HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023
STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 905

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER YIELDS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that groundwater is the primary source of municipal water in the State. Most aquifers in the State occur as a dynamic lens-shaped body of freshwater that floats on denser sea water that is recharged through groundwater flows from inland areas. Because of the underlying seawater, groundwater pumping must be carefully managed to prevent saltwater intrusion. Changes in precipitation and evapotranspiration, or changes to groundwater and surface streams resulting from the drilling and pumping of wells, may reduce or alter the flow of freshwater through the aquifer, resulting in changes to the salinity of the pumped water.

The legislature further finds that the commission on water resource management uses a mathematical model to estimate how much water can be removed from an aquifer or other underground water structure without damaging the quantity or quality of water available. This estimate is the sustainable yield. However, due to difficulties involved in numerical modeling and

an absence of detailed site-specific data, sustainable yield determination defaults to a simple analytical model. Additionally, conventional approaches fail to account for uncertainties, especially those related to freshwater recharge.

The purpose of this Act is to:

(1) Require the University of Hawaii to develop a flexible model for setting sustainable groundwater yields that is inclusive of the needs of traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, climate change history and projections, and groundwater seepage at the shoreline; and

(2) Appropriate funds to develop the model.

SECTION 2. (a) The University of Hawaii shall develop a flexible model for setting sustainable groundwater yields. The model shall take into account the needs of traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, climate change history and projections, and groundwater seepage at the shoreline.

(b) The University of Hawaii shall submit a report of its findings, recommendations, and model for setting sustainable groundwater yields, including any proposed legislation, to the

legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2024.

SECTION 3. 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 2023-2024 for the University of Hawaii to develop a flexible model for setting sustainable groundwater yields.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

INTRODUCED BY: _____

JAN 23 2023

H.B. NO. 905

Report Title:
Sustainable Groundwater Yields; Model; University of Hawaii; Appropriation

Description:
Requires the University of Hawaii to develop a flexible model for setting sustainable groundwater yields that is inclusive of the needs of traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, climate change history and projections, and groundwater seepage at the shoreline. Appropriates funds.

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