

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

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
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 11, 2025
10:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1495 HD1
RELATING TO THE KEAUHOU AQUIFER SYSTEM

House Bill 1495 HD1 proposes to establish and appropriate funds for the Keauhou Aquifer System Monitoring Pilot Project within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), appropriate funds for the installation of two monitoring wells in the Keauhou Aquifer System, and requires reports to the Legislature. **The Department strongly supports this measure, provided that its passage does not adversely impact the Administration's budget priorities, and offers comments.**

The Keauhou aquifer system is a vital water source that sustains local communities, ecosystems, and cultural practices. However, it faces ongoing challenges, including increasing water demand and concerns over potential resource overuse. The balance between development and resource sustainability remains a key issue, as stakeholders seek to ensure long-term water availability while preserving the unique environmental and cultural heritage of the region.

The Commission seeks to protect and regulate groundwater use within the Keauhou aquifer system, ensuring that withdrawals do not compromise the health of the aquifer or the ecosystems and traditional practices that rely on it. A pilot project would support ongoing efforts to manage the Keauhou aquifer system, conduct community outreach and education, and collaborate with other agencies such as the Division of Aquatic Resources.

The Department supports the construction of monitoring wells within the Keauhou aquifer system to support responsible management of Keauhou's ground water resources. We appreciate the incorporation of the amendments to the bill based on our last testimony.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of
DEAN MINAKAMI
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND AND HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

February 11, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 411

In consideration of
H.B. 1495 HD1
RELATING TO THE KEAUKOU AQUIFER SYSTEM.

Chairs Hashem and Lowen, Vice Chairs Lamosao and Perruso, and members of the Committees.

HHFDC **supports** HB 1495 HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Keauhou Aquifer System Monitoring Pilot Project within the Department of Land and Natural Resources. It also appropriates funds for the installation of two monitoring wells in the Keauhou Aquifer System and requires reports to the Legislature. HHFDC supports the measure so long as it does not adversely impact priorities identified in the Executive Budget Request for FY 2026.

The development of affordable housing in West Hawaii is being impeded by concerns about new potable water wells. For example, HHFDC's Kamakana Villages, a master planned community in north Kona with the potential of 1,600 affordable housing units, is located within the area of the Keauhou Aquifer and is stalled due to a lack of potable water.

The pilot program will help to address concerns about developing new water sources in north Kona.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAII

345 KEKŪANAŌ'A STREET, SUITE 20 • HILO, HAWAII 96720

TELEPHONE (808) 961-8050 • FAX (808) 961-8657

February 10, 2025

TESTIMONY OF KEITH K. OKAMOTO, MANAGER-CHIEF ENGINEER
DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY, COUNTY OF HAWAII

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

DATE: Tuesday, February 11, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Via videoconference, Conference Room 411

HB 1495 HD1 - RELATING TO THE KEAUKOU AQUIFER SYSTEM

Honorable Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Lamosao, and committee members,

The County of Hawaii, Department of Water Supply (DWS) submits this letter in support of HB 1495 HD1.

This bill proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to install two monitoring wells in the Keauhou Aquifer System. Establishes the Keauhou Aquifer System Monitoring Pilot Project. DWS is hopeful that this effort will provide data and information that will allow for improved decision making.

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your dedication and commitment to serving our State.

Please feel free to contact me at (808) 961-8050 or via email at dws@hawaiidws.org with any questions you may have regarding DWS' comments. Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony on HB 1495 HD1.

...Water, Our Most Precious Resource...Ka Wai A Kāne...

The Department of Water Supply is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Water & Land
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Representative Rachele F. Lamosao, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 10:00AM
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1495 HD1 Relating to the Keauhou Aquifer System

Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1495 House Draft 1 (HB1317 HD1), which establishes and appropriates funds for the Keauhou Aquifer System Monitoring Pilot Project within the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Appropriates funds for the installation of two monitoring wells in the Keauhou Aquifer System.

HB1495 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Business Services. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

To expand affordable housing and address Hawaii's housing crisis, the state is launching a multi-year pilot program to improve access to reliable water in the Keauhou Aquifer System. Led by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, this initiative will monitor groundwater levels and test water quality to ensure sustainability. The Commission on Water Resource Management will oversee new monitoring wells, assess groundwater conditions, and detect contaminants. To maintain transparency, the Department will report findings to the legislature every six months.

The state has allocated \$163,000 annually for two years to install two monitoring wells, with funds managed by the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Ensuring long-term clean water access, this initiative, effective July 1, 2025, supports housing development while protecting Hawaii's water resources. The Chamber backs this effort, recognizing that reliable water infrastructure is key to expanding housing, driving economic growth, and securing a sustainable future for communities statewide.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 1495. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



February 10, 2025

RE: House Bill 1495: Relating to the Keauhou Aquifer System

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committee on Water and Land, and Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection,

Since our establishment in 1968, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce has worked to enhance the quality of life for our community through a strong, sustainable economy on Hawai'i Island. With over 460 member businesses and organizations, our mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for a successful business environment in West Hawai'i.

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce **strongly supports** House Bill 1495: Relating to the Keauhou Aquifer System.

Water development is a top priority for the Kona-Kohala Chamber and our region. We strongly support freshwater resource development, maintenance, and protection in West Hawai'i. New freshwater development on the west side of Hawai'i Island provides critical infrastructure to support housing, another top priority for our members and the entire community.

This bill establishes a Keauhou aquifer system monitoring pilot program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). The Commission on Water Resource Management shall manage installed monitoring wells, monitor groundwater levels, and conduct water quality tests in the Keauhou aquifer system. DLNR will submit reports detailing groundwater levels and water quality to the legislature every six months.

We are confident the steps outlined in this pilot program will provide progress on this long-standing issue. Ultimately, developing new freshwater resources will promote the well-being of our community, improve business opportunities, and strengthen our local economy.

We ask you to pass House Bill 1495: Relating to the Keauhou Aquifer System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy J. Laros". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy J. Laros, President and CEO
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce

HB-1495-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:09:34 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Funding to monitor the Keauhou aquifer is necessary due to saltwater intrusion into this aquifer which provides drinking water for my residence. It is already bad enough that we filter the water before consuming it. Please pass HB1495.

HB-1495-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:26:08 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

My name is Jess Sobocinski and I am a resident of Kealahou and spend lots of time playing, socializing, and working in places that draw from the Kealahou aquifer. And while I have only been living in Hawai'i for 11 years, I can attest to the increase development of Kailua-Kona in that short time. I have concerns for the amount and type of future development that is slated for this area for the next 25 years, particularly in how it is going to impact the coastline, reef/ocean health, watershed and the quality/quantity of freshwater in our aquifers. Measures like this one that aim to closely monitor the impacts of development are critical in maintaining the resources required to sustain our the ecological and human communities that characterize 'āina.

Mahalo,

Jess



NATURAL ENERGY LABORATORY OF HAWAII AUTHORITY

An Authority of the State of Hawaii attached to the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

Statement of
Laurence Sombardier
Interim Executive Director
Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Tuesday, February 11, 2025
10:00AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

in consideration of

HB 1495
RELATING TO THE KEAUKOU AQUIFER SYSTEM.

The Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) is pleased to support HB 1495 which establishes the Keahou Aquifer System Monitoring Program and appropriates funds to DLNR to install two monitoring wells for this purpose. NELHA is a self-sufficient agency which currently supports over 50 companies with annual economic impact to Hawaii on the order of \$148M as determined by the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization for calendar year 2022.

NELHA's duties include supporting ocean research and technology development on the 870-acre Hawaii Ocean Science and Technology (HOST) park it administers. Additional fresh water will be necessary to develop the remaining 200 + acres within the park to accommodate

additional projects and assist in diversifying the West Hawaii economy by developing innovative technologies in accordance with HRS 227D.

Over the past decade, NELHA has partnered with various State agencies, County, and local community and other stakeholders to develop the OTA well with the aim of providing freshwater for housing as well as economic development activities. The efforts have been stalled due to significant push back and agreement has not yet been arrived at regarding well permit conditions. Establishing a monitoring program which is managed by the DLNR/CWRM will assist in making data driven decisions with respect to permit conditions and assist with addressing concerns expressed by the West Hawaii community regarding the development of the OTA well and other wells currently contemplated for West Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments and express its support.