

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

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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

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Thursday, February 9, 2023
10:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 730, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO FISHPONDS

Senate Bill 730, Senate Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to support the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) in providing fingerlings and limu for restoration and restocking of fishponds 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. Fishponds and 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, capture sediment that would otherwise enter the ocean and harm the reefs, and provide employment opportunities for Hawai'i residents.

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 FY23-24 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 SD1
RELATING TO FISHPONDS
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 9, 2023

10:30 PM

Room 211

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend to the Board of Trustees to **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** SB730, the purpose of which is to restore and restock the state's fishponds, the loko i'a. OHA respectfully asks that the Legislature ensure 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.

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.

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 ensure 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

¹ Art. XII, Sec. 7, Haw. Stat. Con.

² HRS §10-3.



SB730 SD1
RELATING TO FISHPONDS
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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 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.



Testimony Before The
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
IN SUPPORT OF SB 730 SD1
Wednesday, February 9, 2023, 10:30AM, Room 211
Via Zoom

We are Brenda Asuncion and Kevin Chang the Hui Mālama Loko I'a Coordinator and Executive Director, respectively, of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). KUA works to empower grassroots rural and Native Hawaiian mālama 'āina groups to celebrate their places and pass on their traditions to better Hawai'i and achieve 'āina 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 'āina community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together), 40 fishpond projects and practitioners called the Hui Mālama Loko I'a, 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 SD1 as an incremental step on a pathway towards 'āina 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 Moloka'i 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 Hawai'i in addition to Moloka'i; a [Loko I'a 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 'āina momona.

Importantly, the 1993 report recommended that "the State of Hawai'i...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 i'a can be stocked again from natural populations of prized species such as 'anae, but since those fisheries are depleted in many areas across Hawai'i, hatchery-raised fingerlings are an important component of the restoration efforts for loko i'a and their surrounding waters. In our conversations with the Hui Mālama Loko I'a, practitioners from 24 loko i'a 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.



Ko`olau Foundation

P. O. Box 4749
Kane`ohe, HI 96744

February 8, 2023

To: Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
And Members, Committee on Ways and Means

From: Aaron D. Mahi, President
Mahealani Cypher, Board Member

Re: S.B. 730, S.D.1 – Relating to Fishponds

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation strongly supports S.B. 730, S.D.1, which would provide funding to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) for restoration and restocking of fishponds with fingerlings and limu, and adds a fulltime aquaculture coordinator biologist VI position to manage the program.

Our organization is dedicated to the preservation of historic and cultural resources throughout the islands. As we consider the dwindling number of fishponds throughout the pae`aina Hawai`i, and the important role that fishponds can play in supporting food sustainability, we believe this bill, once full implemented, can help in the restoration of many fishponds throughout the islands.

We are excited about the prospects of this initiative, and see this new program as essential to moving the viability of island fishponds toward strengthening our food supplies.

We urge your committee to support this bill and provide the funding needed to implement this program.

Mahalo for considering our mana`o.



Food+ Policy Internship 2023

food@purplemaia.org

February 8, 2023

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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.



LATE

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB730 SD1

Thursday, February 9th, 2023 10:30 am, Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committees,

HAPA strongly supports SB730 SD1, which appropriates funds to support the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) in restoring and restocking fishponds.

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 SD1 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-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 6:38:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/9/2023 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support SB730.

SB-730-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:05:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/9/2023 10:30:00 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-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:14:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/9/2023 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Mahalo for hearing SB730 SD1.

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

Member of Hawaii Environmental Change Agents

LATE

SB-730-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:38:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/9/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha nui,

Kimeona Kane in support of the future and revitalization of loko i'a.

Mahalo nui,
Kimeona Kane