

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE WATER AND LAND

FEBRUARY 12, 2024
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 229

SENATE BILL NO. 513
RELATING TO FISHPONDS

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 513. The bill requires the Board of Land and Natural Resources to create a standard lease application and programmatic environmental impact statement to streamline the process for leasing government-owned Hawaiian fishponds and appropriate funds. The Department supports this bill.

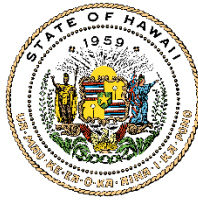
Fishponds represent both a cultural asset and an opportunity to expand nearshore restorative aquaculture efforts. Many fishponds have fallen into disuse and disrepair from lack of activity and oversight. A standard lease application and programmatic EIS would create a positive signal to fishpond practitioners and provide a consistent framework for permitting.

As such, the Department supports this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify 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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DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO
ACTING 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
DANW N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER & LAND

Monday, February 12, 2024
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229, Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 513
RELATING TO FISHPONDS

Senate Bill 513 proposes to require the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) to create a standard lease application and programmatic environmental impact statement to further streamline the process for leasing government-owned Hawaiian fishponds. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) submits its concerns and comments on this measure.**

This bill conflates the separate approval and lease processes and imposes an unsustainable burden on the Department with minimal benefit to the public.

Currently, leases for State lands are processed only after the proposed land use has been recommended for approval by the appropriate permitting agency and approved by the Board. This process is the same for Hawaiian fishponds as for any other State land use. In the case of Hawaiian fishponds, the Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL) processes use applications under its Ho'āla Loko I'a program, which includes a streamlined application form tailored to Hawaiian fishpond applicants and a statewide programmatic Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FEA-FONSI), which was published in *The Environmental Notice* on October 23, 2013.

The standard State land leasing process bifurcates approval of the land use and issuance of the lease. This promotes efficiency because a lease is not processed unless and until the underlying use or activity has already been approved and the applicant has provided the Department with all

relevant information and completed all necessary preparatory steps. Leases are processed and administered by the Land Division while approval of the underlying use or activity is managed by the particular Division that has a professional staff with specific subject matter expertise and capacity to meaningfully evaluate use applications. By combining the lease application and programmatic EIS, this measure would place the responsibility for obtaining and managing a programmatic EIS with the Land Division, which does not have the staffing capacity or expertise to do so.

It is notable that DLNR has had very few, if any, inquiries into leasing Hawaiian fishponds on State land over which the Department has jurisdiction. Considering this, the burden of obtaining and maintaining a programmatic EIS outweighs the benefit to the very small number of potential applicants.

The Department notes that the House Standing Committee on Water & Land heard House Bill 2626, a measure identical to this one, and advanced an amended version that addresses the concerns stated above. The Department supports HB2626, HD1 and requests that the present Committee consider adopting the same or similar language if it chooses to advance SB513.

The Department supports easing burdens on cultural practitioners and conservationists who wish to perpetuate traditional land management practices that include Hawaiian fishponds and recognizes the array of benefits that well-managed Hawaiian fishponds offer to the State. However, for the reasons stated above, the Department requests that this bill be amended to address the Department's concerns or held in this Committee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Testimony Before The
Senate Committee on Water and Land (WTL)
IN SUPPORT OF SB513
February 12, 2024, 1:00 PM, Room 229 & Via Zoom

We are Olan Leimomi Fisher and Brenda Asuncion Lima, Kua'āina Advocate and Hui Mālama Loko I'a Coordinator, respectively, testifying on behalf of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). "Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo" stands for "grassroots growing through shared responsibility," and our acronym "KUA" means "backbone." **Our mission is to connect and empower communities to improve their quality of life through the collective care for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage, serving as a "backbone organization" that supports creative and community-driven solutions to problems stemming from environmental degradation.** Hawai'i's biocultural resources continue to be negatively impacted by political, economic, and social changes, and the increasing dangers of climate change make fostering and empowering resilient communities acutely critical.

Currently KUA supports three major networks of: (1) almost 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or "that which feeds") community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) and wai 'ōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things "limu" or locally-grown "seaweed." Our shared vision is to once again experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as **'āina momona** – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.

KUA strongly supports, with amendments, SB513 as an incremental step towards 'āina momona. We are so grateful to your committee for reviving this measure from last session. [HB2626](#) was also introduced this year to achieve the same goals regarding government fishpond leasing. **At its February 6, 2024 hearing, the House Committee on Water and Land (WAL) recommended that HB2626 be passed as an HD1 with amendments, of which KUA strongly supports the same amendments for improving this measure as well.** As such, we urge you to consider mirroring those same amendments for SB513, which would shift the focus and intent of this measure to ensure that leasing of government fishponds include a management plan demonstrating the use and knowledge of traditional native Hawaiian practices and protocols as the primary component of the applicant's tenancy.

Prior to 1900, Hawai'i had close to 500 flourishing loko i'a, sustaining communities in numerous ways including through sustainable local seafood, limu, shellfish, and fertilizer – at one time producing an average of 400-600 pounds of fish per acre per year, yielding over 2 million pounds of fish annually throughout Hawai'i. (See *Generally*, [Loko I'a Needs Assessment, 2021](#)). The U.S. Organic Act of 1900 (the Act) abandoned the support of most semblances of Native Hawaiian governance, especially in regard to biocultural resource

management. The Act then transferred the aegis of governance – or lack thereof – to a U.S. laissez faire market system, ended Konohiki Fishery Management, and condemned loko i'a – extinguishing most of the existing ownership and operations of these systems. For context, in 1901 the catch and sale data for commercial 'ama'ama (mullet) – believed to be mostly fishpond-raised – decreased from close to 800,000 pounds of fish to less than 3,000 pounds today, with an estimated 88% of all food consumed in Hawai'i now imported. **Rebuilding our robust and sustainable local food systems is critical to community resilience in the face of more frequent natural disasters** such as the recent devastating Lahaina fires and 2018 floods, climate change, and long lasting pandemics.

Up until about nine years ago, all loko i'a were once stymied by an overly burdensome permitting process that would often take decades to secure all the required state and federal permits to restore the ponds. A partnership of regulatory agencies, funders, and nonprofits formed in 2012 to design a better process, including input from members of KUA's Hui Mālama Loko I'a – and the Hō'ala Loko I'a Program was born after extensive consultations with loko i'a practitioners, scientists, resource agencies, and government officials. **Since the [Hō'ala Loko I'a Program](#) was implemented in 2015, 23 fishpond permits have been approved on six of the main Hawaiian Islands, with an average processing time reduced from many years to under one month.** The success of permit streamlining for fishponds serves as a resounding example of the power of our collective sharing of responsibility to care for our island home and resources.

Looking at the lessons learned from the successful permit streamlining process, we hope to one day also implement streamlining for leasing of fishponds as well. However, **we find it equally important to ensure that any applicants using the current leasing process understand and utilize the time-tested techniques and practices through native Hawaiian scientific knowledge most adapted to our unique Hawai'i environment.** With these amendments, SB513 would most-likely attract and secure more Native Hawaiian and local community individuals and organizations to fishpond management, further increasing the likelihood of more successful multi-sector partnerships where our “shared responsibility” to care for our island resources would benefit all that love Hawai'i. As we build a better future for our keiki, **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 that they have cared for and depended on for generations since time immemorial. **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 taking the steps necessary for greater self-sufficiency, development of a pipeline of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships, and resources for mālama 'āina efforts that encourage and build upon the time-tested . Passing this bill out of your committee is a start on a pathway toward reaching this vision.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support. Please **pass** SB513 with our suggested amendments.

Aloha 'Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

DATE: February 10th 2024

Subject: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 513 - Restoring and Preserving Hawaiian Fishponds

Aloha Chair Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair Brandon Elefante, and the Senate Committee on Water and Land

I am writing to express my strong support for **SB513**, which focuses on the restoration and preservation of Hawaiian fishponds. This critical initiative aligns with the cultural and environmental values that are integral to our beloved state of Hawaii.

The information provided by Fisheries (n.d.) highlights the profound significance of Hawaiian fishponds in providing both physical and cultural sustenance. These fishponds play a vital role in supporting local communities by serving as a source of fresh and sustainable seafood. Additionally, they are deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of Hawaii, representing a connection to ancestral practices and a rich heritage.

Furthermore, the article by Uyeda (2023) emphasizes the transformative impact of restoring Hawaiian fishponds on food systems and cultures. The revitalization of these fishponds has the potential to enhance local food security, promote sustainable practices, and contribute to the overall well-being of our communities.

SB513 presents a crucial opportunity to invest in the preservation and restoration of Hawaiian fishponds, ensuring that these valuable resources continue to thrive for generations to come. By supporting this bill, we are not only safeguarding our environment but also honoring and preserving the cultural heritage that defines Hawaii.

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.



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

I urge you to consider the compelling evidence presented by reputable sources such as Fisheries and Prism in your deliberations on **SB513**. The restoration of Hawaiian fishponds is a step toward a more sustainable and culturally rich future for our state.

Thank you for your dedication to the well-being of Hawaii and its communities. I respectfully request your favorable consideration and support for **Senate Bill 513**.

Mahalo Nui,

Joseph Ramos
Hawaii 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.

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 11:25:53 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support!

Please pass this bill to streamline facilitate leasing for fishponds by requiring BLNR to develop a standard lease application and programmatic environmental impact statement.



LATE

SB513
RELATING TO FISHPONDS
Senate Committee on Water and Land

February 12, 2024

1:00 pm

Conference Room 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers **SUPPORT** on **SB513**, which instructs the Board of Land and Natural Resources to create a standard lease application and programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) to streamline the process for leasing government-owned Hawaiian fishponds. We believe this bill represents a critical step forward in promoting the sustainable management and revitalization of our precious natural resources in Hawai'i. We also **respectfully request this committee consider amendments** that we believe will further strengthen this promising proposal.

By establishing a standard lease application and PEIS, this bill will streamline the leasing process, reduce administrative burdens, and provide greater clarity and consistency for lessees, right-holders and stakeholders. This will not only expedite the issuance of leases but also facilitate more efficient and effective management of fishpond resources, benefiting both lessees, the broader community and can lead to more climate resilient of coastal areas.

For millennia, Native Hawaiians built and maintained a successful and thriving ecosystem of traditional loko i'a (fishponds) and lo'i (taro) fields across the Pae 'Aina. Native Hawaiian traditional ecosystem and resource management methodologies and practices have garnered national and international recognition. Some estimates suggest these successful, thriving, and abundant practices helped to feed around 1 million people, almost as many as are living in Hawai'i today.

Sadly, European and American contact and colonization led to changes in our land tenure systems, excessive development and environmental degradation, leading to damage, and destruction of many of our traditional loko i'a and lo'i and the subsequent ecosystems surrounding them. Today, the hard work of rebuilding, restoration and revitalization of many of our remaining traditional loko i'a and lo'i is being done by



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Senate Committee on Water and Land

Native Hawaiians practitioners, families, and communities in collaboration and partnerships, with non-profits, state and federal agencies, including OHA.

Restoring, building and maintaining our loko i‘a methodology and traditional aquaculture techniques took centuries to cultivate and are an integral part of our cultural heritage. They play a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of our coastal ecosystems. However, **the current leasing process for government-owned and non-government owned fishponds is complex, time-consuming and involves multi-jurisdictional permitting that is often fraught with bureaucratic hurdles.** This has hindered efforts to restore and manage these valuable cultural assets effectively.

Further, non-traditional methodologies applied to traditional loko i‘a systems and ecosystems combined with the development of a programmatic environmental impact statement may overlook the complexities and cumulative impacts of fishpond leasing activities on the broader coastal environment. Non-traditional fishpond restoration and aquaculture activities can have significant ecological consequences, including changes in water quality, habitat alteration, and impacts on native species. A comprehensive environmental review process is essential to ensure that these impacts are adequately addressed and mitigated.

OHA’s mandate requires advocacy for the health and wellbeing of the both the land, including submerged land, and its people. Therefore, **we respectfully request this committee consider including the following amendments:**

1. That placed-based Native Hawaiian communities, traditional practitioners, and organization with traditional and Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) be given the first chance to lease and help and or partner with the State to manage and or restore traditional government owned fishponds.
2. That Native Hawaiian-led communities and or organizations with knowledge and or expertise in restoration of Hawaiian traditional fishpond restoration be given



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priority to lease and or partner with the state and other stakeholders in any management and restoration efforts.

OHA supports the general intent and purpose of establishing a standard lease application and PEIS streamlining to provide greater clarity and consistency for the state lessees, right-holders and stakeholders. This will not only expedite the issuance of leases, but also facilitate more efficient and effective management of fishpond resources, benefiting both the lessee and the broader community.

We hope this committee will consider our suggested amendments including prioritizing leasing and or partnering with Native Hawaiian communities and organizations with traditional knowledge, practices, and know-how to manage and restore government-owned fishponds. By doing so produces equitable jobs, food security and a thriving and healthy climate resilience ecosystem for Hawai'i and its future generations.

In conclusion, we urge the committee to **Support SB513 and include our suggested amendments** to support and include Native Hawaiian traditional fishpond expertise and knowledge keepers and take action to improve the leasing process for government-owned Hawaiian fishponds. **By streamlining administrative procedures and enhancing regulatory clarity, we can empower communities to play a more active role in the restoration, management, and conservation of these culturally significant and ecologically valuable resources.**

OHA asks that the committee **advance this measure and consider our offered amendments.** Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and your attention to this important issue.

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 11:39:43 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha nui kākou,

Kimeona Kane of Waimānalo in strong support of this bill as it intends to simplify the processes for fishpond practitioners to fulfill their kuleana in managing resources and feeding communities again. As a loko i‘a practitioner myself, I have seen first hand the challenges and the great opportunities that our loko i‘a have and look forward to a day when we will be able to fully realize the whole ecosystem, mauka to makai. I am humbled to be another generation of care takers, who teach not just about fish, but all things that connect to them. I have supported in the restoration of several fish ponds across many islands and even worked in international spaces with a wonderful network of folks striving to re establish culture and food sovereignty. We must look for ways to make access easier for loko i‘a practitioners and recognize others who may not share the same intention. Food systems like loko i‘a play such a significant role in how Hawai‘i will be poised to support the decrease of imports. I strongly urge this body to push for greater access to these and other related native food systems and look forward to participating further in this critically important work.

Mahalo nui,
Kimeona Kane

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:19:09 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clemens Mayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Committee Members,

I am Clemens Mayer from Kaimuki.

I strongly support SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i'a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time & energy to care for these beloved places. I support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in HB2626 HD1 to improve the effectiveness of this measure.

Hawai'i once had a thriving loko i'a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million k̄anaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see Loko I'a Needs Assessment, Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i'a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we all know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported. With the permit streamlining Hō'ala Loko I'a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i'a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i'a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.

I have been working on loko i'a across the pae'āina since 2021, and I have seen the value of rebuilding these food systems, not just for continuing k̄anaka ways of life, but also seeing how it builds community and lets people reconnect to their heritage. Loko i'a should be accessible to all and therefore it must be easier for k̄anaka to access their ancestral places of work.

Please PASS SB513 as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

Mahalo nui loa for considering our testimony.

Clemens Mayer

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:43:06 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Wat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i‘a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time & energy to care for these beloved places. I support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in HB2626 HD1 to improve the effectiveness of this measure.

Hawai‘i once had a thriving loko i‘a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million kānaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see Loko I‘a Needs Assessment, Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i‘a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we all know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported. With the permit streamlining Hō‘ala Loko I‘a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i‘a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i‘a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.

I am an uhu humu pohaku student and practitioner, having helped build wall regularly at two ponds on O‘ahu and assisted with a few workdays at a handful more. These ponds are not only resources for fish to harvest, but represent an important ecological nursery for future fish harvests, limu, and a wide variety of marine life. It takes incredible commitment to restore one of these loko i‘a, any group considering it is not doing it to make money and is access to the significant legal and government resources to navigate the lease process is burdensome. When the right people, rooted in the tradition and community, are ready to step up to the kuleana of caring for one of these ponds we should do what we can to assist the maintenance and restoration of this important cultural and food resources for the future.

Please PASS SB513 as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:33:18 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ethan Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Committee Members,

I am Ethan Chang a current resident of Mānoa originally from Kailua. I am a builder and haumana under Kumu Kimeona Kane and write in relation to several dozen fellow haumāna and cultural practitioners affiliated with the Papa Loko I‘a of the Waimānalo Limu Hui.

We strongly support SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i‘a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time and energy to care for these beloved places. We support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in HB2626 HD1 to improve the effectiveness of this measure.

Hawai‘i once had a thriving loko i‘a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million kānaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see Loko I‘a Needs Assessment, Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i‘a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we all know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported. With the permit streamlining Hō‘ala Loko I‘a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i‘a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i‘a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.

Please PASS SB513 as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

Mahalo nui loa for considering our testimony.

Aloha,

Ethan

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 2:23:28 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of SB513. Streamlining the leasing process to acces, repair, restore, maintain, and operate loko i'a is imperative to the improvement of the State of Hawai'i's ability to be self-sustainable. The delay in lease approval contributes to our food security issues and prevents those with the skillsets to revive and manage loko i'a from timely access. According to records, "researchers have estimated there were 488 fishponds across the Hawaiian islands prior to contact with westerners. An inventory in 1901 identified 360 fishponds, only 99 of which were active, with an estimated annual production of about 486,000 pounds of 'ama'ama and 194,000 pounds of awa." (<https://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/the-return-of-kuula/>). Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

Testimony in Support of SB513
Senate Committee on Water and Land (WTL)
February 12, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Room 229 & Via Zoom

Aloha mai Committee Members,

I am Ryan Chang from Kaimukī,

I **strongly support** SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i'a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time & energy to care for these beloved places. **We support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in [HB2626 HD1](#) to improve the effectiveness of this measure.**

Hawai'i once had a thriving loko i'a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million kānaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see [Loko I'a Needs Assessment](#), Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i'a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we all know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported. With the permit streamlining Hō'ala Loko I'a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i'a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, **this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i'a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.**

I have had the privilege and honor of working at various loko i'a over the past 3 years. I've learned so much about myself, my home, and my culture through restoring loko i'a. It has connected me with communities across the islands and has carved me a path forward to stewarding Hawai'i better. The communities including myself need it to be easier for us to care for the loko i'a. Please streamline this process so it isn't as burdensome.

Please **PASS** SB513 as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

Mahalo nui loa for considering our testimony.

Testimony in Support of SB513
Senate Committee on Water and Land (WTL)
February 12, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Room 229 & Via Zoom

Aloha mai Committee Members,

I am Amanda Millin from Mānoa representing myself as a loko i'a practitioner.

I **strongly support** SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i'a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time & energy to care for these beloved places. **I support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in [HB2626 HD1](#) to improve the effectiveness of this measure.**

Hawai'i once had a thriving loko i'a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million kānaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see [Loko I'a Needs Assessment](#), Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i'a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we all know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported. With the permit streamlining Hō'ala Loko I'a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i'a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, **this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i'a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.**

Having worked as a program manager for both Mālama Loko Ea on the North Shore of O'ahu and Mālama Pu'uloa on the Westside of O'ahu, a bulk of my time was spent navigating the difficult permitting and leasing processes. This time and energy could be better spent towards biocultural restoration and ensuring the loko i'a can return to healthy and sustainable productivity.

Please **PASS** SB513 as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

Mahalo nui loa for considering my testimony.

Amanda

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 10:07:36 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariko Whitenack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Committee Members,

I am Mariko Whitenack and I live in Kaimukī. I strongly support SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i‘a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time and energy to care for these beloved places. We support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in HB2626 HD1 to improve the effectiveness of this measure.

Hawai‘i once had a thriving loko i‘a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million kānaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see Loko I‘a Needs Assessment, Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i‘a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we all know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported. With the permit streamlining Hō‘ala Loko I‘a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i‘a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i‘a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.

Please PASS SB513 as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

Mahalo nui loa for considering this testimony.

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 11:08:16 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

support

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 4:38:50 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in **strong support** of this measure and recommend the same amendments made to HB2626 that is now reflected in [HD1](#).

Please pass this measure, SB513 and allow Hawai'i to restore our loko i'a, restore our people back to these spaces, restore traditional practices and pilina with our 'āina, and restore our food security and 'āina momona.

- U'ilani Naipo

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 6:04:26 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Waianuhea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Committee Members,

My name is Lorraine Waianuhea and I am a resident of O‘ahu.

I strongly support SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i‘a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time and energy to care for these beloved places.

I also support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in HB2626 HD1 to improve the effectiveness of this measure.

Hawai‘i once had a thriving loko i‘a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million kānaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see Loko I‘a Needs Assessment, Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i‘a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported.

With the permit streamlining Hō‘ala Loko I‘a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i‘a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i‘a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.

Being part of the restoration of a loko i‘a is a life-changing experience that I hope everyone in Hawai‘i will be able to participate in if there are more loko i‘a restoration projects. There are so many lessons in learning about the story of a place, the restoration of a pond, and its stewards. Having the means to feed one another is essential to having healthy and thriving communities in Hawai‘i. We need to restore more loko i‘a!

Please PASS SB513 as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony,
Lorraine Waianuhea

LATE

SB-513

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 5:23:26 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breanne Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Committee Members,

My name is Breanne Fong from Kaimuki, O'ahu.

I strongly support SB513 to streamline the overly onerous process for leasing government-owned loko i'a (fishponds) to community members who largely volunteer their time and energy to care for these beloved places. I support and urge you to also adopt the amendments as made in HB2626 HD1 to improve the effectiveness of this measure.

Hawai'i once had a thriving loko i'a system on all islands, supporting estimates of over 1 million kānaka with an average of up to 600 pounds of fish per acre, per year (see [Loko I'a Needs Assessment](#), Aug. 2021). For various political reasons, the loko i'a systems were largely condemned or neglected, and today we all know that roughly 90% of all our food is imported. With the permit streamlining Hō'ala Loko I'a Program established in 2015, over 20 loko i'a permits have been issued on nearly all of the islands, with processing times reduced from decades to months. Unfortunately, **this permit streamlining program does not include leasing, which continues to suffer from an overly burdensome process that many have either given up on pursuing restoration of loko i'a, or are still stuck suffering through the years-long process.**

As a haumana (student) of the Hawaiian practice of uhu humu pōhaku (dry rock wall masonry), I engage in the restoration of loko i'a walls and through this experience, I have learned the importance of loko i'a in past Hawaiian history but also its significance for today and for Hawai'i's future. This culturally important practice has been kept alive with the engagement of community members, especially people who are from, grew up on, and have spent ample time in these spaces, developing strong connections to these loko i'a and also carry the knowledge to know how to take care of these spaces and adapt to any changes.

Please **PASS SB513** as an important step toward greater food security for our islands, as well as bringing more communities back into the stewardship roles needed to best protect and grow our shared biocultural resources.

Mahalo nui loa for considering my testimony.