

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 20** , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1956

H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Water & Land, to which was referred H.B. No. 1956 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FRESHWATER WATERWAYS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Prohibit residing in, on, or within fifty feet of a freshwater waterway; and
- (2) Authorize law enforcement agencies to enforce the prohibition.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that during Hawaii's rainy season, it is common for bays or beaches to be affected by natural runoff from freshwater waterways. Although this runoff occurs naturally, in recent years, the volume of human-made waste finding its way to streams and being washed out to the ocean via these freshwater waterways has significantly increased. Encampments established in, on, or immediately around freshwater waterways and drainage channels that lead to the ocean have added to the human-made waste



in Hawaii's freshwater waterways, degrading marine habitats and diminishing public health and safety. Furthermore, it has become increasingly common for first responders to rescue individuals who reside in, on, or immediately around these freshwater waterways, placing the individuals and first responders in serious peril. This measure seeks to prevent these environmental, public-health, and public-safety hazards from occurring.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

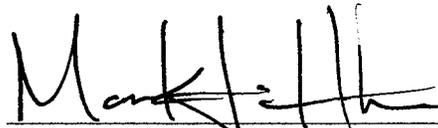
- (1) Amending the definition of "freshwater waterway", amending the definition of "law enforcement officer", adding a definition for "residing", and adding a definition for "unattended personal property";
- (2) Modifying the applicability of this measure to exclude any other individual occupying real property as an owner, lessee, or authorized residential occupant within fifty feet of a freshwater waterway, instead of any other individual who lawfully occupies real property within fifty feet of a freshwater waterway;
- (3) Establishing that violations of this measure are civil violations, not criminal offenses;
- (4) Setting forth with greater specificity the procedures for issuing and responding to citations;
- (5) Establishing procedures for the removal, inventory, storage, and disposal of unattended personal property;
- (6) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (7) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider whether this measure should apply only to counties that have the same number of shelter beds as the number of individuals identified as unsheltered according to the most recent Point in Time Count.



As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water & Land that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1956, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1956, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Water & Land,



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MARK J. HASHEM, Chair



