

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

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Thursday, March 16, 2023
10:00 AM

State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 430

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 730, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO FISHPONDS

Senate Bill 730, Senate Draft 2 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to restore and restock fishponds by providing fingerlings and limu and establishing one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Aquaculture Coordinator Biologist VI position. **The Department supports this bill, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

Loko i'a, Hawaiian fishponds, are unique aquaculture systems throughout Hawai'i and are important components of the ahupua'a (traditional land stewardship framework) that contribute to a healthy, sustainable, and robust food system. Fishpond aquaculture can provide a sustainable source of local-grown fish for Hawai'i residents. Production of fingerlings for grow-out can take pressure off nearshore fish stocks which can be a conservation tool for managing fisheries. At a broader level, fishponds can increase local food production, improve food security, perpetuate local and traditional practices, and provide employment opportunities for Hawai'i residents.

Healthy fishponds also have a tremendous ecological benefit. They capture sediment that would otherwise enter the ocean and harm coral reefs. They provide nutrients and freshwater that increase the productivity of the nearshore marine environment. They also serve as important nursery grounds for numerous aquatic species, including important fishery species. Additionally, fishpond practitioners have a practice of releasing the healthiest adult fish to serve as brood stock, providing the next generation of fish for the reef as well as the pond.

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

LAURA H.E. KAAKUA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

The Legislature has given the Department the authority and mandate to establish aquatic life propagating stations and to distribute aquatic life for the purpose of increasing the food supply of the State.¹ Last year, the Legislature appropriated \$300,000 to the Department for fingerling production to restock fishponds. Through consultations with fishpond communities, it was learned that fishpond practitioners preferred to be taught how to produce and raise fingerlings rather than have the Department do it for them. This idea also turned out to be the most cost-effective use of the funds because the Department does not have the existing facilities and staff required to produce fingerlings. As a result, the Department is using the appropriated funds to support capacity building and training in pua (juvenile mullet) production at Wai'anae High School.

The Department is currently consulting with fishpond communities to identify additional ways we can support fishponds through fingerling production. An appropriation of \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 23-24 will enable the Department to support other fishpond communities in capacity building to produce fingerlings and limu for restoration and restocking of fishponds. It would also enable the Department to establish an aquaculture coordinator position within the Department to oversee the expansion of our aquaculture program.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

¹ Section 187A-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, states that the Department shall:

(2) Establish and maintain aquatic life propagating station or stations; and
(5) Distribute, free of charge, as the department deems to be in the public interest, aquatic life, for the purpose of increasing the food supply of the State; provided that when, in the discretion of the department, the public interest shall not be materially interfered with by so doing, the department may propagate and furnish aquatic life to private parties, upon such reasonable terms, conditions, and prices determined by the department.



SB730 SD2
RELATING TO FISHPONDS
House Committee on Water & Land

March 16, 2023

10:00 AM

Room 430

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers its **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** for SB730 SD2, the purpose of which is to restore and restock the state’s fishponds, the loko i‘a. **OHA respectfully asks that the Legislature ensures responsible and meaningful stewardship over Native Hawaiian technologies and cultural resources, like loko i‘a, by requiring consultation with Native Hawaiian communities and the ‘Aha Moku Advisory Committee established under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.**

OHA offers the following amendments to Section 2 of this measure, to ensure adequate and appropriate management of Hawai‘i’s precious natural and cultural resources:

- (1) Procuring fingerlings and limu;
- (2) Establishing one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) aquaculture coordinator biologist VI position; and
- (3) Providing adequate consultation with the ‘Aha Moku Advisory Committee and relevant Native Hawaiian communities and organizations.

Wehe i ka mākāhā i komo ka i‘a (open the sluice gate, that the fish may enter). Native Hawaiians, i ka wā kahiko (in the time long before), established loko i‘a for sustainable self-sufficiency and enduring survival. The Loko i‘a is a Native Hawaiian technology and key component of critical Native Hawaiian infrastructure aggregating geographically distributed natural resources for the purpose of meeting traditional Native Hawaiian socio-political-economic-environmental needs. Hawai‘i’s network of interconnected natural resource infrastructure, often identified as the “ahupua‘a system,” with some components, like loko i‘a, are still operational today, however, many island infrastructures have been forcefully dismantled in the aftermath of the Great Dying, where foreign-introduced diseases to these Islands, decimated over 90% of the total Native Hawaiian population. Uwē.

Ola nā ‘Ōiwi. OHA wishes to emphasize that it is no longer the case that these Islands are bereft of its native children and that the collective knowledge that we have amassed across centuries of hardship and the rights we possess that are enshrined within the Hawai‘i State Constitution,¹ now make us more than capable of returning to the operating controls of our ancestral technologies.

¹ Art. XII, Sec. 7, Haw. Stat. Con.



SB730 SD1
RELATING TO FISHPONDS
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

OHA respectfully requests, as the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians,² that the Legislature ensures responsible and meaningful stewardship over loko i‘a by requiring consultation with proximate Native Hawaiian communities in addition to the ‘Aha Moku Advisory Committee, which is the statutory body responsible for advising the chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources in effective ways to bridge Native Hawaiian traditional knowledge with Western knowledge.

OHA appreciates this opportunity to support SB730 SD2 and respectfully asks the Legislature to continue to protect the exercise of Native Hawaiian rights through the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices by including the Native Hawaiian people in activities that interact with Native Hawaiian cultural resources. Mahalo nui loa.

² HRS §10-3.



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Water and Land
IN SUPPORT OF SB 730 SD2
March 16, 2023, 10:00AM, Room 430
Via Zoom

We are Brenda Asuncion and Kevin Chang the Hui Mālama Loko Iʻa Coordinator and Executive Director, respectively, of [Kuaʻāina Ulu ʻAuamo \(or KUA\)](#). KUA works to empower grassroots rural and Native Hawaiian mālama ʻāina groups to celebrate their places and pass on their traditions to better Hawaiʻi and achieve ʻāina momona— an abundant, productive ecological system that supports community well-being.

KUA employs a community-driven approach that currently supports a statewide network of 36 mālama ʻāina community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together), 40 fishpond projects and practitioners called the Hui Mālama Loko Iʻa, and a growing group of over 60 Limu practitioners and supporters called the Limu Hui. Participants in our networks have had long term dreams of bringing fishponds, food fish and limu back to our shorelines and dinner tables.

KUA supports SB 730 SD2 as an incremental step on a pathway towards ʻāina momona. This bill would appropriate a currently uncertain sum the department of land and natural resources' hatchery program to:

- (1) Provide fingerlings and limu for restoration and restocking of fishponds; and
- (2) Establish one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) aquaculture coordinator biologist VI Position.

KUA's coordinators and network participants in all three of our networks have built stronger connections to the DLNR-DAR and the aquaculture community knowing very well that to reach a vision of greater food self-sufficiency we need to transform our culture, values and institutions together. Supporting a DLNR role in producing fingerlings and limu for restorative aquaculture would directly address one of the recommendations in the 1993 Report of the Governor's Task Force on Molokaʻi Fishpond Restoration. This report was published nearly 30 years ago, but many of its findings are still relevant and indeed, important to fishponds on most other islands in Hawaiʻi in addition to Molokaʻi; a [Loko Iʻa Needs Assessment](#) finalized in November 2020 reiterated the continued interest in contemporary aquaculture technology to support fishpond revitalization. We acknowledge the existing resources and technical capacity within DLNR-DAR's existing hatchery program and encourage this proposed further support to build towards that vision of ʻāina momona.

Importantly, the 1993 report recommended that "the State of Hawaiʻi...actively support and help fund the development of a hatchery to provide seedstock for fishponds and stock enhancement of the reefs." Many practitioners envision a future when loko iʻa can be stocked again from natural populations of prized species such as ʻanae, but since those fisheries are depleted in many areas across Hawaiʻi, hatchery-raised fingerlings are an important component of the restoration efforts for loko iʻa and their surrounding waters. In our conversations with the Hui Mālama Loko Iʻa, practitioners from 24 loko iʻa on 5 different islands have indicated this opinion in the past several

years. Then looking beyond the boundaries of the walls, loko i'a themselves are key assets to restocking the wild fishery by serving as enhanced nursery areas.

Indeed, as we look to the future our communities are raising the kupa'āina who want to have jobs focused on mālama 'āina. The recent increased capacity of the DOCARE Academy enrollment is one and greater aquacultural capacity and economy are also possible pathways for our young people are another. We appreciate creative and collaborative approaches that build the capacity and skills of the next generation with intention, and in a way that benefits ongoing community efforts at loko i'a as a catalyst for ecosystem regeneration.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources. They have depended on them for generations. We believe our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of 'āina momona. To get there it requires among other things taking the steps toward greater self-sufficiency, development of a pipeline of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships and resource flows for mālama 'āina. Passing this bill out of your committee will open a pathway toward reaching this vision.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support.

Aloha 'Āina Momona.



Food+ Policy Internship 2023

food@purplemaia.org

March 14, 2023

To: Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the House Committee on Water and Land

Subject: **SB 730**, Relating to Fishponds

Aloha,

Food+ Policy **strongly supports SB730**, which would appropriate funds to DLNR to restock and restore fishponds. The success of fishponds in Hawai'i is a key factor in restructuring Hawai'i's food system and supporting our food security and ecosystem health.

The degradation of Hawai'i's fishponds due to erosion, invasive vegetation, as well as climate change has led to the massive drop in fish population in Hawai'i's fishponds.

However, in 2017, Conservation International (CI) Hawai'i partnered with three community based loko i'a organizations to conduct a two-and-a-half-year project. This project has not only shown the success of the growth of the fish population, but also the success of other life within and outside of the fishpond that leads to the overall health of the ecosystem. And, healthy ecosystems contribute to Hawai'i's overall food security.

We strongly believe that supporting SB730 will help our goal to a better future for our food system(s) and will help Hawai'i continue to lead in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Mahalo,
Kelsey Amos & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2023, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



House Committee on Water & Land

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB730 SD2

Thursday, March 16th, 2023 10 am, Conference Room 430

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committees,

HAPA strongly supports SB730 SD2, which appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to restore and restock fishponds by providing fingerlings and limu and establishing one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) aquaculture coordinator biologist VI position.

HAPA understands that loko i'a systems play an important role in Hawaiian cultural practices, have an ecologically important role in watersheds, and could significantly contribute to Hawai'i's food security goals.

We also agree that providing juvenile fish to restock loko ia through the DLNRs' division of aquatic resources will support ongoing efforts to restore the Hawai'i's fishponds.

Loko i'a were, and continue to be, essential components of traditional food systems in Hawai'i, providing food security and community resilience.¹ Their revitalisation goes hand in hand with the revitalisation of Hawaiian language, arts, architecture and diet. Today, most loko i'a sites are highly degraded and in need of restoration and funding.

Please support SB730 SD2 to help us restore these critical indigenous agricultural infrastructure systems that increase our food security, resiliency and improve our environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

¹ <https://www.iccaconsortium.org/index.php/2021/02/20/loko-ia-fishponds-hawaii-communities-restoring-fisheries/>



SB 730 SD2

In Support

3/16/23 10:00 AM

CR 430 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Linda Ichiyama, Vice-Chair Mahina Poepoe and WAL Committee Members,

On behalf of the Maunalua Fishpond Heritage Center we are in strong support of **SB 730 SD2**, which proposes to provide fingerlings and limu for restoration and restocking of fishponds, and establish one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) aquaculture coordinator biologist VI position for the DLNR.

There are numerous community efforts across the state that have made significant strides to restore Hawaiian fishponds. In recent years these efforts have accelerated with greater access for communities and also better awareness on the policy making side. Restocking fishponds will be a wise investment towards the full restoration of these Hawaiian treasures and allow for a traditional and healthy source of protein for our communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Chris Cramer

Executive Director

Maunalua Fishpond Heritage Center

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 7:34:45 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for your support of this Bill which is vital for our sustainability.

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 6:18:30 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of SD2. Thank you.

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 11:32:25 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Support; maybe include money for restoration as well as restocking.

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 9:50:58 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Cabalse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

Limu plays an integral part of healthy ecosystems. Designating a full-time state employee to help support community efforts to rebalance natural processes is key to shifting the environment back to its natural state.

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 11:41:55 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB730 SD2.

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:46:22 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Tincher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Members of the WAL Committee,

Mahalo for hearing SB730 SD2.

It's an investment in the future of Hawaii's fishponds - so important for our natural environment and cultural heritage.

It's well worth the investment.

Virginia Tincher

Ohau

Member of Hawaii Environmental Change Agents

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:36:29 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Support

SB-730-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:01:08 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james pirtle	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I opose this bill. The legislature is not lawfully elected thus does not have the authority to enact laws and bills. All actions are treason against the United States of America.