

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau
P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 2694, Relating to Water Resources.

BEFORE THE:

House Committee on Water & Land

DATE: Tuesday, February 06, 2024

TIME: 10:15 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 430

Chair Ichiyama, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation ("Department") offers the following comments regarding H.B. 2694 for your consideration.

Section 2 of H.B. 2694 seeks to incentivize the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems by amending section 235, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to offer a new nonrefundable income tax credit equal to the value of the water system, as assessed by county officials, which may be carried forward if the credit exceeds the taxpayer's liability in the year claimed. The bill is effective upon approval, with the new tax credit applying to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2023.

The Department recommends that a definition be added for the term "water system," as the Department is unable to determine what constitutes a water system without additional guidance.

The Department also suggests that a definition be added for the term "relinquished." The bill, as currently drafted, is unclear as to what would constitute a relinquishment and whether a taxpayer who is compensated for the relinquishment would qualify for the tax credit.

Further, the Department notes that the bill does not specify the taxable year for

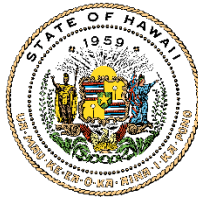
which the credit may be claimed. The Department recommends amending subsection (e) to specify that the credit must be claimed before the end of the twelfth month following the close of the taxable year during which the water system was relinquished by the taxpayer to the county. The Department also recommends amending subsection (b) to replace the phrase "the tax credit allowable is for the assessed value of a water system relinquished by the entity for the taxable year" with "the tax credit allowable is for the assessed value of a water system relinquished by the entity to the county during the taxable year."

Furthermore, the Department notes that the bill would not preclude multiple owners of a water system from each claiming a credit for the full amount of the assessed value of the water system. The Department suggests amending the bill to limit the amount of credit that may be claimed by each owner.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments 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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, February 6, 2024
10:15 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2694
RELATING TO WATER RESOURCES

House Bill 2694 proposes to 1) establish an income tax credit to incentivize the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems; 2) direct the Attorney General to commence eminent domain proceedings in certain counties; 3) appropriate moneys; and 4) declare that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) opposes this measure.**

The Department opposes this measure because of the potential for ownership and management of private water systems to be imposed on the Department, as the measure does not specify the agency that would be responsible for the ownership, maintenance and management of any systems acquired by the State. If the Department were forced to assume ownership of private water systems, it would impose a significant, unfunded management burden for a responsibility that is far beyond the Department's mission for the management and protection of the public trust natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources. Additionally, if the intent is to change the private water operator with the State while retaining the existing water users, then the Department lacks the necessary resources and expertise to function as a water service provider. If an appropriate agency is not identified and provided the needed resources to operate water systems, the result may negatively impact access to water to those that are currently and reliably serviced by a private operator.

The Department has already incurred significant monetary and staff time expenses to manage other reservoirs and irrigation systems located on its lands. The Wailua Reservoir on Kaua‘i, for example, was successfully rehabilitated and the Upper Kapahi Reservoir was removed and replaced with a smaller reservoir. Both of these facilities are part of the east Kauai Irrigation System that was previously under the management of the East Kauai Irrigation Cooperative via revocable permit. The cooperative has since discontinued the revocable permit and the system reverted back to management under the Department’s Land Division. The Land Division uses its limited operating funds to maintain the system to a limited extent to address public and health and safety and to keep the system operationally viable, but does not fully operate the system. Ultimately the Department is working toward a goal to transfer the system to another appropriate agency that could operate the system to provide water for agricultural uses. If that cannot be achieved, the Land Division will seek to decommission the system, including the breaching and removal of both Wailua and Upper Kapahi reservoirs.

The Department does not support using its limited operating funds to fund this additional management burden that is not consistent with its mission. The revenues collected by the Department’s Land Division cover the entire annual operating budget for the Land Division, the Department’s Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, and the Dam Safety and Mineral Resources Programs of the Department. The revenues fund over 80 Department staff positions, including 5 positions within the Commission on Water Resource Management, and provide funding support to the Division of State Parks and various resource protection programs administered by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife such as the protection of threatened and endangered species, removal of invasive species, wildland firefighting and lifeguard services. Revenues collected by other divisions have supported watershed protection, preservation of cultural and historical sites and public recreational resources. In addition, the Department has provided lands to other agencies in support of a variety of agricultural, educational, transportation and affordable housing projects, often at the expense of generating revenue to support its own programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this measure.

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
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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024
10:15 AM

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE ROOM 430

HOUSE BILL NO. 2694
RELATING TO WATER RESOURCES

Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House bill 2694. This bill proposes to 1) establish an income tax credit to incentivize the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems; 2) direct the Attorney General to commence eminent domain proceedings in certain counties; 3) appropriate moneys; and 4) declare that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025. The Department of Agriculture opposes this measure.

The Department opposes this measure as it does not specify the agency that would be responsible for the ownership, maintenance and management of any system(s) acquired by the State. It is our understanding that the only county that is affected by this measure is the County of Maui which has at least one extremely large, multipurpose system. The East Maui Irrigation system serves multiple uses that we are aware of, including potable water. The Department does not have the expertise to manage a system with this use. If the Department were forced to assume ownership of private water systems, it would impose a significant, unfunded management burden for a responsibility that includes uses outside of our core mission. If the intent is to change the private water operator with the State while retaining the existing water users, then the Department lacks the necessary resources and expertise to function as a general



water service provider. If an appropriate agency is not identified and provided the needed resources to operate water systems, the result may negatively impact access to water to those that are currently and reliably serviced by a private operator.

Consequently, the Department has serious concerns regarding both the cost of maintaining the system(s) as well as the capital costs required to make any necessary improvements. It is highly likely that State management would be significantly higher than private management due to procurement requirements and labor/safety costs. Without detailed studies of the potential transferred systems, the magnitude of the undertaking is unknown. Annual costs could be in the millions, and capital costs could be in the eight or even nine figure category.

The Department does not support using its limited operating funds to fund this additional management burden that is not consistent with its mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:43:04 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shane Sinenci	Maui County Councilmember, East Maui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my **strong support for HB2694**, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Shane Sinenci,

Councilmember, East Maui

(808)248-7513



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the House Committee on
Water & Land

In Consideration of House Bill No. 2694
RELATING TO WATER RESOURCES.

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization that was initially formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and re-energized last year after the devastating Lahaina fires on August 8. Our organization, is the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 20,000 supporters, engaged in providing support and assistance to the victims of these disasters.

Lahaina Strong stands in support of HB2694, which establishes an income tax credit to incentivize the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directs the Attorney General to commence eminent domain proceedings in Maui County.

The wildfires that ravaged our town were fueled by a combination of factors, including the private water diversion systems that played a significant role in altering the natural landscape of Lahaina over the last century. The manipulation of water resources for private gain has disrupted the delicate ecological balance, contributing to conditions that facilitated the rapid spread of the fires.

Against this backdrop, Lahaina Strong firmly supports the objectives outlined in House Bill 2694. The recognition that seventy-five percent of water resources in Maui are provided by private operators highlights the urgency of addressing the impact of private water diversion on our natural environment. These altered landscapes have left our community more vulnerable to wildfires, threatening homes, livelihoods, and the well-being of our residents.

By establishing an income tax credit to incentivize the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems, this bill takes a proactive step toward encouraging responsible water management practices. The directive for the attorney general to initiate eminent domain proceedings to acquire privately owned water systems in certain areas is a necessary measure to rectify the disparities in water access that have disproportionately affected our community. Lahaina Strong supports this commitment to promoting water access equity and believes it aligns with our vision of a community that is better prepared to face the challenges of the future.

In conclusion, Lahaina Strong urges the passage of House Bill 2694, recognizing its significance in addressing the environmental impact of private water diversion systems and promoting water access equity in Maui. We appreciate your attention to this critical matter and your dedication to fostering a more resilient and ecologically responsible future for our community.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Pa'ele Kiakona, Courtney Lazo & Jordan Ruidas

Lahaina Strong

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 9:24:54 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chari Ichiyama, Vice Chari Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

The Green Party of Hawai'i supports HB 2694.

Water is life, and without equity of water rights, the people of Hawai'i have no assurance of a healthy quality of life. Privatization of water distribution to the Lahaina region of Maui over the decades correlates with the invasive vegetation by abandoned industries that left the region vulnerable while the water was diverted away with private water rights. Using the carrot and stick to incentivize responsible property owners to invest in their community into the future and for future generations. Without water access, we cannot have abundant and diverse life.

Green Party of Hawai'i , supports a Yes vote on HB 2694!

Mahalo,

Susan RobertsEmery

Co chair GPH

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: INCOME TAX, Credit to Encourage Voluntary Relinquishment of Private Water Resources

BILL NUMBER: HB 2694, SB 2978

INTRODUCED BY: HB by SAIKI; SB by KEOHOKALOLE, CHANG, DECOITE, GABBARD, HASHIMOTO, SAN BUENAVENTURA, Fukunaga, Kidani, Moriwaki

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes an income tax credit to incentivize the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems. Directs the Attorney General to commence eminent domain proceedings in certain counties to acquire private water systems.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new section to chapter 235, HRS, to establish an income tax credit for any taxpayers voluntarily relinquishing their private water systems to the State. The amount of the credit is equal to the value of the water system. The credit is nonrefundable but may be carried forward until exhausted.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval, provided that Part 2 shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2023; and Section 5 shall take effect July 1, 2024.

STAFF COMMENTS: The State's apparent objective is to acquire water systems that are now in the hands of private parties. Rather than negotiating with the owners on a price, the State proposes to have an owner interested in selling its water system to put down a price on a tax form and (presumably) relinquish the system. Later, after the owner has parted with the system, the State retains the ability to disallow the credit in whole or in part, and then use tax collection tools such as liens and levies against other property or interests owned by the same taxpayer to strong-arm the taxpayer into accepting an unfair value for the property.

While the idea of providing a tax credit to encourage such activities may have been acceptable a few years ago when the economy was on a roll and advocates could point to credits like those to encourage construction and renovation activities, what lawmakers and administrators have learned in these past few years is that unbridled tax incentives, where there is no accountability or limits on how much in credits can be claimed, are irresponsible as the cost of these credits goes far beyond what was ever intended. Instead, lawmakers should control water system acquisition through the appropriation of a specific number of taxpayer dollars. A direct appropriation would be preferable to the tax credit as it would: (1) provide some accountability for the taxpayers' funds being utilized to support this effort; and (2) not be a blank check.

Digested: 2/4/2024

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:48:31 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawika Aspili	La'i Hauola	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Committee on Water and Land

Hearing: February 6, 2024, 10:15 AM

State Capitol Conference Room 430

Testimony in Strong Support for HB2694: Relating to Water Resources

Chair Ichiyama and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Kāwika Aspili. I am in strong support of HB2694. I am a 7th generation descendant from Lahaina, Maui. I was also recently appointed as President of La'i Hauola, a Maui Komohana-based nonprofit. Our board is composed of majority residents and lineal descendants of Lahaina, as well as one member from Aotearoa and joined to facilitate a community-driven rebuild plan for Lahaina. Our mission is to ensure that as our beloved town of Lahaina is rebuilt, it is done so with the guidance and input of the community at every step. We stand behind the voices of Lahaina that have time and again stood up to protect the waters of Maui Komohana from abuse by private purveyors for profit at the expense of the public and our 'āina.

HB2694 would result in better management of our water resources on Maui. An important aspect of this bill is that publicly-managed water systems would be held to a higher standard than privately-owned corporations under the public trust doctrine.

If the water systems were public, there would be no need to worry about IIFS violations by these diverters, which the Water Commission does not have enough capacity or funds to enforce as it stands. In remote valleys like Kaua'ula, the people have been beholdent to water purveyors and have been cut-off repeatedly, but the Water Commission has been unable to keep up with the complaints and enforcement of violations. HB2694 would rectify this issue and give people who rely on stream flow for basic housing needs and important cultural practices like kalo farming the peace of mind that they do not need to worry about getting their water cut-off.

This is a good bill that has been needed on Maui for decades as we wrestle with our island's deep-rooted history of plantations and the influence their successor corporations continue to have.

Please vote to pass HB2694.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:00:29 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
john carty	Save Honolua Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Water needs to be a public trust. The privatization of water has been a disaster for the people, especially here in Honolua.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 10:36:59 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 11:10:10 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Fallas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Victoria Fallas

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 7:36:17 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keila Paahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui. The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management. I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Keila Paahana

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 8:56:58 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonnie Marsh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote yes on this bill for it encourages both voluntary relinquishment and eminent domain of private water systems.

mahalo nui',

Dr. Bonnie Marsh

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 9:25:08 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

please approve

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 9:29:47 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

strong support

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 9:39:40 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justice Villaren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

[Justice Villaren

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 10:59:12 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 11:19:50 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Delyon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely, Elizabeth DeLyon

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 2:30:56 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Isis Usborne

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 3:17:21 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Winternitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my **strong support for HB2694**, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 3:33:07 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Vukelich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Maria Vukelich

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 3:43:04 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorena Martinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my **strong support** for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Lorena Martinez
Resident of West Maui

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 4:04:19 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau'i

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 4:05:12 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LISA ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Lisa Isoda
Lahaina, Maui

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 4:16:37 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mahealani Medeiros-Criste	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Mahalo,

Mahealani Medeiros Criste

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 5:04:27 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Velasquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Catherine Velasquez

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 8:40:45 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly D. Lepold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

PLEASE, DO THE RIGHT THING!!

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Lepold

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 10:56:47 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara C Griffiths	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Water is life. Water is a human right. Get the water back from the greedy corporations. I support this bill.

Tamara Griffiths

Lahaina, HI

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 1:29:20 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandra Snedikor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Sandra Snedikor

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:22:02 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I'm a born and raised kanaka of Napili in support of HB2694

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:06:30 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Lee Nava	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Cathy Lee Nava

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:22:21 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Devon Steck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Devon Steck

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:23:44 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Barbeau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Water belongs to the a'ina foremost. Water is the most valuable resource and the theft and illegal diverting of it by unscrupulous developers and greedy parcel holders for their own self-profit must stop. It cannot continue to be allowed. The water belongs to the land to be shared realistically with residents. It is not to be for those to waste indiscriminately, via non indigenous landscaping, swimming pools, only for new 'gentlemen's estates', while creating desert like land for others who would normally have access. Theft of Lahaina's water for crops, GMO or otherwise, which are not made available for residents but only as a money generating industry to be sold worldwide is another negative.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:49:33 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Buy back the water systems - Establish income tax credit to incentivize voluntary relinquishment of private water systems.- Direct the Attorney General to commence eminent domain proceedings in certain counties - Appropriate funding.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 12:14:47 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing as a concerned community member to express my strong support of HB 2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity on Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private and public water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. Our town was once described as the venice of the pacific with natural green buffers and waterways... no more. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB 2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community,

Tamara Paltin

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 12:21:49 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandy Takiguchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Brandy Takiguchi

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 12:26:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stefania Xytakis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Stefania Xytakis

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 12:41:58 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee on Water & Land, and mahalo for hearing this bill today.

I am writing in strong support of HB2694, relating to water resources. As stated in the bill, more than 75% of Maui County's water is controlled by private companies. This means that the County only controls less than 25% of our water. Residents of regular west Maui neighborhoods are always on water restrictions, while gentleman estates and golf courses operate unrestrained.

When you drive past Launiupoko in the summer months, these large lawns on "agricultural land" (that have barely any fruit trees) remain lush and green with full pools while the rest of Mauna Kahalawai turns brown.

When the AG has the directive and the funds appropriated to eminent domain these private water systems, Maui County will gain an ability that it has never had: to regulate all water systems rather than only that of the mostly working class. Lahaina just had a meeting on water conservation two weeks ago, and mostly what it accomplished was upsetting our community. We are given tips and guidelines on how to conserve water, because the County has such limited access to our water resources.

When this bill passes, Maui County will finally have the ability to restore the natural flow of our wai! This will allow us to take a major step towards healing our 'aina, as our streams haven't been able to flow their natural path since the plantation days. Ultimately, Maui County's choice to not condemn the private water systems after the plantation days is one of the huge steps that led us down the road that destroyed Lahaina.

This is our chance to use state resources to allow Maui County to take a very important step towards rebuilding Lahaina in a safer, community-minded way.

I ask that you pass this bill and do not change the timeline set by Section 7.

Thank you for your efforts.

Jackie Keefe

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 1:02:46 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Meade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB2694. I support HB2694.

While I am not excited about a decrease in tax revenue to pay for something which is arguably unconstitutional and has been abused for decades. This bill does seem like a good compromise to get the public trust of water back in control of the state sooner than years and years of litigation. Hopefully, the private water companies can see the writing on the wall and take advantage of the tax credits by returning the water to the people.

Please vote yes on HB2694.

Erik Meade

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 2:03:31 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

it's about time!!! much SUPPORT for this bill..i live on maui- in wailuku, and when wailuku sugar closed, there is NO WAY avery chumbley should have been allowed to create wailuku water company and SELL the water to the county! same goes for HC&S and EMI - ---Pioneer Mill and peter martin..all hewa actions! get these greedy people out of here!!!! .the county needs to take over administration of the water -- kuleana lands need wai! ... Kū Kia‘i Wai

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 2:06:09 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Patton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent fires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 2:09:29 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
louise drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!!!! how we got to a place where private companies 'own' our water is beyond comprehension...

maui suffers with Wailuku Water co- Avery Chumbley; EMI: Launiupoko Irrigation- Peter Martin...all wolves in sheeps clothing with no concern for the culture... is my opinion...

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my **strong support for HB2694**, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

As a Lahaina resident we have been calling for our water back for years. It has never made sense that the county only controls 25% of our water resources. Water is a public trust resource and should be 100% controlled for our community.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Katie Austin

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 5:13:51 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 5:18:55 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiley Adolpho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 6:19:33 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

None

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 6:37:02 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Moody	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

As our island faces the consequences of poor water management and ecosystem collapse because of water diversions, it is important and necessary to begin prioritizing taking care of our ecosystems. When water is returned to where it naturally flows, the land will change dramatically. The current dryland areas of Kula, Kihei, Puunene, Lahaina, and Ka'anapali need the water returned if they are to be able to respond in a healthy way to the dry season (which will return this fall). Please help encourage community members to return the water with an incentive as we begin to restore our ecosystems make the health of the aina a priority.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Ashley Moody

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 7:02:44 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui County and many other islands.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Resident

(808)866-7409

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 7:21:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Support

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 7:21:35 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Clapper	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe we need to stop the corruption of water diversion and restore the flow of water to Maui

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 7:50:03 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Hudson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694.

Private water diversion systems exacerbated the recent wildfires in Lahaina, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable.

This bill will establish an income tax credit for the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and direct eminent domain proceedings.

Our children's future and the health of our natural resources need this responsible and proactive approach.

Mahalo,

Jacqueline Hudson

6 Kiohuohu Lane Unit 8

Lahaina, Hi 96761

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:09:47 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Stacey Alapai

Makawao, HI 96768

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:31:16 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dina Edmisson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Dina Edmisson

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:45:05 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kailani Amine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Kailani Amine

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:55:37 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Carter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Paul Carter

201 River Rd, Waihe'e, Maui

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:58:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I stand in support of HB2694.

Especially in Maui, where as this bill states, 75% of water resources are provided by private operators, eminent domain to acquire privately-owned water systems is needed. As we all know, water is life, and with the history of legal challenges surrounding water on Maui, it is clear that water management has not been fair and equitable to the people of Maui. This poor and unfair water management that has occurred in the past is the reason for the need to acquire the water resources on Maui. I look forward to a time when water resources are managed fairly and made available to the public on Maui.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Keoni Shizuma

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 10:13:41 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nameaaea Hoshino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Nameaaea Hoshino. I support HB 2694 Buy Back the Water System. Mahalo

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 10:24:47 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gretchen Losano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support this incredibly important bill. Water should absolutely not be controlled by private interests, please support this important step to make sure the private water system owners and operators are properly compensated for correcting a loophole in the system that should never have been there in the first place. This is 2024, not the plantation era, it's time for proper management of the plantation ditch system and making right what has been LONG corrupted. The private water system operators have proven for decades that they cannot be trusted to put the public interests first and now their time is up. The bill is designed to keep their whining to a minimum while the government finally does right by the people. Please support this bill!

Ola i ka wai!

Gretchen Losano

Lahaina, Maui

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:51:26 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hiialoakahekili Palakiko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in support of buying back the water systems. By buying back the system from private owners we could be able to bring back Mauka to Makai stream flow which will help our aquifers and keep our aina nice and green.

Mahalo nui.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 12:14:57 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Timothy Wiley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

Aloha, my name is Timothy Wiley, and I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Timothy Wiley

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 1:22:21 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee members,

I strongly support HB2694, which addresses the critical issues of private water systems impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The wildfires in Lahaina exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:00:17 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my **strong support for HB2694**, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Tia Lee Klug-Wessell

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:44:41 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth ray	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Give the people back their water it is key to success in the cultivation and preservation of their aina .water in the hands of the big fat white rich baby has seen to fail miserable aka invasive grasses and in Lahaina on state and private lands the Lahaina residents have warned you of this and now are suffering consequences of years of bad legislation and bullying by higher powers to put greed over need and let hotels flow endlessly with water while the parks in Lahaina turn brown because of no water rights and the financial burden past legislation has caused to the community.let aina thrive in the hands of its people. We want water rights

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:31:32 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tarsis Rich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:47:33 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daphne Lindsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB2694!!

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:59:48 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danette Trujillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

https://click.actionnetwork.org/ss/c/CMxF4nARlf6wAFa1PSfv0pxLN8zuXd485gHNRhmg2sYXAG5PcVPfPf5uuo9ZtkOclGI94ue4N3L_htX-iaJ-fA4GykYjoyChbqeuxsoEOjFqyAMDQG-m74dRnXsp-X42AZUGcUJpYsBu5XOUllKqXNVrI0ODxG1w8xuNGERStBGJyXICmy0MktKRa_UXiyoPZPkiEcD5ojvJeDNW3rl9cRlux9B31AgdM5C93yztVDZR45aseH8IP4ENdAbrNPLsc1ZQ2jYBz-rsdUJzgU3o2kVj8TfRBuc6-owPqStWyZOHCsNZduw58cveZvhpqCYgtxOooYDArngoG-Y9pQdly2NN-3xVK8c9ZBgWHoXI-XgK4lPPbHHA6vn50PsnmUy3ATq4yDOgkJ4hz6i-7X2wIkA1cRdbfldSSGAY1MNJFRstsV99m7c1NTFEIcho7pE5/43j/L-t4or4yT-qn-Vw8kqVJVg/h12/blCzhUqMzB3UQoGz1LDiqFL-5A66b7tGSYC5GOBvznA

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 8:31:19 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Earle Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, chair Ichiyama, vice chair Poepoe and members

I support this bill, 2694, if we haven't learn from our past mistakes, then dam us. We have a chance to right this wrong. Now is the time. Malala Pono.

Aloha,

Earle medeiros

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 8:36:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Carty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The privatization of water is terrible so lets help take it back with HB2694. Water needs to be a public resource.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 8:48:10 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Riley Bond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the esteemed members of the committee,

I write to you as a concerned member of the community, expressing my strong endorsement of HB2694. This bill tackles the pressing issue of private water systems' environmental impact and underscores the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, causing disruptions to our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. HB2694 takes a proactive stance by establishing an income tax credit for the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings. This approach encourages responsible water management, addressing a critical need in our community.

Mahalo for your dedication to addressing this pressing need.

Sincerely,

Riley Bond

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 8:53:06 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kai Nishiki	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

FULLY SUPPORT - Water is a public trust resource and must be under public control for proper management and conservation efforts to be effective.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 8:56:40 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louise Palmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i support this bill

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:27:42 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Abril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Water is life! The private control of water, by greedy private corporations, is a crime against our planet. Humans and local wildlife need water to survive. No corporation should profit off of the resources we need to survive. Especially, in Maui, where greedy hotels and golf courses held much of the water needed for to fight these deadly fires.

According to an article written by the New York Times, "During the frantic moments on Tuesday after a wildfire jumped containment near a residential neighborhood in Lahaina, Hawaii, firefighters rushing to slow the spread were distressed to find that their hydrants were starting to run dry." (<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/13/us/lahaina-water-failure.html>)

Firefighters fighting this disaster found numerous fire hydrants tapped out. It got to the point there was so little water, they had to refocus their efforts to evacuation of Lahaina residents instead. Sure. The blame could be placed on the HECO generators for being destroyed by the fires (something we all expect the current lawsuits in civil court to support), but the amount of water being used by these resorts is excessive and deadly. It leads to less water to combat these fires, but, also, incredibly dry environments more susceptible to burning. This problem was especially apparent before the Lahaina fires in August of last year.

An article published by SFGate, in July 25, 2023 (published a whole three weeks before the fires), drew attention to the overuse of water by tourist resorts: "... the [Maui County water standards](#) for resorts are the highest in the state. Maui resorts are allowed up to 17,000 gallons per acre per day. 'If those water advocates believe that that amount is too high, then it's on them to lobby the counsel to reduce that amount,' said William Meheula, an attorney representing the Grand Wailea, in a 2020 deposition." (['Hurting for water': Hawaii resorts worsen Maui's water shortage.](#)) Residents of Maui were already aware of the lack of water on their island. Families' lawns would grow brown, forrests and hills stayed brown, and wildfires became more frequent. For every thousands of gallons wasted to keep some useless golf course lawn green, is a local garden or forrest dying from dehydration. And another potential Lahaina fire.

The bill must be amended to place limits on the amount of water used by resorts in Maui. As well as seize all water held by private interests. If this means golf course lawns have to stay brown, then so be it! Peoples' lives and our local fauna matter more. A greener and hydrated Maui means a more sustainable and cleaner environment. This will not only improve the island's image, but it will make it stronger to fight future fires!

Mahalo,
Nathan Abril

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:30:51 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Nalani

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:48:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander K.D. McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of this bill.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:52:23 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Dew	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Sierra Dew

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:54:20 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rochelle Sombelon-McEwen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Rochelle Sombelon-McEwen

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:07:39 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yayoi Hara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Yayoi Hara from Lahaina. It is absolutely unbelievable that 75% of water on Maui is privately owned, based on the Hawaiian Constitution water belongs to the people NOT to private entities. The fact that the likes of Peter Martin was able to purchase land that holds the plantation era systems where water was diverted and therefore take control of the water is WRONG, this should never have been allowed to happen, NOW we must make this wrong, right and put water back into the public utility. I implore you to take water out of private hands and restore it for all. Mahalo!

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:23:05 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kay Aina	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

The intent of this measure to incentivize private landowners with a tax credit is commendable, however, the inclusion of an eminent domain provision to force private landowners to comply appears to be counterproductive. Please amend this measure to delete the eminent domain provision at this time to allow all private landowners an opportunity to voluntarily assist in Hawaii's desired water resource management. Thank you.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:30:25 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nani Dapitan-Haake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB2694, which proposes a buyback of water systems from private owners.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:59:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samuel A Akoi IV	Hana Ahamoku Representative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2694

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,
Samuel A Akoi IV (808) 281-4259

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:40:45 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paele Kiakona	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

I write to you from the heart of Maui Komohana, a place where the spirit of aloha ‘āina runs as deep as the waters that nurture our land. Our community has long stood as guardians of these precious resources, tirelessly defending them against exploitation by private entities driven by profit rather than stewardship.

It is in this light that we extend our deepest mahalo to Representative Saiki for championing HB2694, a beacon of hope for the sustainable management of our water resources. This bill promises to usher in a new era where our waters are managed with the reverence they deserve, aligning with the public trust doctrine—a standard far beyond what is expected of private purveyors.

The designation of Nā Wai ‘Ehā and Lahaina as water management areas, along with the implementation of Instream Flow Standards (IIFS), underscores our commitment to ensuring our streams flow freely. Yet, despite these efforts, our community has faced unjust water cutoffs by private diverters, often as a form of retaliation for our advocacy. These actions not only betray the trust of our community but also threaten the very fabric of our way of life, including vital cultural practices like kalo farming.

In places like Kaua‘ula, the narrative is all too familiar, with residents left at the mercy of water purveyors, their pleas for justice drowned out by the silence of inaction. The Water Commission, despite its best efforts, grapples with the sheer volume of complaints and the daunting task of enforcement, leaving our people vulnerable.

HB2694 stands as a pivotal solution to these challenges, offering a pathway to public water management where the interests of the community are paramount. Under public stewardship, the fears of IIFS violations and arbitrary cutoffs will be alleviated, ensuring that our people's access to water for basic needs and cultural practices remains unimpeded.

We urge the legislature to recognize the transformative potential of HB2694 for Maui and our beloved islands. By supporting this bill, we can safeguard our water resources for generations to come, honoring our ancestors' legacy and the sacred bond we share with our ‘āina.

With hope and solidarity,

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 2:17:59 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carlos Lamas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Carlos Lamas, a resident of Lahaina, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB2694. This bill is a significant step towards addressing the critical issue of water access equity in our community. With only twenty-five percent of water resources in Maui provided by the county and the rest by private operators, the importance of promoting equitable water access cannot be overstated. HB2694's approach to incentivize the voluntary relinquishment of private water systems through an income tax credit, alongside the initiation of eminent domain proceedings to acquire privately-owned water systems in certain areas, is both innovative and necessary. The appropriation of funds for these proceedings underscores the commitment to ensuring that all residents of our state have fair access to water resources.

The challenges we face with water access in Lahaina and across Maui are complex, but the solutions proposed in HB2694 represent a bold and pragmatic approach to addressing these issues. As a resident who deeply cares about the sustainability and welfare of our community, I believe that this bill will bring us closer to a future where water access is no longer a privilege but a right shared by all. I urge our legislators to support and pass HB2694, not just for the benefit of today's residents but for the generations to come.

Mahalo for reading my testimony in support of HB2694.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 2:25:43 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kekai Keahi	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm reaching out directly from the heart of Maui Komohana to address a critical issue that affects us all across Hawaii. We've stood united against the privatization of our water resources, fighting for their protection against profit-driven exploitation. It's time for a change, and HB2694, introduced by Representative Saiki, is the key to that change.

This bill isn't just about managing water; it's about respecting our natural resources in line with the public trust doctrine, something private companies have consistently failed to do. Nā Wai 'Ehā and Lahaina are just the start. With this bill, we can ensure that no community in Hawaii faces the threat of having their water unjustly cut off by private entities, a practice that has harmed our people and our way of life, particularly our sacred kalo farming.

The issues faced in Kaua'ula are a stark reminder of our current system's failures, where residents are left without a voice, and the Water Commission is overwhelmed. HB2694 offers a clear solution: bring water management into public hands, where community needs lead and accountability is clear.

This bill has the potential to transform water management across Hawaii, ensuring every community's access to water is protected for daily needs and cultural practices. It's a step towards rectifying past wrongs and honoring our commitment to the land and our ancestors.

I urge the legislature to see the broader impact of HB2694. It's more than a bill; it's a promise for a sustainable future for all of Hawaii.

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 3:58:59 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zane Kekoa Schweitzer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 2694.

Having control of the water systems for the benefit of our natural ecosystem and resource management should be the greatest of importance after the devastating wildfires. Caring for our natural environment and natural resources provide fire blocks and as well a lush environment that contributes to the overall health mauka to makai.

mahalo,

Zane

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 5:22:12 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelei Tancayo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2694.

After the tragedy and devastation that happened to Lahaina on 8/8. We need to make sure that their are adequate water for all communities, especially the community of Lahaina by making sure Maui's water systems are public and benefits the public trust.

Mahalo,

Michelei Tancayo

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:56:42 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey A Drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Drayer

Support for HB2694

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee, I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my **strong support for HB2694**, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Pahia

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:37:45 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karyn Kanekoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2694

HB-2694

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:50:10 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2024 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
susan walczak-pol	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

I am writing as a concerned member of the community to express my strong support for HB2694, which addresses the critical issue of private water systems' impact on our environment and the urgency of promoting water access equity in Maui.

The recent wildfires in Lahaina were exacerbated by private water diversion systems, disrupting our natural landscape and leaving our community vulnerable. This bill, by establishing an income tax credit for voluntary relinquishment of private water systems and directing eminent domain proceedings, takes a proactive approach to encourage responsible water management.

I urge the committee to pass HB2694, recognizing its significance in rectifying the environmental impact of private water diversion and promoting water access equity for a more resilient and ecologically responsible future.

Mahalo for your commitment to addressing the pressing needs of our community.