Laws of Hawai'i) and Act 250 (2025, Session Laws of Hawai'i), a total of \$12 million in general obligation bond funds were awarded to BWS to install monitoring wells and an exploratory well to meet future potable water demands. To date, \$10 million dollars of this funding has been used toward construction of three monitoring wells and one exploratory well. The remaining \$2 million dollars has been allocated to future monitoring wells that are currently in design.

Although the Facility was defueled in 2024 and is in the process of being decommissioned for permanent closure, the type, volume, and location of past releases and its impact to the environment and underground sole source aquifer remains largely unknown. Funds appropriated from this bill will support the Red Hill WAI's goals, in

The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
and Members
February 3, 2026
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studies into the full characterization of our sole source aquifer, additional environmental monitoring and testing, and further enhance ongoing research in groundwater modeling that will help expedite the full remediation of our environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 1926.

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



To: The Honorable Representative Mark Hashem, Chair, the Honorable Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair, and Members of the Water and Land Committee.

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: **Hearing HB1926 RELATING TO RED HILL**

Hearing: Tuesday February 3, 2026 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Water and Land Committee!

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **SUPPORTS** HB1926!

Funding is needed to study how to remediate the impacts of Red Hill spills and leakage on our drinking water. The public needs to be informed and a dashboard may help. The U.S. Department of Defense needs to reimburse the State for the damage it has caused.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

February 3, 2026

9:00 AM

Conference Room 411

In **SUPPORT** of **HB1926**: RELATING TO RED HILL

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Water & Land Committee,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS HB1926**, which provides funding for remediation research and for independent expert review and assessment of water data collected as part of the governmental Red Hill response effort.

Over four years since the Red Hill catastrophe, the Navy has still provided no meaningful strategy or specific plans for the remediation of the mess it has inflicted upon our water - and that of our children, grandchildren, and future generations. In terms of remediation research, the Red Hill WAI Policy Coordinator has only identified an unpublished, unreviewed study on bacteria found in O'ahu's soil that *could* biodegrade JP-5 (and none of the other compounds released from the Red Hill Facility), without any investigation into the continued toxicity of the degraded fuel or strategy for using such bacteria for groundwater remediation. Meanwhile, **the Navy's "soil vapor extraction" pilot program will have no effect on the contamination plume in O'ahu's sole-source aquifer.** It is clear that we cannot wait for the Navy to clean up its mess in a timely manner, and must take the initiative to protect our water future.

This measure would accordingly fund groundwater monitoring and remediation research, both critically needed to ensure our present and future generations do not inherit a contaminated aquifer that was poisoned on our watch. It will also provide for independent expert review and assessment of highly technical water data and to make such assessments accessible to the public. This latter investment is particularly necessary given the myriad and ongoing "irregularities" in the Navy's water testing procedures, which have severely eroded public confidence in the integrity of their water monitoring efforts.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i urges the Committee to **PASS** HB1926. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1926

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 4:56:37 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

1926 HB RELATING TO RED HILL.	WAL	411 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE	Feb 3, 2026 9:00 AM
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HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:40:33 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support, but you might want to get funding in advance instead of reimbursement.

Testimony Presented Before the House Committee on Water & Land and the House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection February 03, 2026, 9:00 am | Conference Room 411

HB 1926 – RELATING TO RED HILL

Testifier: Yinphan Tsang **Position:** Hydrologist at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Chair Hashem, Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Morikawa, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the committees:

I am writing in **strong support** of HB 1926, which proposes essential funding for remediation research, environmental monitoring, and transparent data verification. I am testifying in my individual capacity as a Hydrologist and researcher at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

For the past four years, a significant part of my work has focused specifically on monitoring Halawa Stream. This research is vital for understanding current stream biodiversity and, crucially, the potential long-term effects of **Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) discharge** on the health of the stream ecosystem.

This measure is critical because:

- **Impact of Remediation:** While GAC is a necessary tool for treating contaminated water, we must monitor the resulting discharge to ensure we aren’t trading one environmental issue for another. My research provides the baseline data needed to protect the diverse species and habitats within Halawa Stream.
- **Complex Hydrology and Connected Systems:** As a hydrologist, I can attest that contaminant transport through surface and subsurface water paths is incredibly complex. It can take years for the full breadth of impacts on ecosystem processes and organisms, such as fish and algae, to emerge, making long-term monitoring efforts critical. Continuous environmental monitoring and testing are the only ways to ensure ecosystem health.
- **Scientific Accountability:** The public dashboard funded by this bill ensures that our findings are not just academic but are used to build public trust through transparent, verified data.



The University of Hawai‘i is the only entity with the local expertise and public-interest mandate to conduct this long-term oversight. I urge you to pass HB 1926 to ensure the continued protection and stewardship of our irreplaceable water resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:43:36 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is critical we ensure that steps are taken for the full remediation of our lands and waters contaminated by the Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. Please pass this very important measure.

HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:06:17 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Craig Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony as a private citizen, and am strongly in favor of DLNRs measure proposing a combination of ecosystem, testing, remediation and modelling to ensure that we fully understand the potential impacts of the Red Hill Fuel Storage facility on water, watershed and coastal ecosystems. I am a Professor of Oceanography and my laboratory was heavily engaged in supporting community tapwater monitoring and the development of a rapid detection protocol for petroleum contamination for citizens on the Navy water supply after the 2021 contamination of Red Hill shaft. I worked as part of the Red Hill task force addressing the lack of transparency and testing offered by the Navy after the spill, and we developed a public facing dashboard showing where and for how long people's taps showed evidence of diesel contamination. My work on ecosystem impacts of pollution, ranging from cesspool contamination to the Lahaina fires, has reinforced the potential for complex material to linger in the environment with complex impacts for years, and this bill will address those issues.

1 Feb 2026

Chair Hashem, Chair Morikawa, and WAL committee,

HB 1926 proposes to appropriate funds to support research on Red Hill remediation, environmental monitoring and testing, groundwater modeling and sampling, and transparent data verification and sharing via a public dashboard that supports accountability, public trust, and informed decision-making. I am writing today to **comment** on this measure as an individual citizen, although I also served on the state Water Commission (2021-2025) and work at the University of Hawai‘i.

Following the 2021 fuel release at the Red Hill Bulk Storage Facility, an alliance of University of Hawai‘i faculty, staff, students, and community volunteers collaborated to respond quickly with a diverse and relevant set of skills to support community concerns related to the crisis. Our ad hoc group included individuals from across the UH Mānoa campus and Leeward Community College, and our response included public informational webinars¹, collaborative tap water screening², and the development of an online info hub to help the public navigate the complex information environment surrounding Red Hill³.

Since 2021, various UHM-based research groups have been carrying out research: lab-based experiments on fuel biodegradation and fuel-chlorination interactions, field-based dye tracer studies and geophysics, as well as interviews and surveys on impacts of the disruption on human health and wellbeing, and monitoring of Hālawā Stream chemistry and ecology. More recently, the Red Hill Registry⁴ has begun to address support for long term human health concerns and needs, drawing on public health and medical expertise. Some of these projects benefited from defense funding; others did not. Importantly, all of them understood the critical need for independent investigation by entities not directly involved in the incident or ongoing litigation. The state’s present willingness to direct and fund DLNR-supported monitoring could augment existing DOH-led efforts and allow for independent, more publicly-responsive and precautionary efforts than previously possible.

Regional monitoring beyond the footprint of the Red Hill fuel storage facility is the only way to reliably assess contamination impacts to the diverse streams, springs, groundwater, and coastal waters of Māmalā and Pu‘uloa, and to ensure the long-term stewardship of these interconnected water resources. Long-term monitoring efforts are key because the emergence of the full breadth of impacts on ecosystems and human health can take years. Data from monitoring complements bench/modeling work. Research that addresses the complexity of contaminant release and transport through aquifers, the biochemistry of contaminant breakdown, and the diversity of chemical compounds detected as a result of multiple releases is critical. This foundational work can and should inform the development of island-appropriate remediation solutions that account for our hydrogeology and geochemical context, biological systems, and cultural as well as social-political context.

Mahalo for your time. Ola i ka wai,

Aurora Kagawa-Viviani

¹ UH Water Resources Research Center Spring 2022 seminar series: <https://www.wrrc.hawaii.edu/spring-2022-wrrc-seminar-schedule/>

² UH Red Hill Tap Water Screening Dashboard: <https://red-hill-fuel-spill-information-hub-uhm.hub.arcgis.com/pages/tap-water-dashboard-faqs> ; also <https://swift-test.shinyapps.io/redhill/>

³ UH Red Hill Info Hub: <https://redhill.hawaii.edu>

⁴ Red Hill Registry: <https://redhillregistry.org>

HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 11:56:22 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Jani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1926. As we know, the Red Hill fuel spill of 2021 released massive quantities of jet fuel into the island's aquifers and ecosystems. This spill undoubtedly had far-reaching impacts that may include contamination of groundwater, aquatic, and soil ecosystems, with long-term implications for the health of people and 'aina. However, for the most part, we don't know what those effects are, nor how to remedy them. As a professional in biology and education, I find this deeply concerning. Monitoring and modeling of the movements of contaminants through the environment, chemical changes of contaminants through environmental interactions, and effects on native species, are all critically needed. I support this bill because it is a commitment to monitor the impacts of the spill, provide information to the public, and work toward remediation methods. In supporting this bill, we decide to do something to understand the problems and improve outcomes, rather than sitting by to "wait and see" what happens. I strongly urge you to support HB1926.

**Testimony of
Donald Thomas, Ph.D.**

**Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND**

**Tuesday, February 3, 2026
9:00 AM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1926
RELATING TO RED HILL**

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1926 which proposes the appropriation of funds to the Red Hill Remediation Special Fund to support studies on remediation, environmental monitoring and testing, groundwater modeling and sampling, and independent testing and verification of water data related to substances released from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.

The work proposed under this appropriation will lay the foundation of a long-term program of remediation and restoration of the aquifers impacted by past fuel and contaminant releases from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The work is intended to provide information on where the aquifers have been contaminated, what methods can cost-effectively be implemented to remediate residual fuel in the subsurface, and what the ecological impacts have been and are occurring as a result of the past contamination events.

For the past decade I have been providing subject matter expertise to the staff of the DLNR Commission on Water Resources Management as well as to the Department of Health Safe Drinking Water Branch. I would anticipate that this work will be performed in close collaboration and coordination with these agencies to ensure that the results of the planned investigations can be incorporated into the actions and policy decisions of these agencies to the benefit of the communities impacted by past fuel and contaminant releases from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Although I am affiliated with the School of Ocean and Earth Sciences and Technology (SOEST) at the University of Hawaii, this testimony is mine alone and does not reflect an official position of the University of Hawaii or SOEST.

HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:58:18 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen Nalley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1926 - RELATING TO RED HILL

To Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support HB 1926 as a member of the community of Hawai‘i, O‘ahu, and Honolulu and also as an individual with expertise in contaminants, risk assessments, and environmental health. This measure will appropriate funds to support continued research, monitoring, and transparent data sharing that is critical to our community following the Red Hill fuel disaster.

Following the 2021 fuel spill at Red Hill, which was preceded by other fuel spill incidents at the Red Hill Bulk Storage Facility, researchers from the University of Hawai‘i were able to respond quickly and with the necessary expertise to support the state as they worked to understand the impacts and mitigate risks. The support of this bill will ensure that these teams are able to continue working together to aid communities and ensure safe drinking water for our island.

Monitoring is absolutely critical for assessing contamination impacts to streams, springs, groundwater, and coastal areas, especially in this area where they are so complex and poorly understood. It can take years for the full breadth of impacts on ecosystem processes and organisms to manifest. That makes this type of work absolutely critical to support remediation, accurate modeling, and the development of risk prevention strategies.

As a member of the community and resident of Hawai‘i, I strongly support this measure and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eileen Nalley, PhD

HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:59:17 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Swift	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Chairs Lee and Fukunaga, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lee, and members of the committees:

I am writing today as an individual citizen in support of HB1926 . As a PhD candidate, I have worked on monitoring studies and fuel degradation experiments related to Red Hill, beginning in December of 2021.

Having spent several years working on this issue, I want to emphasize that the broader scientific community currently knows very little about how refined fuels, like those stored at Red Hill, can be transported and broken down in natural aquifers. I firmly believe that wide scale monitoring combined with comprehensive characterization of the contaminants is the only way that we will understand the true impacts of Red Hill on our island.

Mahalo,

Sean Swift

HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:37:42 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hawai'i resident	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear committees of Water & Land, Energy & Environmental Protection, and Finance,

I am writing this testimony in support of HB 1926, Relating to Red Hill, Red Hill Remediation Special Fund; Remediation; Monitoring and Testing; Groundwater Modeling and Sampling; Water Data Testing and Verification; Appropriation (\$). I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i and student researcher for the University of Hawai'i in subjects related to water quality. I believe that the state and federal governments should bear the responsibility for the health hazards caused by the leakage of toxic contaminants from the Red Hill Bulk Storage Facility. These hazards were preventable and inexplicably caused by negligence on the part of the Federal Government, and therefore they should bear the financial burden of the remediation and subsequent monitoring for potential future issues. The state has a responsibility to stand for its citizens and ensure that events like this are not possible in the future, and this bill will help ensure that principle.

As a long time resident of Hawai'i, Red Hill is an example of the many ways the government has failed it's people in this state. If the federal government cannot provide clean drinking water for it's own citizens, let alone soldiers and their families who give their lives for this country, then they have no right to govern here. This bill is one of many steps required to regain the trust of Hawai'i residents, and I reiterate my support.

Sincerely,

UH Student.

HB-1926

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:46:48 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabrielle Gamil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the committee, as a citizen of Hawai'i I believe this bill should pass because of its importance in being part of the remediation of substances released from the red hill water crisis which has affected the surrounding environment and the people that reside within it and rely on its resources. Environmental studies of the area conducted to remediate the substances released from red hill and publishing the study results made open for viewing to the public, along with seeking reimbursement from the part of the government responsible for the incident. Should be permitted to do so utilizing appropriated funds for this action specifically to their liking. As a person studying environmental management I believe that testing and analyzing an environmental resource crisis that affects the people living within its area heavily should occur using any available resources to do so with full transparency made available to the community, in the hopes of preventing future similar incidents from taking place.