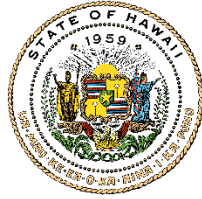
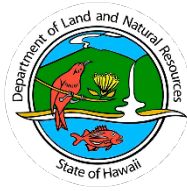


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

LAURA H.E. KAAKUA  
FIRST DEPUTY

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AQUATIC RESOURCES  
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ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
and  
WATER AND LAND

Friday, February 3, 2023  
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224, Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 833  
RELATING TO THE WAHIAWA IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Senate Bill 833 proposes to require the Office of the Governor to negotiate the State's fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa Irrigation System on the island of Oahu, which includes the Wahiawa reservoir, Wahiawa dam, and ditch system; and authorize and appropriate moneys for the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) (collectively, "Departments") to purchase, repair and maintain the Wahiawa Irrigation System and associated spillway. **The Departments offer the following comments on this measure.**

The Departments appreciate the importance of Wahiawa Irrigation System to agriculture irrigation, flood control, wastewater management, and public recreation in central O'ahu. However, this measure deletes an appropriation of \$1,500,000.00 to DLNR to manage and maintain its portion of the irrigation system, i.e. the reservoir lands, including creating 4 full time equivalent (FTE) positions, that was included in last year's measure (Senate Bill 2480). DLNR respectfully requests that the appropriation be restored. Without this funding, the DLNR cannot proceed with its part of the acquisition as it simply does not have the resources to manage this area. Therefore, DLNR requests an amendment to the measure to restore management funding to DLNR by adding a new Section 6:

SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the department of land and natural resources to manage and maintain its acquired portion of the Wahiawa irrigation system, including the creation of four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) positions for this purpose.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

DLNR further notes that there will be significant ongoing challenges to manage this area and that future recurring funding will be required. Given the significant management responsibilities that will involve multiple DLNR divisions, even 4 FTE positions may not be sufficient staff resources to adequately manage this area. Specifically, additional officers from DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement will be required to respond to homeless and other enforcement issues.

- a. DLNR estimates that it would be responsible for managing approximately 206.5 additional acres resulting from this acquisition.
- b. DLNR understands that as many as 50 homeless people occupy various areas of the parcels and a commitment of substantial resources will be required to manage the area to provide clean, safe recreational opportunities to the public.<sup>1</sup>
- c. In addition to addressing the homeless issue, DLNR will need to manage the submerged land areas and approximately 20 miles of shoreline for public use by regularly removing trash, debris and other hazards, including aging Eucalyptus trees that abut the adjacent residential properties.

DOA and ADC request the appropriation of sufficient funds to ensure that ongoing maintenance, repairs, and operations can be performed during and subsequent to the performance of the mitigation, repair, and construction work required to bring the dam and spillway into compliance with DLNR's Dam Safety Program.

For background, Wahiawa Dam was constructed in 1905 to create a great reservoir basin to capture waters in Kaukonahua Stream from the Koolau Mountains for a massive irrigation system for Central O'ahu farming that continues to this day. The system generated hydroelectric energy and has received R2 wastewater from the nearby treatment plant of the City and County of Honolulu. Since 1957, through a

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<sup>1</sup> DLNR also understands that there are more homeless in the general vicinity that may migrate to the subject parcels once they become publicly accessible.

cooperative agreement with Castle & Cooke, Inc., DLNR has managed a public fishing area on Wahiawa reservoir and constructed and manages a boat ramp at the 66-acre Wahiawa State Freshwater Park.

The Wahiawa Irrigation System, which includes Lake Wilson, has a critical role in the economy of Hawaii by providing an essential input for agricultural production in the Wahiawa-Waiialua-Haleiwa area. Like for many other types of infrastructure such as roads, airports, harbors and power grid, the economic impact of an irrigation system is most crucial in the service it provides that makes possible for other economic activities to take place and thrive.

DLNR's Dam Safety Program regulates dams in Hawai'i to ensure landowner compliance with dam safety laws and regulations. The Wahiawa Dam does not meet current dam safety standards and needs significant repairs to bring it into compliance. These deficiencies were first identified in the 1978 United States Army Corps of Engineers dam safety report. The current landowner was notified by DLNR's Dam Safety Program to remedy these issues in 2009 and has not taken all necessary actions to remediate the dam and bring it into compliance.

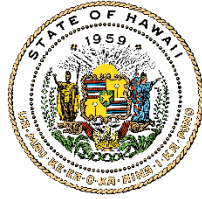
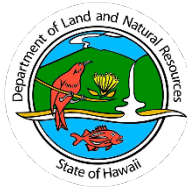
The Departments agree that subject to the appropriation of sufficient funding and negotiations with the current owners of the pertinent lands covered by this measure, that: DLNR may acquire and manage the parcels identified by the measure excluding the parcels on which the dam facility including the spillway are situated and the irrigation system infrastructure that serves to deliver water (dam, spillway, outlet works, ditches, etc.); ADC may acquire and manage the irrigation system infrastructure needed for water delivery; and DOA may acquire and manage the dam and spillway and the parcels on which the dam, spillway and appurtenant features are situated. The Departments acknowledge that acquisition and control of the Wahiawa Irrigation System by the State serves critically important public purposes for the State. The Wahiawa State Freshwater Park is adjacent to the subject parcels and DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources uses the reservoir for recreational fishing programs that serve about 1,500 fishers annually. The irrigation system provides essential water infrastructure for agricultural users in the region who are engaged in activities that support local food production and is a key component in achieving the State's food sustainability goals.

The Departments note that the State must perform its due diligence for the acquisition. Some of the items required would be a survey map and description, title reports for all the parcels, and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) to determine whether any hazardous materials or other contaminants are present on the parcels, and a Phase II ESA if necessary. The Departments also note that Parcel (1) 7-3-007:001 which consists largely of the Lake Wilson submerged lands, also appears to have portions of the irrigation system infrastructure, such as a portion of the dam and the outlet works located on it. As the measure contemplates the fee simple acquisition of these improvements by DOA, subdivision of this parcel may be required to achieve the intent of this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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  
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STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
and  
WATER AND LAND

Friday, February 3, 2023  
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224, Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 833  
RELATING TO THE WAHIWA IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Senate Bill 833 proposes to require the Office of the Governor to negotiate the State's fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa Irrigation System on the island of Oahu, which includes the Wahiawa reservoir, Wahiawa dam, and ditch system; and authorize and appropriate moneys for the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) (collectively, "Departments") to purchase, repair and maintain the Wahiawa Irrigation System and associated spillway. **The Departments offer the following comments on this measure.**

The Departments appreciate the importance of Wahiawa Irrigation System to agriculture irrigation, flood control, wastewater management, and public recreation in central O'ahu. However, this measure deletes an appropriation of \$1,500,000.00 to DLNR to manage and maintain its portion of the irrigation system, i.e. the reservoir lands, including creating 4 full time equivalent (FTE) positions, that was included in last year's measure (Senate Bill 2480). DLNR respectfully requests that the appropriation be restored. Without this funding, the DLNR cannot proceed with its part of the acquisition as it simply does not have the resources to manage this area. Therefore, DLNR requests an amendment to the measure to restore management funding to DLNR by adding a new Section 6:

SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the department of land and natural resources to manage and maintain its acquired portion of the Wahiawa irrigation system, including the creation of four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) positions for this purpose.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

DLNR further notes that there will be significant ongoing challenges to manage this area and that future recurring funding will be required. Given the significant management responsibilities that will involve multiple DLNR divisions, even 4 FTE positions may not be sufficient staff resources to adequately manage this area. Specifically, additional officers from DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement will be required to respond to homeless and other enforcement issues.

- a. DLNR estimates that it would be responsible for managing approximately 206.5 additional acres resulting from this acquisition.
- b. DLNR understands that as many as 50 homeless people occupy various areas of the parcels and a commitment of substantial resources will be required to manage the area to provide clean, safe recreational opportunities to the public.<sup>1</sup>
- c. In addition to addressing the homeless issue, DLNR will need to manage the submerged land areas and approximately 20 miles of shoreline for public use by regularly removing trash, debris and other hazards, including aging Eucalyptus trees that abut the adjacent residential properties.

DOA and ADC request the appropriation of sufficient funds to ensure that ongoing maintenance, repairs, and operations can be performed during and subsequent to the performance of the mitigation, repair, and construction work required to bring the dam and spillway into compliance with DLNR's Dam Safety Program.

For background, Wahiawa Dam was constructed in 1905 to create a great reservoir basin to capture waters in Kaukonahua Stream from the Koolau Mountains for a massive irrigation system for Central O'ahu farming that continues to this day. The system generated hydroelectric energy and has received R2 wastewater from the nearby treatment plant of the City and County of Honolulu. Since 1957, through a

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cooperative agreement with Castle & Cooke, Inc., DLNR has managed a public fishing area on Wahiawa reservoir and constructed and manages a boat ramp at the 66-acre Wahiawa State Freshwater Park.

The Wahiawa Irrigation System, which includes Lake Wilson, has a critical role in the economy of Hawaii by providing an essential input for agricultural production in the Wahiawa-Waiialua-Haleiwa area. Like for many other types of infrastructure such as roads, airports, harbors and power grid, the economic impact of an irrigation system is most crucial in the service it provides that makes possible for other economic activities to take place and thrive.

DLNR's Dam Safety Program regulates dams in Hawai'i to ensure landowner compliance with dam safety laws and regulations. The Wahiawa Dam does not meet current dam safety standards and needs significant repairs to bring it into compliance. These deficiencies were first identified in the 1978 United States Army Corps of Engineers dam safety report. The current landowner was notified by DLNR's Dam Safety Program to remedy these issues in 2009 and has not taken all necessary actions to remediate the dam and bring it into compliance.

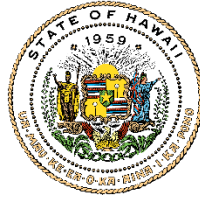
The Departments agree that subject to the appropriation of sufficient funding and negotiations with the current owners of the pertinent lands covered by this measure, that: DLNR may acquire and manage the parcels identified by the measure excluding the parcels on which the dam facility including the spillway are situated and the irrigation system infrastructure that serves to deliver water (dam, spillway, outlet works, ditches, etc.); ADC may acquire and manage the irrigation system infrastructure needed for water delivery; and DOA may acquire and manage the dam and spillway and the parcels on which the dam, spillway and appurtenant features are situated. The Departments acknowledge that acquisition and control of the Wahiawa Irrigation System by the State serves critically important public purposes for the State. The Wahiawa State Freshwater Park is adjacent to the subject parcels and DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources uses the reservoir for recreational fishing programs that serve about 1,500 fishers annually. The irrigation system provides essential water infrastructure for agricultural users in the region who are engaged in activities that support local food production and is a key component in achieving the State's food sustainability goals.

The Departments note that the State must perform its due diligence for the acquisition. Some of the items required would be a survey map and description, title reports for all the parcels, and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) to determine whether any hazardous materials or other contaminants are present on the parcels, and a Phase II ESA if necessary. The Departments also note that Parcel (1) 7-3-007:001 which consists largely of the Lake Wilson submerged lands, also appears to have portions of the irrigation system infrastructure, such as a portion of the dam and the outlet works located on it. As the measure contemplates the fee simple acquisition of these improvements by DOA, subdivision of this parcel may be required to achieve the intent of this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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**Testimony of  
DAWN N.S. CHANG  
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
And  
WATER AND LAND**

**Friday, February 3, 2023  
1:00 PM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 224, Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 883  
RELATING TO THE WAHIAWA IRRIGATION SYSTEM**

Senate Bill 883 proposes to require the Office of the Governor to negotiate the State's fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa Irrigation System on the island of Oahu, which includes the Wahiawa reservoir, Wahiawa dam, and ditch system; and authorize and appropriate moneys for the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) (collectively, "Departments") to purchase, repair and maintain the Wahiawa Irrigation System and associated spillway. **The Departments offer the following comments on this measure.**

The Departments appreciate the importance of Wahiawa Irrigation System to agriculture irrigation, flood control, wastewater management, and public recreation in central O'ahu. However, this measure deletes an appropriation of \$1,500,000 to DLNR to manage and maintain its portion of the irrigation system, i.e. the reservoir lands, including creating 4 full time equivalent (FTE) positions, that was included in last year's measure (Senate Bill 2480). DLNR respectfully requests that the appropriation be restored. Without this funding, the DLNR cannot proceed with its part of the acquisition as it simply does not have the resources to manage this area. Therefore, DLNR requests an amendment to the measure to restore management funding to DLNR by adding a new Section 6:

SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the department of land and natural resources to manage and maintain its acquired portion of the Wahiawa irrigation system, including the creation of four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) positions for this purpose.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

DLNR further notes that there will be significant ongoing challenges to manage this area and that future recurring funding will be required. Given the significant management responsibilities that will involve multiple DLNR divisions, even 4 FTE positions may not be sufficient staff resources to adequately manage this area. Specifically, additional officers from DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement will be required to respond to homeless and other enforcement issues.

- a. DLNR estimates that it would be responsible for managing approximately 206.5 additional acres resulting from this acquisition.
- b. DLNR understands that as many as 50 homeless people occupy various areas of the parcels and a commitment of substantial resources will be required to manage the area to provide clean, safe recreational opportunities to the public.<sup>1</sup>
- c. In addition to addressing the homeless issue, DLNR will need to manage the submerged land areas and approximately 20 miles of shoreline for public use by regularly removing trash, debris and other hazards, including aging Eucalyptus trees that abut the adjacent residential properties.

DOA and ADC request the appropriation of sufficient funds to ensure that ongoing maintenance, repairs, and operations can be performed during and subsequent to the performance of the mitigation, repair, and construction work required to bring the dam and spillway into compliance with DLNR's Dam Safety Program.

For background, Wahiawa Dam was constructed in 1905 to create a great reservoir basin to capture waters in Kaukonahua Stream from the Koolau Mountains for a massive irrigation system for Central O'ahu farming that continues to this day. The system generated hydroelectric energy and has received R2 wastewater from the nearby treatment plant of the City and County of Honolulu. Since 1957, through a cooperative agreement with Castle & Cooke, Inc., DLNR has managed a public fishing area on Wahiawa reservoir and constructed and manages a boat ramp at the 66-acre Wahiawa State Freshwater Park.

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<sup>1</sup> DLNR also understands that there are more homeless in the general vicinity that may migrate to the subject parcels once they become publicly accessible.



The Wahiawa Irrigation System, which includes Lake Wilson, has a critical role in the economy of Hawaii by providing an essential input for agricultural production in the Wahiawa-Waiialua-Haleiwa area. Like for many other types of infrastructure such as roads, airports, harbors and power grid, the economic impact of an irrigation system is most crucial in the service it provides that makes possible for other economic activities to take place and thrive.

DLNR's Dam Safety Program regulates dams in Hawai'i to ensure landowner compliance with dam safety laws and regulations. The Wahiawa Dam does not meet current dam safety standards and needs significant repairs to bring it into compliance. These deficiencies were first identified in the 1978 United States Army Corps of Engineers dam safety report. The current landowner was notified by DLNR's Dam Safety Program to remedy these issues in 2009 and has not taken all necessary actions to remediate the dam and bring it into compliance.

The Departments agree that subject to the appropriation of sufficient funding and negotiations with the current owners of the pertinent lands covered by this measure, that: DLNR may acquire and manage the parcels identified by the measure excluding the parcels on which the dam facility including the spillway are situated and the irrigation system infrastructure that serves to deliver water (dam, spillway, outlet works, ditches, etc.); ADC may acquire and manage the irrigation system infrastructure needed for water delivery; and DOA may acquire and manage the dam and spillway and the parcels on which the dam, spillway and appurtenant features are situated. The Departments acknowledge that acquisition and control of the Wahiawa Irrigation System by the State serves critically important public purposes for the State. The Wahiawa State Freshwater Park is adjacent to the subject parcels and DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources uses the reservoir for recreational fishing programs that serve about 1,500 fishers annually. The irrigation system provides essential water infrastructure for agricultural users in the region who are engaged in activities that support local food production and is a key component in achieving the State's food sustainability goals.

The Departments note that the State must perform its due diligence for the acquisition. Some of the items required would be a survey map and description, title reports for all the parcels, and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) to determine whether any hazardous materials or other contaminants are present on the parcels, and a Phase II ESA if necessary. The Departments also note that Parcel (1) 7-3-007:001 which consists largely of the Lake Wilson submerged lands, also appears to have portions of the irrigation system infrastructure, such as a portion of the dam and the outlet works located on it. As the measure contemplates the fee simple acquisition of these improvements by DOA, subdivision of this parcel may be required to achieve the intent of this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**MORRIS M. ATTA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
And  
WATER AND LAND**

February 3, 2023  
1:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**SENATE BILL NO. 833  
RELATING TO THE WAHIAWA IRRIGATION SYSTEM**

Chairpersons Gabbard and Inouye and Members of the Committees:

Senate Bill 833 proposes to require the Office of the Governor to negotiate the State's fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa Irrigation System on the island of Oahu, which includes the Wahiawa reservoir, Wahiawa dam, and ditch system; and authorize and appropriate moneys for the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) (collectively, "Departments") to purchase, repair and maintain the Wahiawa Irrigation System and associated spillway. **DOA SUPPORTS this measure and offers the following comments and amendments.**

DOA appreciates the importance of the Wahiawa Irrigation System, Wahiawa Dam and Lake Wilson Reservoir to agriculture irrigation, flood control, wastewater management, and public recreation. However, this bill does not include the request the appropriation of sufficient funds to ensure that ongoing maintenance, repairs, and operations can be performed during and after the performance of the mitigation, repair, and construction work required to bring the dam and spillway into compliance with DLNR's Dam Safety Program. DOA estimates that the operation and maintenance costs of the Wahiawa Dam and Spillway during the period following acquisition to the completion of construction of all dam and spillway construction to be \$1,500,000 per year.



DOA requests that a new Section be added to Part III of SB 833 to read as follows:

SECTION X. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the Department of Agriculture to operate and maintain the Wahiawa Dam and Spillway following the acquisition of such, until the completion of the construction of necessary improvements to the Wahiawa Dam and Spillway.

The Departments agree that subject to the appropriation of sufficient funding and negotiations with the current owners of the pertinent lands covered by this measure, that: DLNR may acquire and manage the parcels identified by the measure excluding the parcels on which the dam facility including the spillway are situated and the irrigation system infrastructure that serves to deliver water (dam, spillway, outlet works, ditches, etc.); ADC may acquire and manage the irrigation system infrastructure needed for water delivery; and DOA may acquire and manage the dam and spillway and the parcels on which the dam, spillway and appurtenant features are situated. The Departments acknowledge that acquisition and control of the Wahiawa Irrigation System by the State serves critically important public purposes for the State. The irrigation system provides essential water infrastructure for agricultural users in the region who are engaged in activities that support local food production and is a key component in achieving the State's food sustainability goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER & LAND AND AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT  
Friday, February 3, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 833, Relating to the Wahiawa Irrigation System.**

Dear Chair Inouye, Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food; renewable energy and clean transportation; and better management of freshwater and waste.

**Ulupono supports SB 833**, which requires the Office of the Governor to negotiate the State's fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa Irrigation System on the island of Oahu and authorizes and appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture, Agribusiness Development Corporation, and Department of Land and Natural Resources to purchase, repair, and maintain the Wahiawa Irrigation System and the associated spillway.

Ulupono supports funding for critical agricultural infrastructure across the State. The Wahiawa Irrigation System provides critical water access to local producers in the region. The system also provides recreation to the local community under the jurisdiction of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. It is prudent for the State to acquire the Wahiawa Irrigation System to support both recreation and production agriculture, therefore some sort of collaborative agreement across multiple state departments may be necessary. Having such an important system abandoned, or sold to a private entity, may have drastic ripple effects to local agriculture and communities alike. We support keeping this water resource within the purview of the State and maintaining affordable water access island-wide.

It is important to note that there are other maintenance and repair projects proposed in the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's CIP Budget that also merit strong consideration by the Legislature. Agricultural water system infrastructure (irrigation systems) is an essential component of our state's efforts to achieve its goals of increasing local food production and food security. This is affirmed in the DOA's 2019 Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan (AWUDP), which documents how Hawai'i's agricultural industry relies on these water systems to deliver inexpensive water to meet and expand agricultural production even during times of drought. The DOA has identified agricultural water systems as the most important infrastructural requirement needed to expand Hawai'i's diversified agriculture industry. However, most of the large-scale irrigation systems in the state are or will soon be more than 100 years old.

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

Additionally, according to the Association of State Dam Safety Officials' latest Dam Safety Performance Report, more than a third of Hawai'i's dams are rated either in poor or unsatisfactory condition.

In the AWUDP, the DOA estimates the five-year cost of repairs and maintenance for Hawai'i's most critical agricultural water systems at approximately \$168 million - of that amount, about \$90 million is needed specifically for DOA-managed agricultural water systems over that same period. This is substantial for our small state, requiring an average of more than \$33 million per year for five years. While the price tag to repair and maintain these systems may seem high, the cost to replace these plantation-era water systems would be in the billions of dollars. More importantly, continuing to let these systems fall into disrepair puts Hawai'i's food security at risk, particularly the food security of the next generation who will be forced to adapt to a hotter and dryer planet.

### **Climate Change in Hawai'i**

The importance of well-maintained agricultural water systems becomes even greater when the impacts of climate change on Hawai'i's food security are considered. In April 2021, Hawai'i became the first state to declare a climate emergency, when the State Legislature passed [Senate Concurrent Resolution 44 SD1 HD1](#), which also requested "statewide collaboration toward an immediate just transition and emergency mobilization effort to restore a safe climate."

The people of Hawai'i are seeing first-hand local impacts consistent with the effects of climate change: rising air temperatures; decreased rainfall and stream flow; increased rain intensity; increased frequency of drought; and increased frequency of powerful storms. For example:

- Since 1950, temperatures across the Hawaiian Islands have been on the rise, ranging from increases of 0.2 to 0.4 degrees Fahrenheit per decade;
- The annual total precipitation measured at Hilo International Airport decreased by nearly 20 inches since 1950—the most among Hawai'i's four major airports;
- Rain intensity is becoming as much a destructive factor as drought, with the amount of rain falling in the very heaviest downpours from 1958 to 2007 increasing by approximately 12%;
- The area in Hawai'i burned annually by wildfires has increased four-fold in recent decades, according to University of Hawai'i wildland fire researcher Clay Trauernicht; and
- Powerful storms are anticipated to become more frequent, as warmer climates tend to amplify existing weather patterns and variability, according to Hawai'i's state climatologist, Pao-Shin Chu.

These are each detrimental to local food production on their own; and yet, as an isolated island state we are also susceptible to climate change impacts far from our shores due to Hawai'i's continuing over-reliance on food from imports.

### **Irrigation Infrastructure IS Part of Climate Change Adaptation**

For international and domestic food producers, meeting the global demand of a projected 10 billion people by 2050—an increase of 2.3 billion people over just a quarter of a century—will become increasingly challenging as the Earth's climate continues to warm. Some estimate this will require an increase in global food production of 60%, if we are to ensure enough food for all.



In the Biden Administration’s fact sheet outlining the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the White House highlighted investments in **infrastructure to make communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including** “funds to protect against droughts and floods...”

Irrigation plays an essential role in increasing food production and is an effective method of climate change adaptation. Globally, irrigated land represents only 16% of arable land, but produces 44% of total crop production. For most crops, irrigation can double or triple crop yields. For example, irrigated crop yields for corn, soybean, and wheat are 165%, 75%, and 140% higher than rain-fed yields. In regards to climate change adaptation, irrigation systems mitigate the impact of decreasing rainfall, increasing frequency of drought, and increasing temperatures; and irrigation can help capture more rainfall during storm events, so that water can be used in the future.

According to research by The Nature Conservancy, climate change will bring increased moisture deficits across the United States. Nationally, the total area irrigated will need to increase by 11-54 million acres (an increase of 19-94%) by 2090 in order to maintain food production.

The DOA’s AWUDP plan concludes: “The investment into these agricultural water systems is the key to provide adequate water to continue to grow diversified agriculture. As the saying goes, ...without water there is no agriculture..., which is the reason these agricultural water systems were originally constructed—and why they need to be maintained for another 100 years.”

We strongly agree. For generations to come, local food production will depend on these systems and their ability to provide water for local farmers and ranchers. This represents a singular opportunity to make Hawai‘i more self-sufficient and resilient.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 1, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 833**  
RELATING TO THE WAHIAWA IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Elefante, and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 833**, which requires the Office of the Governor to negotiate the State's fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa irrigation system on the island of Oahu and authorizes and appropriates moneys for the Department of Agriculture, Agribusiness Development Corporation, and Department of Land and Natural Resources to purchase, repair, and maintain the Wahiawa irrigation system and the associated spillway.

The Wahiawa Irrigation System is critical for Oahu farmers and ranchers that depend on it for their operations. Water availability is a basic necessity for farmers and ranchers to maintain and expand their production, particularly in times of drought manifested on many islands as a result of a changing climate. Moreover, a reliable water supply is a key factor when Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are making decisions to start new or to expand existing operations.

The Dole Food Company has listed the Wahiawa Irrigation System for sale. We can't afford to lose this critical agricultural water source. No farming entity can afford the \$20,000,000 listed price. We are concerned about the potential impact on farmers if a private individual or entity purchases the system. They may raise water rates or even discontinue supplying water to farmers.

Oahu growers, especially those in Waialua and Haleiwa, need the reliable source of water that the Wahiawa Irrigation System provides, to continue to produce cabbage, bell pepper, tomato, cucumber, taro, eggplant, okra, papaya, citrus, avocado, banana, dragon fruit, watermelon, and green onion, and to expand production to better serve our communities.

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



**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 833  
RELATED TO THE WAHIAWA IRRIGATION SYSTEM**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
FEBRUARY 3, 2023  
1:00 PM

**On behalf of Dole Food Company Hawaii, a division of Dole Food Company, Inc., we are submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 833.**

The Wahiawa Irrigation System (WIS) is essential to continued agricultural production in Central and North Oahu. Dole has offered the system to the State. The funding in this bill is essential to making required upgrades to the system. Without this bill, the system will be decommissioned.

The decommissioning of this system would be catastrophic to agriculture and food production in Central Oahu. It would also mean the loss of the flood control and recreational assets that the State and the community now enjoy and the loss of irrigation water for a major portion of agricultural production on Oahu.

Dole is prepared to gift the system for no cost in exchange for delivery of a maximum 6 MGD of irrigation water at no cost, which is the necessary amount to keep its agricultural operations going in Central Oahu. Dole will only draw what is needed each day. The system currently delivers about 4 MGD to other users for a total of 10 MGD on average. Currently the maximum daily outflow is 20 MGD. This can be increased with future improvements. The reservoir holds 3 billion gallons, water is abundant for future use opportunities. To fund the cost to expand the spillway the State will be able to access federal infrastructure funds that a private owner cannot access.

This system currently serves fifty farmers with over 500 farm jobs and will serve more in the future once the State of Hawaii Agribusiness Corporation lands are fully leased out in Central and North Oahu. For food security it is essential that Hawaii expands agricultural production, and this is an opportunity for the State to do just that.

Over the last few months, Dole has conducted extensive outreach to the Central and North Oahu communities regarding the WIS and proposal to transfer the system to the State. Both the Wahiawa Neighborhood Board and North Shore Neighborhood Board voted in support of this proposal. We have obtained over 1,000 signatures in support of the proposal (a full copy of the petition and its signatures is available upon request). We have also collected numerous letters of support from nonprofits, farmers, and other stakeholder groups. We have attached a sample for your review.

In addition to the current uses of this system the future uses could include hydroelectricity to meet State of Hawaii renewable energy goals and possibly power a water purification system that can provide potable water security to the island of Oahu as our aquifers face threats from contamination and saltwater intrusion from over pumping.

WIS is a historically important asset for Oahu and the State of Hawaii and this opportunity for the State to own, manage, and improve the system is critical to agriculture, flood control, energy security, and water security. I urge you to pass this bill and capitalize on this opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dan Nellis  
General Manager





**INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION**  
LOCAL OFFICE • 451 ATKINSON DRIVE • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814 • PHONE 949-4161

**HAWAII DIVISION:** 100 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii 96720 • **OAHU DIVISION:** 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814  
**MAUI COUNTY DIVISION:** 896 Lower Main Street, Wailuku, Hawaii 96793 • **KAUAI DIVISION:** 4154 Hardy Street, Lihue, Hawaii 96766  
**HAWAII LONGSHORE DIVISION:** 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**LOCAL 142**

THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE**

**North Shore Neighborhood Board No. 27**

Kathleen M. Pahinui, Chair  
925 Dillingham Blvd. Suite 160  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817  
[Kcalohalani1111@gmail.com](mailto:Kcalohalani1111@gmail.com)

North Shore Neighborhood Board Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, November 22, 2022; 7:00 p.m.

Dear Ms. Pahinui:

The ILWU Local 142 **supports** the transfer of Wahiawa Reservoir and the Wahiawa Irrigation System (WIS) to the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our view on this matter.

Christian West  
President, ILWU Local 142

/sai  
howu





**TO:**

Governor Josh Green

**DATE:**

December 10, 2022

**Dear Governor Green,**

I am writing to support the transfer of the Wahiawa Irrigation System to the state. As a farmer on the windward side of Oahu, I know how important water is to a thriving farm. We are fortunate on the windward side that we have streams and water sources that naturally feed our crops. Central Oahu and the North Shore do not all enjoy this same benefit.

As a lifelong farmer and the father to nine children who were all born raised on our farm, I can assure you that farming is truly endangered in Hawaii. Without the support of the state and nonprofits who have helped to keep our farming efforts going, I don't know that I'd still be able to farm today.

Other Oahu communities are also deserving of the state's support. We work very hard to feed our families and our communities. We don't mind long hours and hard work, we only ask that the state support our farming efforts so we can increase food security in our islands.

Hawaii's farming community is a small but proud one. We all know each other and support each other. This is a wonderful community that helps to preserve our local culture and country communities. I urge you to act to protect our farming communities.

**Mahalo,**

**Mark Stride**

Farmer, Luluku Farmers' Association



mpaikulstride@gmail.com



**NORTH SHORE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 27**

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD SUITE 106 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817

TELEPHONE: (808) 768-3710 • FAX: (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco>

December 23, 2022

Daniel X. Nellis  
General Manager  
Dole Food Co. Hawaii  
1116 Whitmore Ave.  
Wahiawa, HI, 96786

Re: Letter Regarding Support for Transferring the Wahiawa Reservoir and Irrigation System to the State of Hawaii


Aloha Mr. Nellis:

Mahalo for your presentation to the North Shore Neighborhood Board #27 at our November 22, 2022 meeting. Per the board, we support your request to have the reservoir and irrigation system transferred / sold to the State of Hawaii.

Per comments from the board and community, will an Environmental Assessment or Impact Study be needed for the purchase? We are concerned about legacy chemicals from pineapple that would be in the sediment at the bottom of the dam. In addition, we want to ensure that all users of the irrigation water are kept informed about the status of the dam, transfer and any other potential impacts that could affect their farms and use of the water.

Please keep us posted on your progress and the outcome of any decisions.

Mālama 'āiā,



Kathleen M. Pahinui

Chair, North Shore NB #27



**Contact - new submission**

Ken Cho Jr <reply-to+d577787e93fd@crm.wix.com>

Mon 11/21/2022 8:31 PM

To:

**Ken Cho Jr** just submitted your form: Contact  
on

**Message Details:**

Enter Your Name : Ken Cho Jr

Enter Your Email:

Enter Your Subject: Wahiawa irrigation system

**Message:** I strongly support the state taking responsibility for this aging water system.. water is a Precison commodity.... The state needs to step up and be responsible for the future of irrigation in this part of our island...

Reply directly or go to your site's Inbox:

[Respond Now](#)

---

If you think this submission is spam, [report it as spam](#).

To edit your email settings, go to your Inbox on desktop.



**Contact - new submission**

Ralph Ehni <reply-to+cd0be464aa83@crm.wix.com>

Wed 11/23/2022 6:09 AM

To:

**Ralph Ehni** just submitted your form: Contact  
on

**Message Details:**

Enter Your Name : Ralph Ehni

Enter Your Email:

Enter Your Subject: Wahiawa irrigation system

Message: I'm a farmer, I feed People, that's my job

Reply directly or go to your site's Inbox:

[Respond Now](#)

---

If you think this submission is spam, [report it as spam](#).

To edit your email settings, go to your Inbox on desktop.



# Save O'ahu Agriculture

by: [Save O'ahu Ag](#)

recipient: Governor Josh Green

**1,046** SUPPORTERS

**2,000** GOAL

Ola i ka Wai. Water is life.

The State of Hawaii is poised to acquire the Wahiawā Irrigation System (WIS), which is main water source for central and north O'ahu. This system is also essential to protecting the livelihoods of the many farmers who keep agriculture alive in this region.

The aging system needs to be upgraded. Dole Foods Hawaii, the current owner of the system, has offered the irrigation system to the state for free, as long as the state takes on the responsibility of making the necessary upgrades.

Fresh water is a public trust resource. This water rightfully belongs with the state and under state management. Should the state fail to accept the donated irrigation system, the alternative is for the system to be decommissioned, which would effectively close Dole Food Hawaii operations and agriculture water distribution to farmers in central and north O'ahu. The loss of agricultural activity in this region would be devastating to Hawaii's local food industry and sustainability goals.

Please help inspire our new Governor Josh Green to become a champion for local agriculture and food security in Hawai'i by saving the Wahiawā Irrigation System and agriculture in central and north O'ahu.



URGENT ACTION NEEDED!

About History How to Help **Supporters** Contact

[Sign our petition today!](#)



# Meet our Farmers and Supporters

The Wahiawā Irrigation System supports a thriving community of farmers. The historic agricultural communities in central and north O’ahu are defined by their charm and rural nature. Agriculture is critical to these small communities, which serve as an important hub for Hawaii’s food security and local food production.



FARMERS' ASSOCIATION



MOHALA MO' BETTA!



Mokuleia Farms  
Lovan Taro Company  
Nine Fine Mynahs Cacao  
Sustainable Hawaii

**URGENT ACTION NEEDED!**

[About](#) [History](#) [How to Help](#) [Supporters](#) [Contact](#)

**[Sign our petition today!](#)**

saveoahuag@gmail.com

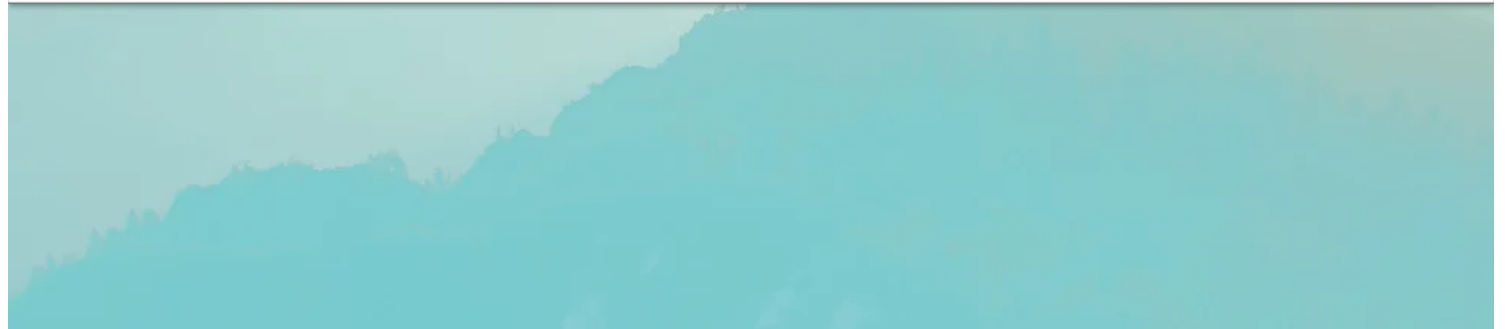
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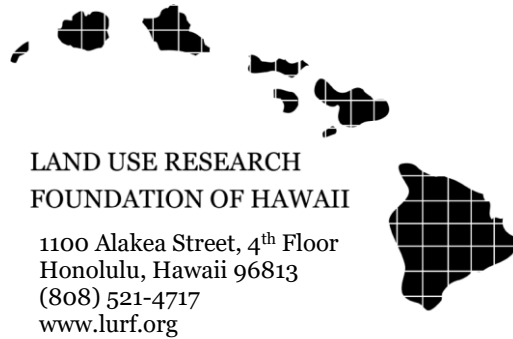
*Enter Your Subject*

*Message*

Submit







LAND USE RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

1100 Alakea Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
(808) 521-4717  
www.lurf.org

January 31, 2023

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Water and Land

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

**Comments in Support of SB 833 Relating to Wahiawa Irrigation System (Requires the Office of the Governor to negotiate the State’s fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa irrigation system on the island of Oahu. Authorizes and appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture [DOA], Agribusiness Development Corporation {ADC}, and Department of Land and Natural Resources [DLNR] to purchase, repair, and maintain the Wahiawa irrigation system and the associated spillway.)**

**Friday, February 3, 2023, 1:00 p.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference.**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF’s mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii’s significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 833**, and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands (IAL) in Hawaii.

**SB 833.** This bill proposes to authorize the DOA, DLNR, and ADC to acquire the Wahiawa irrigation system, on terms negotiated and agreed upon by the office of the governor, and to purchase, repair, and maintain the associated spillway.

**LURF’s Position.** Well-functioning irrigation systems are vital to Hawaii’s agricultural industry to ensure that the State’s agricultural crops receive a reliable

and consistent supply of water to support and maintain productivity. LURF understands that the Wahiawa irrigation system, which was originally built by the Wahiawa Sugar Company, was created with a dam and freshwater reservoir, and that the dam is essential to agriculture since water in the reservoir provides irrigation to farmers in Wahiawa, Waialua, and Haleiwa. In order to ensure that these local farmers may continue to receive a dependable supply of water for crops, funding is necessary to improve, repair and maintain the Wahiawa irrigation system.

Local farmers and ranchers who rely on irrigation systems to service their agricultural lands consider such resources critical to conduct their agricultural operations and to sustain their businesses. These agricultural stakeholders believe measures such as SB 833 will greatly assist by providing funding and support necessary to make improvements to irrigation systems for the long-term betterment of the State's agricultural industry and are relying on legislation such as this to help them work toward the expansion of diversified agriculture; promote the agricultural self-sufficiency of the State; and to protect water as a valuable and significant resource.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports SB 833**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of this matter.



Environmental Caucus of  
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

## Agriculture & Food Security Committee

Friday, February 3, 2023, 1:00 pm

Senate Committees on Agriculture & Environment and on Water and Land

SENATE BILL 833 – RELATING TO WAHIAWA IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chairs Gabbard and Inouye, Vice-Chairs Richards and Elefante, and members of the Senate Committees on Agriculture & Environment and on Water and Land:

SB833 authorizes the purchase, repair, and maintenance of the Wahiawa Irrigation System, which encompasses the streams impounded in Lake Wilson (Wahiawā, O'ahu) and serves both Mokuleia and Kawaihoa from the Kaukonahua Ditch. It was formerly developed by and served Waialua Sugar Company and is now controlled by Dole Food Company. The Agribusiness Development Corporation, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Land and Natural Resources all have a role to play in this bill.

The Caucus' Agriculture & Food Security Committee supports the continuation of this irrigation system, recognizing its need for modernization, already the subject of large investments by Kamehameha Schools. The North Shore has struggled to ensure that agriculture remains a substantial part of its community lifestyle and livelihood, and substantial investments of time and energy throughout the community have sought to preserve this resource in that service.

This proposal continues the long-term effort by the State to secure land and water for agriculture, to replace dependency of the people of Hawai'i on 85-90% food imports subject to supply chain disruptions due to weather disasters elsewhere and port closures here due to hurricane or pandemic.

The Caucus would like to see a proviso that the service area of this system not be permitted to provide water to "gentleman estates" or "hobby farmers" – generally agricultural fictions owned by non-Hawai'i people, but be reserved to serve only agricultural production that benefits the revenues of the State and the tables of the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this matter.

/s/ Charley Ice, Acting Chair, Agriculture and Food Security Committee

Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party

**SB-833**

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 1:40:45 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/3/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Racquel Achiu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha & Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB833.

My name is Racquel Achiu of the Haleiwa/Waiialua moku. I am writing in support of SB833. The Wahiawa dam and ditch are **CRITICAL** to our moku. Two (2) primary (although there are many) reasons. #1 Farms rely on the resource that the dam provides. Without it, they have nothing. #2 proper management and maintenance provides significant support to the safety of the Waiialua & Hale'iwa communities in terms of rain monitoring and controlled release of water vs unknown limits/volume of water potentially spilling over to flow down the streams into the waiialua community.

Please please pursue the transfer of this dam/ditch for the future of our farmers and communities as a whole.

Mahalo