



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAII

345 KEKŪANAŌ`A STREET, SUITE 20 • HILO, HAWAII 96720

TELEPHONE (808) 961-8050 • FAX (808) 961-8657

March 24, 2022

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

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

DATE: Tuesday, March 29, 2022

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

HCR 140/HR 140 – RECOGNITION OF ERNEST “ERNIE” LAU AND HIS ROLE IN PROTECTING HAWAII’S WATER SUPPLY AND ESTABLISHING THE “ERNIE LAU WATER PROTECTOR POSTER CONTEST”

Honorable Chair David A. Tarnas, Vice-Chair Patrick Pihana Branco, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of this resolution to recognize Ernie Lau.

I have known and worked with Ernie in the water utility field for many years. Ernie is a prime example of a true public servant. He does not seek attention or the limelight but is steadfast in doing what is right for the community. Although the municipal water utilities of the state are independent, we have regular and consistent dialogue with each other. I am confident that other water utility leaders share my respect of Ernie and his team at the Honolulu Board of Water Supply.

This is a well-deserved recognition for him, his Deputy, Ellen Kitamura and their hard-working staff.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

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

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

BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
630 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96843
www.boardofwatersupply.com



March 29, 2022

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

ELLEN E. KITAMURA, P.E.
Deputy Manager and Chief Engineer

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Patrick Pihana Branco, Vice Chair
and Members
Committee on Water and Land
House of Representatives
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 430
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco and Members:

SUBJECT: HCR 140, HR 140: Recognizing Ernest "Ernie" Lau and His Role in Protecting Hawaii's Water Supply and Establishing the "Ernie Lau Water Protector Poster Contest".

As Manager and Chief Engineer to the Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS), I am humbled and honored to be recognized in House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 140 and House Resolution (HR) 140. My role as a public servant and BWS Manager and Chief Engineer is to ensure the BWS provides safe, dependable, and affordable drinking water now and into the future.

While I appreciate this honor, there are many more that also deserve to be recognized. Mr. Erwin Kawata, Program Administrator of the BWS Water Quality Division, who has stood for the past 8 years advocating for the protection of our precious wai. The Sierra Club and its then Executive Director, Ms. Marti Townsend who was an early advocate. Members of our community, the unsung heroes who for years who for years listened and heard our concerns about this danger to our wai. The kanaka maoli, who we have learned what our kuleana should be in protecting the `aina. There are many more heroes of this effort. The journey is not over yet. Together, we can ensure that our precious wai will be there for generations to come. Let us endeavor to leave this gift in better condition than we received it. Pure and free of contamination!

It is important for all levels of government leadership and the community-at-large to remain vigilant and steadfast to lead this effort with one voice to ensure the Navy will not delay, deflect, and defer the defueling of the Red Hill Facility and its permanent closure.

Ka Wai Ola – all life needs water.

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Patrick Pihana Branco, Vice Chair
and Members
March 29, 2022
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HCR 140, HR 140.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ernest Y.W. Lau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "L".

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

Kūpuna for the Mo'opuna
committed to the well-being of Hawai'i for the next generations to come
kupuna4moopuna@gmail.com



HCR 140/ HR 140 - RECOGNIZING ERNEST "ERNIE" LAU AND HIS ROLE IN PROTECTING HAWAII'S WATER SUPPLY AND ESTABLISHING THE "ERNIE LAU WATER PROTECTOR POSTER CONTEST".

Committee on Water and Land 3/29/2022 @9:00a

SUPPORT

We, Kūpuna for the Mo'opuna, whose members include public and private school administrators, teachers, and support staff, are in **SUPPORT of HCR 140/HR 140** recognizing Ernest "Ernie" Lau and his role in protecting Hawai'i's water and establishing a water protector poster contest.

The "Ernie Lau Water Protector Poster Contest" is a wonderful way to perpetuate Mr. Lau's legacy of water protection by engaging elementary school students throughout Hawai'i to take action to protect Hawai'i's water.

"There is no substitute for pure water" repeatedly spoken by Ernie Lau has taken on personal meaning for everyone in Hawai'i, including our young elementary students. Giving those in grades K-5 an opportunity to creatively express themselves is both healing and responsible. This poster contest is in alignment with the Hawai'i Department of Education's "Nā Hopena A'o" framework: "working together with the broader community to develop the competencies that strengthen a sense of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total-well-being..."

We look forward to seeing these water protector posters on display in public places serving to educate, inspire, and continue Ernie Lau's legacy of water protection.

Mahalo,
Kūpuna for the Mo'opuna
Pana'ewa, Hawai'i

Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono!

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/26/2022 8:56:27 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jim Albertini	Malu 'Aina	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our organization strongly supports HCR 140 recognizing the important work Ernie Lau has done to protect Hawaii's water. Ernie is a true public servant. His integrity is transparent and his voice from the beginning helped to stress how important it is to protect Hawaii's water from contamination. A tip of the papale to Ernie. We need more people like him in government.

Jim Albertini, president of Malu Aina

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 7:22:10 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan B Burdick	Progressive Democrats of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Progressive Democrats of Hawaii stand in **very strong support** of this resolution and its companion. Ernie Lau is a Hawaii HERO for his integrity and courageous actions in protecting Oahu's water supply, often acting alone as Manager and Chief Engineer of the Honolulu Board of Water Supply while other agencies that should have been supporting the public interest failed to do so. Ernie protested when the State Department of Health weakened the Environmental Action Levels that determined when the Navy would have been obliged to clean up spills and leaks at Red Hill.

It is good that this Resolution's poster drawing contest might inspire a younger generation to admire a hero like Ernie. Let's hope so!

Let's also PLEASE BEAR IN MIND that the declaration of the U.S. Department of Defense to permanently close the Red Hill facility is - so far - only an unenforceable promise. We need more! The Legislature must continue to be vigilant and hold everyone's feet to the fire.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this great son of Hawaii Nei!

Alan B. Burdick, co-chair.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

To: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Patrick Pihana Branco, Vice Chair
Committee on Water & Land

Re: **HCR 140 HR 140 RECOGNIZING ERNEST “ERNIE” LAU AND HIS ROLE IN PROTECTING HAWAII’S WATER SUPPLY AND ESTABLISHING THE “ERNIE LAU WATER PROTECTOR POSTER CONTEST”**

Hearing: Tuesday, March 29, 2022, 9:00 a.m., Conference Room 430 and via Videoconference

Position: **Strong Support**

Aloha, Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and Members of the Committees on Water & Land:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports HCR 140 and HR 140. These Resolutions would recognize Ernest “Ernie” Lau and his role in protecting Hawaii’s water supply and establishing the “Ernie Lau Water Protector Poster Contest.

Ernie Lau deserves the profound and heartfelt thanks of all of the residents of Oahu, and indeed the entire State of Hawaii, for his dedication and courage in standing up to the U.S. Navy, sometimes alone, to protect our water supply. We all owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Equally important is the diligent work of Erwin Kawata, water quality program administrator for the Board of Water Supply. He should also be recognized for his good work in protecting Hawaii’s water supply. Ernie Lau and Erwin Kawata oftentimes have worked as a team in their crusade to protect the Moanalua - Waimalua Aquafer.

This Resolution would recognize Ernest “Ernie” Lau and his role in protecting Hawaii’s water supply and establish the “Ernie Lau Water Protector Poster Contest.”

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Alan B. Burdick

Co-Chair, Environmental Caucus
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 4:20:51 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice K T Shiira	Shimanchu Wai Protectors-Ukwanshin Kabudan	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support Ernest "Ernie" Lau in his role to protect our water supply on the Island of Oahu. Also establishing the Ernie Lau water protector poster contest.

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 6:07:02 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Connie Chun	Shimanchu Wai Protectors - Ukwanshin Kabudan	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mr. Ernie Lau is our hero! With great courage and integrity, he has called out the US Navy on its negligence and failure to maintain the Red Hill fuel storage facilities. A lesser person would've remained silent on this issue given the lack of support from other governmental regulatory and enforcement agencies. The island of Oahu and the state of Hawai'i owe Mr. Lau a debt of gratitude for remaining steadfast on his position to protect our water source. Never forget his humble but powerful character, his strong messages to protect the wai, and his unfailing leadership in the face of great opposition and/or apathy from many others. Thank you for this opportunity to honor Mr. Ernie Lau!

~~LATE~~ *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.*
SAH - Subcontractors Association of Hawaii
1188 Bishop St., Ste. 1003**Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-2938
Phone: (808) 537-5619 ✦ Fax: (808) 533-2739

March 29, 2022

Testimony To: House Committee on Water & Land
Representative David A. Tarnas,
Representative Patrick Pihana Branco, Vice-Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons, President

Subject: HCR 140/HR 140 – RECOGNIZING ERNEST “ERNIE” LAU AND HIS ROLE IN
PROTECTING HAWAII’S WATER SUPPLY AND ESTABLISHING THE “ERNIE LAU
WATER PROTECTOR POSTER CONTEST”.

Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Branco and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, President of the Subcontractors Association of Hawaii. The SAH represents the following nine separate and distinct contracting trade organizations.

HAWAII FLOORING ASSOCIATION

ROOFING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

HAWAII WALL AND CEILING INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

TILE CONTRACTORS PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM

PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

SHEETMETAL AND AIR CONDITIONING NATIONAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

PAINTING AND DECORATING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

PACIFIC INSULATION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

We are in wholehearted support of this Resolution and believe that for the efforts Ernie Lau has put forth on behalf of Hawaii's people, he should be recognized for his courage and his leadership on Hawaii's water supply issues.

It is based on those efforts and his sincerity in attempting to resolve those issues that we stand in support of this Resolution.

Thank you.

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/25/2022 6:20:47 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabethanne Masaoka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To all who will decide on passing HCR 140.

I fully support HCR140. Ernie Lau, a man of integrity! Heart for Hawaii and it's people. Protecting our water supply. Without water, there is no life! Teaching this to our keiki thru this project, how profound! I was born in Hawaii. Lived here all my 65 years. Raised 3 children. Have 9 grandchildren. I have roots here.

Please pass HCR 140.

Mahalo,

Elizabethanne Masaoka

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/25/2022 10:07:10 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sanford Yee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I whole heartily support HCR140 because Ernie Lau deserves this recognition.

Mahalo!

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/25/2022 3:29:18 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Kendrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ernie Lau is a hero and an inspiration. I fully support this effort by the Legislature to recognize his advocacy and community service.

Steph Kendrick

Palolo Valley

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/26/2022 8:26:24 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this resolution to honor Ernie Lau by educating and inspiring keiki to protect Hawaii's precious water. Ernie Lau is a true hero and has won everyone's deep respect and gratitude for his steadfast efforts toward protecting our sole-source aquifer. I strongly urge that in addition to what is proposed in this resolution, that if we are to truly honor Mr. Lau that we ensure the **permanent defueling and closure of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility without further delay. Mahalo.**

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 7:33:16 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Support Hawai'i Heros! Including Erwin Kawata.
I wish you all would have listened to them sooner. :(**

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 9:49:22 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrice Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of HCR140 to acknowledge, honor and support Ernie Lau's steadfast commitment to protecting our water. He is Hawaii's Man of the Century. Where would we be without Ernie Lau? Mahalo, Ernie.

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 9:53:30 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Phaethon Keeney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha esteemed legislators, please support HCR140, those who stand for the public trust and life giving waters of Hawaii should be recognized and honored. Ernie Lau did the right thing in a very sensitive and caring way, please honor him with Hawaii's gratitude and full aloha.

Phaethon Keeney

Honokaa Hawaii

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 10:23:42 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jeanne wheeler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This man cares & deserves the recognition - please pass reso! Mahalo, JW

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 11:17:04 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Watase	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas and members of the House Water & Land Committee,

I support HRC140 and I am very grateful for Ernie Lau's contribution to protecting Hawaii's water supply. He has been a consistent fighter and advocate for the relocation and removal of the leaking fuel tanks in Red Hill. I've listened to him at community meetings and seen him testify on behalf of the BWS and the people of Hawaii. This poster contest is a great idea that will bring attention and awareness of the importance of protecting and preserving our valuable water resource to our keiki.

Malaho for your consideration and please vote in favor of HCR140.

Dave Watase

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 11:43:16 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DIANE CHOY FUJIMURA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Not only has Ernie Lau been the voice in the past, present and future regarding the abominable negligence of the Navy's mismanagement of the Red Hill Fuel Tanks, he continues to be the voice of calm, reason, and yes, encouragement to all of us who have directly experienced the toxic contamination of our precious, irreplaceable aquifer, and to those of us who will continue to face this real threat now and in the future. Mahalo, Ernie, for our forthrightness and bottom-line, no-nonsense delivery of crucial information necessary in these troubled and difficult times. Ola i ka wai! Shut down Red Hill NOW!

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 12:21:15 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverly Heiser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I highly support and concur with all that is stated in HCR 140. Ernie Lau is such a asset to the Board of Water Supply and has gone over and beyond to protect our water on Oahu. We are so fortunate to have him.

The poster contest to have younger children create posters on the topic protecting Hawaii's water is a great idea to teach them about this precious resource.

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 1:49:06 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou, Chair Tarnas, and the Members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I have known Mr. Ernie Lau, director and chief engineer of the Board of Water Supply, since the current Red Hill crisis began in the first days of 2014. Mr. Lau has loyally protected public trust water in all the time since. If only the powers that be had better listened to him!

E ola i ka wai!

I have spent much of my life in Honolulu. Like many Honolulu residents, I have a deep respect for those who embody the more patient and country ethos of the neighbor islands. Mr. Lau has lived in Honolulu a long time, but never lost his Kaua'i spirit. I have seen him dedicate countless hours to community meetings, including my neighborhood board in Mānoa. I have also worked with Mr. Lau in a professional capacity. I appreciate his systematic and dedicated work towards disaster and climate resiliency.

Mr. Lau is a true public servant. Indeed, I am so glad to see Rep. Kobayashi introduce a resolution which I can proudly support. Thank you to Rep. Kobayashi for this measure.

Mahalo nui loa,

Dylan P. Armstrong, individual capacity

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 2:53:23 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Baron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha chair and members, Please accept this request in support of Hcr140 to give Ernie Lau recognition via public tribute for his exemplary work as a water protector. Please support a poster contest for elementary students on protecting our water. Thank you. Aloha, Laurie Baron Kaneohe

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 4:05:18 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a resident of Kaimuki and somebody who learned volumes about Red Hill thanks to Ernie Lau's tireless work, I strongly support this measure to honor him. Under ordinary circumstances, your average person would probably never know the name of the Board of Water Supply's chief engineer. The fact that so many do speaks to Mr. Lau's integral role in seeing through the decommissioning of Red Hill. In terms of this resolution, it would be nice to see an attempt at engaging more than just young students, but I appreciate the intent and hope to see the City also recognize its exemplary public servant in a meaningful way.

Mahalo,
Dylan Ramos

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 4:27:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou Committee on Water & Land,

My name is Bruce Lum, a resident of Halawa, a native Hawaiian and an grateful admirer of Chief Engineer of the Board Of Water Supply, Ernie Lau.

We, the people of Hawai‘i, have witness Mr. Lau steadfastly and faithfully fulfill his kuleana (duty) as the protector of Hawai‘i’s pure water supply.

For simply doing his job so humbly, professionally and with infinite aloha, my family and I are eternally grateful for Ernie Lau’s leadership. He is an exemplary role model for all and this measure is an excellent use of taxpayer dollars to replicate and perpetuate his work ethic, commitment and excellence for generations to come.

I strongly support the adoption of H.C.R. 140 (2022) and recommend that The Thirty-First Legislative Session of 2022, in total, support and adopt this measure.

Mahalo a nui loa,

Bruce Lum

Ann H. Kobayashi
2711 Puuhonua Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Email: ann.kobayashi@gmail.com

March 28, 2022

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Water & Land
State Capitol Building
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: HCR 140 – RECOGNIZING ERNEST “ERNIE” LAU AND HIS
ROLE IN PROTECTING HAWAII’S WATER SUPPLY AND ESTABLISHING THE
“ERNIE LAU WATER PROTECTOR POSTER CONTEST”.

Dear Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

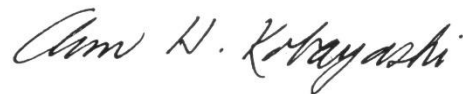
I am writing in support of HCR 140”. I have known Ernie Lau for many years while serving as a member of the Honolulu City Council and have worked with him while he served as Manager and Chief Engineer of the Board of Water Supply.

I believe establishing the “Ernie Lau Water Protector Poster Contest” for elementary school students would be a fitting tribute to Ernie and his strong desire and spirit to protect Hawaii’s water supply for now and generations to come.

I respectfully request passage of HCR 140.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,



Ann H. Kobayashi

HCR-140

Submitted on: 3/28/2022 10:00:43 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/29/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
SHELLEY CHOY	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly support HCR 140 to recognize Ernest "Ernie" Lau for his heroic and steadfast efforts to protect Hawaii's pure and precious water. He is a true champion of the people and our most valuable resource. Mr. Lau's actions are courageous, his heart is pure, and his words are clear, humble, and powerful. We need to acknowledge and thank him for his daily, determined labor.