

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

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
HIGHER EDUCATION

Wednesday, February 5, 2025  
2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 309, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO FISHPONDS

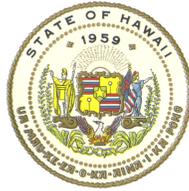
House Bill 309, House Draft 1, proposes to establish a fishpond inventory working group with the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory of all state-owned fishponds. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill.**

The Department has a close working relationship with Hui Mālama Loko I'a, a collaborative network of practitioners, cultural leaders, educators, and communities dedicated to the restoration, preservation, and perpetuation of Hawaiian fishponds. The Department recognizes that loko i'a are an integral part of Hawaiian culture, history, and sustainability practices, and that they showcase the ecological knowledge of early Hawaiian communities. Loko i'a are invaluable cultural and ecological resources that contribute positively to coastal ecosystems and the well-being of their adjacent communities.

In conjunction with Hui members, the Department developed the Ho'āla Loko I'a program to streamline the permitting process for the restoration and maintenance of traditional Hawaiian fishpond systems. Approximately 20 community organizations have utilized the streamlined program since its inception in 2015.

The Department believes that developing an inventory of fishponds is an important next step in the restoration of additional loko i'a throughout the State

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION  
COMMISSION  
POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Co-Chairs:**  
Chair, DLNR  
Director, OPSD

**Commissioners:**  
Chair, Senate AEN  
Chair, Senate WTL  
Chair, House EEP  
Chair, House WAL  
Chairperson, HTA  
Chairperson, DOA  
CEO, OHA  
Chairperson, DHHL  
Director, DBEDT  
Director, DOT  
Director, DOH  
Chairperson, DOE  
Director, C+C DPP  
Director, Maui DP  
Director, Hawaii DP  
Director, Kauai DP  
The Adjutant General  
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of  
LEAH LARAMEE  
Coordinator, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission**

**Before the House Committee on  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2025  
2:00 PM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 309, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO FISHPONDS**

House Bill 309 House Draft 1 establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all state-owned fishponds and conduct a literature review and appropriates funds. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different departments, committees and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation in a manner that is clean, equitable and resilient. It is important for there to be a centralized system of mapping and tracking loko i'a (Hawaiian fishponds) as they are both impacted by and play a role in mitigating climate change. Loko i'a provide important ecosystem services (e.g. sediment retention, flood mitigation, wave attenuation, stormwater filtering), and function as important nature-based solutions. Climate change driven sea level rise (SLR) will negatively affect some loko i'a due to SLR-driven salinization causing impacts to food security and cultural practices in Hawai'i.

Currently, 63% of seafood consumed in Hawai'i is imported. By increasing aquaculture in Hawai'i, we can reduce our reliance on imported foods, provide jobs, and minimize the strain on our marine resources. By better understanding where fishponds historically and currently exist the state and partners can then better support the restoration of fishponds statewide, and result in valuable cultural and ecological services and climate resilience.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
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 COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND EDUCATION**

**FEBRUARY 5, 2025  
2:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 309**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 309 HD1  
RELATING TO FISHPONDS**

Chair Garrett, Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Amato, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 309 HD1. The bill establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all fishponds on state land, conduct a literature review and appropriate funds. The Department supports this bill.

Documenting and mapping traditional Hawaiian fishponds will help preserve an important aspect of Hawaii's cultural food system heritage. The State's food security status would be positively impacted if viable fishponds were restored and traditional aquaculture practices were revived. Important to note that the purpose of traditional Hawaiian fishponds was for food production including, but not limited to shellfish, shrimp/prawn, and limu. The Department of Agriculture requests that on Page 3, line 16, item (9) be added to include the foods that were grown in the specific fishponds as part of the inventory of information being gathered.



As such, the Department supports this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**JOSIAH K. NISHITA**  
Managing Director



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

TO: Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair  
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair  
Committee on Higher Education

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair  
Representative Trish La Chica, Vice Chair  
Committee on Education

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor  
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: February 3, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB309, RELATING TO FISHPONDS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The act establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all fishponds on state land and conduct a literature review. Appropriates funds.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Loko i'a are critical and vital public infrastructure that historically and traditionally are important to our culture, identity, and the overall well-being of our people here in Hawai'i.
2. Safe and functional Loko i'a enhances our environmental and ecological health, protects our cultural resources, and is one of the most sustainable and resilient agriculture systems in the world. The revitalization of our Loko i'a is foundational to our communities moving forward and adapting to the age of climate change and striving towards sustainability.

3. This Loko i'a inventory is an important first step to increasing our situational awareness on the state of our fishponds. From there, we can begin to plan on and move towards the implementation of the restoration of our Loko i'a.

Mahalo for your consideration.



Testimony Before The  
House Committee on Higher Education (HED)  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB309 HD1**  
February 5, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Room 309 via Videoconference

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

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

**KUA strongly supports HB309 HD1 as an incremental step toward 'āina momona.**

Prior to 1900, Hawai'i had close to 500 flourishing loko i'a, sustaining communities in numerous ways including through sustainable local seafood, limu, shellfish, and fertilizer – at one time producing an average of 400-600 pounds of fish per acre per year, yielding over 2 million pounds of fish annually throughout Hawai'i. (See Generally, [Loko i'a Needs Assessment, 2021](#)). The U.S. Organic Act of 1900 (the Act) abandoned the support of most semblances of Native Hawaiian governance, especially in regard to biocultural resource management. The Act then transferred the aegis of governance – or lack thereof – to a U.S. laissez faire market system, ended Konohiki Fishery Management, and condemned loko i'a – extinguishing most of the existing ownership and operations of these systems. For context, in 1901 the catch and sale data for commercial 'ama'ama (mullet) – believed to be mostly fishpond-raised – decreased from close to 800,000 pounds of fish to less than 3,000 pounds today, with an estimated 88% of all food consumed in Hawai'i now imported, and reports showing that about 60% of our seafood alone is imported. **Rebuilding our robust and sustainable local food systems is critical to community resilience in the face of more frequent natural disasters** such as the devastating Lahaina fires and 2018 floods, climate change, and long lasting pandemics.

After the successful passage of [Act 124, HB2626 HD1 SD2](#) last year to ensure that any state-owned fishpond lease management plan utilizes time-tested practices through native Hawaiian scientific knowledge best-adapted to Hawai'i's environment, KUA found from both internal and public discussions that no current or active inventory of state-owned fishponds exists or is maintained by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). However, the [Hō'ala Loko I'a Program](#) was implemented in 2015 for state-owned fishpond permit streamlining, with to-date over 20 fishpond permits approved on six of the main Hawaiian Islands (an average processing time reduced from many years to under one month). We are also aware of at least three state-owned ponds currently leased by community members, with two specifically for community-based restoration activities. Indeed, as shown from the increase in permits and recent lease finalization for state-owned Kalauha'iha'i Pond on O'ahu, the momentum is growing for interest by communities to restore and steward their fishponds once again. Community-based fishpond restoration and stewardship serves as a resounding example of the endless benefits to be realized through collective sharing of responsibilities to care for our island home and resources.

Establishing a working group to develop an inventory that could then be easily and actively maintained by DLNR would add to this momentum enabling more Native Hawaiian and local communities to restore and manage their fishponds, increasing more multi-sector partnerships where our "shared responsibility" to care for our island resources would benefit all that love Hawai'i. As we build a better future for our keiki, **we appreciate creative and collaborative approaches that build the capacity and skills of the next generation with intention, and in a way that benefits ongoing community efforts with loko i'a as a catalyst for ecosystem regeneration.**

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources that they have cared for and depended on for generations since time immemorial. **We believe our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of 'āina momona.** To get there requires taking the steps necessary for greater self-sufficiency, development of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships, and resources for mālama 'āina efforts that encourage and build upon the time-tested techniques of our ancestors in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to submit testimony. Please **PASS** HB309 HD1.

**Aloha 'Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.**



# SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

February 5, 2025

2:00 PM

Conference Room 309

### In **SUPPORT** of **HB309 HD1**: RELATING TO FISHPONDS

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Aloha Chair Garrett, Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Amato, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS HB309 HD1**, which could represent a critical step towards the restoration and rejuvenation of our loko i'a, and by extension, our food security, cultural integrity, estuary health, and social fabric.

Hawai'i's loko i'a are as remarkable as they are unique. The various types of loko i'a found in our islands were constructed using highly sophisticated engineering and design strategies found nowhere else in the Pacific. They played a vital role in our islands' traditional food systems, which sustainably supported an estimated population of upwards of one million residents prior to the arrival of Western explorers. Their construction and stewardship also served important social functions, and they invariably held and continue to hold deep cultural significance in mo'olelo and cultural practices unique to each fishpond.

By making an investment in inventorying the remaining loko i'a owned by the state, this measure will provide a critical first step towards their restoration and rejuvenation. This in turn will help us to rebuild a foundation of our islands' food security – an especially critical need as our climate continues to destabilize, and as our dependency on imported food becomes ever more fragile. Such restoration and stewardship of loko i'a will also uplift a long-established foundation of our social and cultural fabric – providing opportunities for practitioners, students, community groups, and the broader public to connect over culturally grounded science, practices, and values – and further protect our ocean ecosystems, including through the mitigation of runoff and the enhancement and preservation of estuarine habitat.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i urges the Committees to **PASS** HB309 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



## House Committee on Higher Education

### **Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB309 HD1**

February 5th, 2025 at 2:00pm; Conference Room 309

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato and members of the committees,

HAPA is testifying in support of HB309 HD1 which establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all state-owned fishponds and conduct a literature review. Appropriates funds.

Loko i'a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of broader ahupua'a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i'a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i'a restoration and the health and abundance of nearshore fisheries. The continued restoration of Hawai'i's loko i'a is a critical component of increasing local food security.

Key environmental benefits of loko i'a include :

#### **Sustainable food production:**

Loko i'a provide a consistent and reliable source of fish, reducing pressure on wild fish populations and promoting food security for local communities.

#### **Water quality improvement:**

By filtering water through vegetation and natural processes within the pond, loko i'a can help improve water quality in surrounding coastal areas.

#### **Fish population enhancement:**

Fishponds can act as nursery habitats for juvenile fish, supporting the replenishment of local fish stocks.

#### **Biodiversity conservation:**

The design of loko i'a can support a diverse range of aquatic life, promoting biodiversity within the fishpond ecosystem.

#### **Coastal erosion mitigation:**

Properly managed fishponds can help stabilize shorelines and reduce coastal erosion.



**Cultural preservation:**

Restoring and maintaining loko i'a helps preserve important cultural heritage and traditional knowledge practices of Kanaka 'ōiwi communities.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i'a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying their current status, identifying next steps and resources needed to revitalize more loko i'a across Hawai'i.

Please support HB 309 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick,  
Executive Director

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:58:31 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
laurel brier	Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: The Loko i'a plays an important role in the ahupua'a system and the environmental balance established by the Native population. Restoring the system becomes more crucial as we encounter more extreme weather and face other challenges to fortify our food sovereignty. Strong support for this legislation

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:44:44 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Fox	Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fishponds are critical food resources that deserve revitalization for our food security as islands. This first step in identifying them so they can be restored is an important one worth the state's investment.



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State President

Anabella Bruch  
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Mauna Kahālāwai,  
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Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the House Higher Education Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB309.**

By establishing a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program, the bill underscores the need for a dedicated body to conduct thorough research and documentation, providing a foundation for informed management and conservation strategies.

The allocation of funds to facilitate this detailed exploration of state-owned fishponds is an investment in Hawaii's rich cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. Through a comprehensive literature review and up-to-date mapping, HB309 supports the sustaining of traditional practices that can complement modern agricultural methods, fostering resilience and food security. This effort aligns well with the broader goals of the Hawaii Farmers Union by promoting sustainable production systems and integration of traditional ecological knowledge.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



# HISTORIC HAWAI'I FOUNDATION

680 Iwilei Road Suite 690, Honolulu HI 96817 • (808) 523-2900 • [preservation@historichawaii.org](mailto:preservation@historichawaii.org) • [www.historichawaii.org](http://www.historichawaii.org)

**TO:** Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair  
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair  
Committee on Higher Education (HED)

**FROM:** Kiersten Faulkner, Executive Director  
Historic Hawai'i Foundation

**Committee:** Wednesday, February 5, 2025  
2:00 p.m.  
Via Video Conference and Conference Room 309

**RE: HB 309 HD 1, Relating to Fishponds**

On behalf of Historic Hawai'i Foundation (HHF), I am writing in **support for HB 309 HD 1**. The bill establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all state-owned fishponds and conduct a literature review, and appropriate funds.

Hawaiian fishpond systems, *loko i'a*, are some of Hawai'i's most significant traditional cultural resources. They are tangible evidence of Hawaiian innovation in the areas of engineering, education, hydrology and aquaculture. Fishponds were a vital component of the agricultural, economic and natural resource management systems for native Hawaiian communities. Functioning fishponds are valuable cultural and ecological resources that can provide resilience for coastal ecosystems and their adjacent communities. They also contribute to sustainability, food sovereignty and natural resource management goals. Research shows that over 400 fishponds once functioned across the main Hawaiian Islands and provided a significant and sustainable food source to the Islands' pre-contact population, estimated at 1,000,000 people.

Over time, the traditional fishponds suffered from urbanization, changing socio-economic and agricultural systems, invasive species and damage from storms, flooding and tsunamis. However, there is renewed and growing interest in the repair, restoration, maintenance, and operation of traditional Hawaiian fishponds, for their cultural, economic and ecological value. An inventory of the remaining fishponds is a necessary element to stimulate traditional Hawaiian cultural activities and the restoration of fishpond systems. The community benefits will include supporting traditional Hawaiian cultural activities and the restoration of fishpond systems and their related food security and ecosystem services.

Therefore, Historic Hawai'i Foundation supports HB 309 HD 1.

# Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force



February 5, 2025

House Committee on Higher Education  
Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 309 HD1, Relating to Fishponds

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

The Ocean Legislative Task Force strongly supports House Bill 309, relating to fishponds, which takes an important step toward restoring and sustaining Hawai'i's traditional fishponds. As a coalition of over 100 individuals from diverse organizations and communities, we recognize the critical role loko i'a play in strengthening food security, cultural heritage, and coastal resilience.

Establishing a working group to create and maintain a comprehensive fishpond inventory would provide a valuable foundation for streamlining restoration efforts. By ensuring that this inventory remains actively updated by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, there will be greater access to resources and support necessary to manage fishponds effectively. This initiative will also foster stronger partnerships, reinforcing the shared responsibility of caring for Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources.

Loko i'a are more than historical sites; they are living examples of sustainable aquaculture that can serve as a model for ecosystem regeneration. Investing in fishpond restoration not only revitalizes local food systems but also builds capacity for future generations to continue this stewardship. This measure represents an opportunity to merge traditional knowledge with modern restoration efforts, ensuring that communities have the tools and collaboration needed to sustain these efforts over time.

We deeply appreciate this committee's commitment to advancing solutions that empower communities while protecting Hawai'i's ocean resources. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the passage of this bill.

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

*The Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that promote funding for natural resource protection and restoration, ocean resources, coral reefs, subsistence fishing, and coastal resilience, and other priorities.*

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:07:27 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HIROC SUPPORTS** creation of fishpond inventory working group within UH Seagrass College. This will help us to connect with traditional cultural resources, provide fish sustainably, improve water quality, and protect shorelines, marine ecosystems and fish populations.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)



February 3, 2025

To: Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair Terez Amato and the House Committee on Higher Education

Subject: **HB309 HD1, Relating to Fishponds**

Aloha,

I am submitting this testimony **in support of HB309 HD1** to establish a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program, to create an inventory and map of all fishponds on state land and conduct a literature review of sources such as Hawaiian language newspapers to compile this data.

Loko i'a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua'a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i'a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts and serve as a component of a broader movement for 'āina-based education. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i'a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

Hawai'i Sea Grant's emphasis on collaboration across the university and with the people of Hawai'i coupled with its focus on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture make it the ideal host for this much needed working group on mapping loko i'a, a natural extension to the program's ongoing partnerships with fishpond practitioners and organizations.

"I ka wā ma mua, i ka wā ma hope" – we look to the past as a guide to the future. In the face of food supply and climate vulnerabilities, this 'ōlelo no'eau reminds us of the value of compiling much needed data on the locations and conditions of loko i'a in order to support a more resilient future. By creating an inventory of fishponds on state land, this measure provides an important first step towards revitalizing loko i'a across Hawai'i. I urge you to support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo,  
Jeanette Burdick & the Food+ Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

TESTIMONY OF PACIFIC WHALE FOUNDATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION &  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2025  
2:00 pm

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 309 HD1

Aloha Chairs Takuya Garret and Woodson, Vice Chairs Amato and La Chica, and Members of the Committees,

Pacific Whale Foundation (PWF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the ocean through science, advocacy, and inspiring environmental stewardship, strongly supports HB309 HD1, which would establish a fishpond inventory for the state of Hawai'i. This bill is a necessary step toward revitalizing Hawai'i's historic loko i'a (fishponds), ensuring their long-term restoration and management, and strengthening food security and environmental resilience across the islands.

Prior to 1900, Hawai'i had close to 500 thriving loko i'a producing between 400-600 pounds of fish per acre per year—yielding over 2 million pounds of fish annually. These sophisticated aquaculture systems were essential to Native Hawaiian food sovereignty, coastal management, and ecosystem balance. Today, with approximately 88% of Hawai'i's food and 60% of its seafood being imported, it is more critical than ever to restore traditional fishpond management as part of Hawai'i's broader strategy for self-sufficiency and resilience.

After the passage of Act 124 (HB2626 HD1 SD2) in 2023, which ensured that state-owned fishpond lease management plans integrate Native Hawaiian science and traditional ecological knowledge, it became clear that no current or active inventory of state-owned fishponds exists within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). Despite the successful Hō'ala Loko I'a Program, which has streamlined permitting for over 20 fishponds across six islands, the absence of a comprehensive and actively maintained fishpond inventory presents a barrier to restoration efforts. Establishing a formal inventory will:

- Identify state-owned fishponds suitable for restoration and management
- Support communities seeking leases for stewardship and restoration
- Increase opportunities for food production, environmental sustainability, and workforce development.
- Streamline partnerships between local, state, and federal entities to improve loko i'a management

As Hawai'i faces rising sea levels, coastal erosion, more frequent natural disasters, and climate change-related food insecurity, loko i'a restoration is an essential component of a climate-resilient future. These systems:

- Act as natural coastal buffers, protecting shorelines from erosion and flooding.
- Improve water quality by filtering sediment and excess nutrients.
- Enhance marine biodiversity by providing habitat for native fish and limu.
- Strengthen local food production and community food sovereignty.



*Protecting the ocean through science and advocacy, and inspiring environmental stewardship*

The resurgence of community-based fishpond stewardship, demonstrated by recent lease finalizations (e.g., Kalauha'ihai Pond on O'ahu), underscores the growing momentum behind loko i'a restoration. By passing HB309 HD1, the state can help empower local communities to continue the work of revitalizing these invaluable cultural and ecological assets.

Pacific Whale Foundation urges the committee to pass HB309 HD1 to establish a state fishpond inventory. This foundational step will remove barriers to restoration, support Native Hawaiian and local stewardship efforts, and advance Hawai'i's long-term sustainability goals. Mahalo for your leadership in ensuring the future of loko i'a and for considering the testimony of Pacific Whale Foundation and its supporters.

Sincerely,



Dayna Garland  
Interim Executive Director



Susan Frett  
Conservation Director



Written Testimony  
before the House Committee on Higher Education (HED)  
**IN SUPPORT OF House Bill 309 HD1**  
February 5, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 309

I am Nicole Nakamoto, testifying on behalf of Mālama Pa'akea o Waimalu, a non-profit based in the ahupua'a of Waimalu on the island of Oahu.

The mission of Mālama Pa'akea o Waimalu ("to care for Pa'akea [fishpond] in Waimalu") is to repair, restore, develop, and care for what remains of loko i'a Pa'akea, an ancient fishpond aquaculture system built by Oahu's chiefess Kalanimanuia. We invite community volunteers, educators and students to assist in the hands-on work at the fishpond, and in the process they learn about the area's history, the ingenuity of Hawaiian fishponds, the functionality of an ahupua'a, and native Hawaiian plants and their uses. This is how we plan to perpetuate native Hawaiian culture and kuleana through education, stewardship, and cultivation of Hawaii's natural resources.

We are a member of Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"), a collaborative network of practitioners, cultural leaders, educators, and communities dedicated to the restoration, preservation, and perpetuation of Hawaiian fishponds. Loko i'a are an integral part of Hawaiian culture, history, and sustainability practices, that showcase the ecological knowledge of early Hawaiian communities. Loko i'a are invaluable cultural and ecological resources that contribute positively to coastal ecosystems and the well-being of their adjacent communities.

Hui Mālama Loko I'a is supported by "Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo" (KUA), who's shared vision is to experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as *'āina momona* – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.

**Mālama Pa'akea o Waimalu strongly supports HB309 HD1 as an incremental step toward 'āina momona** We believe that developing an inventory of fishponds is an important next step in the restoration of loko i'a throughout the State, and that this inventory should include all fishponds on state land.

Historically, ancient Hawaiians were independently able to provide for their own communities. Prior to 1900, Hawaii had close to 500 flourishing fishponds that sustained communities in numerous ways. Sadly the majority of those fishponds have been lost. Our future depends on rebuilding these robust and sustainable local food systems. It is critical to create community resilience if we are to survive the natural disasters that seem to be occurring with increasing frequency, such as the Lahaina fires, 2018 floods, climate change, and pandemics.

In 2015 the State took a step in the right direction by implementing the Hō‘ala Loko I‘a Program. This program successfully streamlined fishpond permitting, but only for state-owned fishponds.

We believe that the next step is to establish a more thorough and all-encompassing fishpond inventory that could be maintained by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). This inventory would enable more local communities to restore and manage their fishponds. Increasing multi-sector partnerships where it is our “shared responsibility” to care for our island resources would benefit all of Hawaii.

This expanded fishpond inventory would add support to the growing momentum of current community interest in restoring and stewarding their fishponds. Community-based fishpond restoration and stewardship serves as a resounding example of the endless benefits to be realized through collective sharing of responsibilities to care for our island home and resources.

We are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources – the land, water, plants, animals, knowledge and culture that we have cared for and depended on for generations. We believe the success of our future is based on long-term investment, and a shared vision of ‘āina momona. To achieve this vision we need to take the steps necessary for greater self-sufficiency, and support efforts that encourage and build upon the time-tested techniques of our Hawaiian ancestors. It is important for us as a community to make choices and take actions that will help build a positive future for our children, such as investing in the of food security and community stewardship.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit our testimony, and for your serious consideration of this request.

Please **PASS** HB309 HD1.

Mahalo,

Mālama Pa‘akea O Waimalu  
808-486-4196  
info@malamapaakea.org



**‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAI‘I**

Legislative Testimony  
Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

**LATE**

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Darren T. Lerner, PhD  
Director, University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program  
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 309 HD1 – RELATING TO FISHPONDS

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) supports HB 309 HD1 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

HB 309 HD1 proposes to establish a fishpond inventory working group led by Hawai'i Sea Grant to develop an inventory of fishponds. Hawai'i Sea Grant has long-standing collaborative working relationships with both the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and Hui Mālama Loko I'a, a network of practitioners, cultural leaders, educators, and communities dedicated to the restoration, preservation, and perpetuation of Hawaiian fishponds.

Hawai'i Sea Grant has supported the restoration of loko i'a and the perpetuation of loko i'a practice for decades as part of our mission to improve understanding and stewardship of coastal and marine resources. Loko i'a are invaluable cultural and ecological resources that support thriving coastal ecosystems, food security, and community resilience.

Hawai'i Sea Grant has partnered with Hui Mālama Loko I'a and DLNR on numerous projects. We look forward to continuing these partnerships and bringing the expertise of our program to support the important work of developing an inventory of fishponds.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

**LATE**



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

February 5, 2025

## Testimony in Support of HB309 HD1: Relating to Fishponds

**To:** Chair Garrett, Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Amato, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the House Committees on Higher Education and Education

**From:** Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

**Date:** February 5, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

**Re:** HB309 HD1: Relating to Fishponds

**Position:** Strong Support

**Aloha Chair Garrett, Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Amato, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the House Committees on Higher Education and Education,**

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, strongly support HB309 HD1, which establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all fishponds on state land and conduct a literature review. This bill also appropriates funds to support these initiatives.

### Key Points

- 1. Historical and Cultural Significance:** Fishponds, or loko i'a, hold historical and cultural significance for the Native Hawaiian community, representing traditional aquaculture practices that have sustained generations.
- 2. Environmental Benefits:** Restoring and maintaining fishponds supports biodiversity and helps preserve native species, contributing to the health of Hawaii's coastal ecosystems.
- 3. Sustainable Food Source:** Reviving traditional fishpond practices can provide a sustainable source of food, promoting food security and reducing reliance on imported goods.
- 4. Educational Opportunities:** The working group will provide valuable educational and research opportunities for students and researchers at the University of Hawaii, fostering a deeper understanding of traditional and sustainable aquaculture practices.
- 5. Community Engagement:** The initiative encourages community involvement in the restoration and stewardship of fishponds, strengthening connections between local communities and their natural resources.

## Arguments in Favor

1. **Cultural Preservation:** HB309 HD1 promotes the preservation of traditional Hawaiian practices and honors the cultural heritage of Native Hawaiians.
2. **Ecological Restoration:** The bill supports ecological restoration efforts, enhancing the health and resilience of coastal ecosystems.
3. **Economic Benefits:** Restored fishponds can stimulate local economies by providing sustainable food sources and creating opportunities for eco-tourism.
4. **Educational and Research Value:** The project provides significant educational and research value, supporting academic and community knowledge about traditional aquaculture.

## Conclusion

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii urges the Committee to support HB309 HD1. This bill represents a significant step toward preserving Hawaii's cultural heritage, promoting environmental sustainability, and providing educational and economic benefits.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

Co-chairs Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:24:41 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keila Paahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:27:55 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tamara Luthy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:45:43 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Suellen Barton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote to pass this bill

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:18:18 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
janice palma-glennie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and mahalo for supporting HB309 HD1 which will support a needed effort to inventory our precious fish ponds.

best regards,.

janice palma-glennie

kai;lua-kona

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:37:14 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra Perez Urbina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Alexandra Perez Urbina, and I am not a resident of Hawai'i, but I am a frequent visitor and love the people and the land. For this reason I ask that you support HB309 HD1.

Loko i'a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua'a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i'a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i'a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi'a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i'a across Hawai'i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Thank you for saving the cultural practices that we tourists visit Hawai'i to experience.

Alexandra

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:47:04 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Barbeau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 2:45:52 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aviva Libitsky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo ,

Aviva Libitsky

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 2:58:21 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Richard Janik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this measure.

Richard Janik, MD

Lihue, Kauai

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 4:07:44 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1. Mahalo.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 5:13:17 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

aloha e,

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

mahalo,

Nalani A. From Lahaina

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 6:51:28 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 309 RELATING TO FISHPONDS.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 6:51:41 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 10:14:16 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 1:10:17 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:24:58 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loka i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideraton.

JarraeTehani Manasas, Kailua Kona Hawai‘i

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:08:57 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support HB309 HD1, which takes an important first step in revitalizing loko i‘a (fishponds) across Hawai‘i by creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a. These traditional fishpond systems are not only vital to our islands' cultural heritage but also play a key ecological role within the larger ahupua‘a system.

Restoring loko i‘a goes beyond food production—it strengthens community connections through collaborative stewardship and hands-on restoration efforts. Practitioners are also seeing a direct link between thriving fishponds and the health of our nearshore fisheries, reinforcing their importance in maintaining local food systems and marine ecosystems.

This measure will help identify the next steps needed to restore and reactivate more loko i‘a, ensuring that these invaluable systems continue to support both our communities and our environment. I urge you to support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:16:32 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kodie Solis-Kalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. Please Support HB309. In the past, loko i‘a have played critical roles when feeding the people of Hawai‘i. Known as a living "icebox," these practices helped hone in the expertise in raising foods and learning the intimacies of sustainability. HB309 would aid in the critical research, story holding, and story sharing that is needed in order to move our lahui forward to sustainability and aina momona. Mahalo nui.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:23:45 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Committee Members,

I writing to respectfully ask that you support HB309 HD! which would establish a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all fishponds on state land and conduct a literature review.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 1:26:35 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committe Chairs and Committee members,

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:14:26 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert H. Pahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the initial phase of fishpond restoration. Investment in our natural resources is wise .

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:35:46 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Susan Wong, Kailua, HI

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:59:20 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support HB309 HD1, which will create an inventory of all state-owned loko i'a (fishponds). Loko i'a systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua'a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i'a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts and improve the health of nearshore fisheries.

Thank you

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:58:26 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sven Sorge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Thank you very much!

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:31:33 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Martha Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the House Committee on Higher Education and the House Committee on Education:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Martha Evans

anmevans@gmail.com

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:59:50 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noreen Dougherty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB309 HD1. I, Noreen Dougherty, as an educator of our Hawaii Keiki for over 30 years realize the importance of HB309 HD1. We must pass on to our children our support of HB309 HD1. I observed over 2000 residents of Kauai come together to rebuild the Menehune fishpond. Our island community representing extensive diversity came together in a most heartwarming unity. Families, individuals, organizations, and students celebrated the opportunity to work together handing rocks one at a time to rebuild the walls. I'm sure that my testimony represents thousands of others. All of our keiki are relying on your support and passing of HB309 HD1. Lets work together. Support the passing of this bill and the people will benefit for generations.

Noreen  
Dougherty  
Hawaii

Kapaa,

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 2:28:57 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:59:37 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All,

I support HB309 HD1

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:43:36 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Miguel Castrence	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am providing written testimony in support of HB309 HD1 to establish a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all fishponds on state land and conduct a literature review.

Through my professional and volunteer work in agriculture and conservation, I have been searching for up-to-date GIS data on fishponds. I quickly learned that much of this information is only available through historical maps, documents, and photos. Because there is no comprehensive statewide database, it requires difficult detective work to find out where fishponds have been destroyed, overgrown with vegetation, filled in, or replaced.

An up-to-date inventory and map of fishponds is an important step towards their restoration. Please support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo piha for your consideration,

M. Castrence

Kāne‘ohe

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 2:41:22 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jenny Yagodich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT of HB309 HD1 to establish a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all state-owned fishponds and conduct a literature review, and to appropriate funds.

Mahalo

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 3:42:12 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kanoelehua Hook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I strongly support H.B. No. 309, H.D. 1, which seeks to establish a working group within the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant Program to develop a comprehensive inventory of state-owned fishponds. This measure is critical to the preservation of Native Hawaiian culture, ecological restoration, and the enhancement of food security in Hawai'i.

Loko i'a, or traditional Hawaiian fishponds, have played a vital role in sustaining communities for centuries. However, due to various environmental and socio-economic factors, many of these fishponds have fallen into disrepair or have been lost entirely. By conducting a thorough inventory, this bill ensures that we have a clear understanding of the current state of these invaluable resources and can take informed steps toward their restoration and sustainable management.

Beyond their cultural significance, loko o' a contribute to Hawai'i's ecological health. They support native fish populations, improve coastal water quality, and act as natural buffers against climate change impacts such as sea level rise and storm surges. Restoring these fishponds aligns with the state's commitment to environmental stewardship and climate resilience.

Furthermore, the revitalization of loko i'a presents an opportunity to strengthen local food systems and community-based resource management. With increasing concerns about food security and the need for sustainable, locally sourced food, restoring fishponds can provide a reliable and culturally appropriate food source for future generations.

This bill is an important step toward fulfilling the state's responsibility to protect and restore loko i'a. The requested funding will enable the necessary research, documentation, and planning required to ensure the long-term sustainability of these resources. I urge lawmakers to advance H.B. No. 309, and invest in the preservation of Hawai'i's cultural and environmental heritage.

Mahalo

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:51:40 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sheena Lopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support getting funding for more mapping initiatives. In 2019 as a Kupu Intern I was able to map the trails and roads on registered maps for a Na Ala Hele trail database. I believe doing more mapping of our historical resources can help us better manage our resources today. By mapping these historical features we can learn about the aina through how it was utilized back in the day, creating a more aina based management system.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:12:12 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Padgett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

My name is James Padgett and I am writing in support of HB309, HD1. Fishponds had a very important cultural and ecological role in Hawaii, but because of natural causes or neglect, many of them have disappeared. However, there are now a number them being restored on every island. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connections through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and please support HB309 HD1. Mahalo, James

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:42:07 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Hennessy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connections through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying the next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo,

Lisa Hennessy, Princeville

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:14:57 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristen Pahukoa-Sardinh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am in support of this bill. Our 'ohana stated to work with a private Loko i'a in Waihe'e this past year and we continue to restore it with the hopes of it being fully restored by July of 2025. We understand the importance of restoring our natural resources like these Loko i'a so that they can help to restore the ecosystem around it. If more people knew where these Loko i'a where we could have more groups actively restoring Loko i'a across the Pae'aina. Our reefs could be plentiful and bountiful again for our future generations and we could supply our communities with food.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:25:56 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lorraine Waianuhea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I am writing in strong support of HB 309.

Loko i‘a are extremely important to the cultural and ecological health of Hawaiian ecosystems, as well as have the ability to support greater food security across Hawai‘i.

Appropriating funds to create a fishpond inventory working group that will conduct a literature review and map loko i‘a on state land will help lead to more community education and restoration of loko i‘a.

Healthy, functional loko i‘a = healthy people & ‘āina. Please pass HB 309.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony,

Lorraine Waianuhea

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:29:06 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nic Sardinha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I kāko'o this bill. Our 'ohana started working at a private Loko i'a in Waihe'e this past year and we continue to restore it with the hopes of it being fully restored by 2026. As an Alaka'i with Kopoholima ka'ēo (builders of the loko in Waihe'e) We understand the importance of restoring our natural resources like these Loko i'a so that they can help to restore the ecosystem around it. If more people knew where these Loko i'a where we could have more groups actively restoring Loko i'a across the Pae'aina. Our reefs could be plentiful and bountiful again for our future generations and we could supply our communities with food. Not to mention the importance of restoring the wai to where it should naturally flow which is lo'i, mala or loko and right back into kai. if this is not done the water gets used for more development which our small island cannot support. The more invasive comes to inhabit the less the native can thrive. E ola i ka lāhui Hawai'i.  
Mahalo

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:01:22 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:17:20 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Breanne Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Breanne Fong and I am from Niu, Kona, O'ahu and also grew up in Kaimukī. I support HB309 HD1. Before western colonization caused the overdevelopment of the islands, Hawai'i was thriving through the abundance of fish from its many loko i'a across the islands. This bill will establish a working group to create an inventory and map of all loko i'a across the pae 'āina to better document the historical and/or current loko i'a, preserve valuable 'ike, and allow for communities to be at the forefront of restoring and stewarding fishponds.

Personally, I have become connected to several loko i'a in the past few years, as I am a haumana (student) of uhaul humu pōhaku (dry rock wall stacking/weaving) and regularly engage in building wall weekly. Some of these loko i'a include Pāhonu, Huilua, Kānewai, and Loko i'a Pā'aiau. I have also visited and built at loko on other islands like Kapoho on Maui. As someone who has firsthand observed and experienced the impacts of traditional Hawaiian knowledge on loko i'a, I can say with full confidence that developing an inventory will bring more awareness to the importance of traditional Hawaiian knowledge and hopefully inspire more people to mālama these special places, keep cultural practices alive, and grow relationships with community and 'āina

I urge you to please pass HB309 HD1. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Breanne Fong

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:51:13 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, my name is Keala Fung from Honolulu and i strongly SUPPORT and urge you to pass HB309 HD1 pertaining to the Fishpond Inventory Working Group.

I am a fisherman and I only eat the fish I catch. I do this because I do not support the commercial fishing industry because I do not feel they are sustainable at all. Whereas, fishponds are. It is a system that has worked for hundreds of years in harmony with the environment and not only did it feed the humans, it fed the land as well, everything thrived.

Food sustainability is so important in our current times, and thus the importance and urgency for functioning fishponds is even more important. There is great public interest and support for fishponds, and I believe establishing this working group will benefit the community as well as the environment.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keala Fung, Honolulu Hawaii

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:07:50 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Garrett, Vice Chair Representative Amato and Members of the Committee on Higher Education, and Chair Representative Woodson, Vice Chair Representative La Chica and Members of the Committee on Education.

Please support HB 309 HD 1 to establish a fishpond inventory.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:43:15 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e,

Loko i‘a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua‘a restoration. In addition to serving as important sites of food production, reactivated loko i‘a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Practitioners are also observing a connection between loko i‘a restoration and the health of nearshore fisheries.

By creating an inventory of all state-owned loko i‘a, this measure provides an important first step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more loko i‘a across Hawai‘i. Please support HB309 HD1.

Mahalo,

Isis Usborne  
96815

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:56:13 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Millin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Amanda Millin from Mānoa representing myself as a loko i‘a practitioner. I have worked as a program manager at both Mālama Loko Ea (a loko i‘a in Haleiwa) and Mālama Pu‘uloa (a loko i‘a in ‘Ewa.) Currently, I help mālama Huilua loko i‘a in Kahana Bay and Pāhonu loko i‘a in Waimānalo, while being an active member in the Cross-Pacific Indigenous Aquaculture Collaborative.

**Along with many of my colleagues and fellow loko i‘a practitioners, I support HB309 as an incremental step on a pathway towards ‘āina momona.** After the successful passage of Act 124, HB2626 HD1 SD2 last year to ensure that any state-owned fishpond lease management plan utilizes time-tested practices through Native Hawaiian scientific knowledge best-adapted to Hawai‘i’s environment, we found from both internal and public discussions that no current or active inventory of state-owned fishponds exists or is maintained by Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

The Hō‘ala Loko I‘a program was implemented in 2015 for state-owned fishpond permit streamlining, with to-date over 20 fishpond permits approved on six of the main Hawaiian islands.

Momentum is growing for communities to restore and steward Hawai‘i’s fishponds once again. HB309 adds to this momentum. It will establish a working group to develop an inventory that could then be easily and actively maintained by DLNR. This enables more multi-sector partnerships where our "shared responsibility" to care for our island resources, including loko i‘a, would benefit all that love Hawai‘i.

**I appreciate creative and collaborative approaches like HB309 that build the capacity and skills of the next generation with intention, and in a way that benefits ongoing community efforts at loko i‘a as a catalyst for ecosystem regeneration.**

The communities I work with and am a part of are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources that they have cared for and depended on for generations since time immemorial. **I believe our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of ‘āina momona.** Getting there requires taking the steps necessary for greater self-sufficiency, development of a pipeline of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships, and resources for mālama ‘āina efforts. Passing HB309 out of your committee continues the pathway toward reaching this vision.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support. **Please pass HB309.**

**Aloha ‘Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.**

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:18:44 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sebastian Church	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill regarding the inventorying of loko i'a across the pae 'āina. Fishponds are critical to past and future scenarios of food security in Hawai'i. Creating a working group to inventory fishponds is a step toward protecting and restoring them, along with the ability for Hawai'i to produce it's own sources of protein. Mahalo.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:50:38 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra D'Angelo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kanani and I am from 'Aiea and I support HB309 HD1. As a steward of Loko I'a Pā'aiau in Pu'uloa, where over twenty loko i'a have been filled in and built over, we rely on maps and literature to support restoration and historical preservation efforts. The mapping of loko i'a on state lands is critical to both the restoration of cultural practice and sites, and to the strengthening of mo'olelo and understanding of place throughout our islands. In doing so, we may honor the ingenuity, care and collaborations of generations of loko i'a stewards, rather than further contribute to their erasure.

Mahalo,

Kanani

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:57:46 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Danielle Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and all efforts to help reestablish a modern-day version of the ahupua‘a system. This will also help to further strengthening Hawai‘i's food sovereignty and resilience during future inevitable crisis as we are such a vulnerable island community. We must respect the indigenous knowledge and concept of mauka to makai to ensure future generations to continue thriving.

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:19:50 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Damien Nakoa Kahahawai Farrant	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Dr. Nākoa Kahahawai Farrant and I'm from Paumalū, Ko'olauloa, O'ahu. Since childhood, I have been lucky to have opportunities to work extensively at loko i'a around Hawai'i. My experiences at Loko Ea fishpond in Hale'iwa played a key role in improving my understanding of 'āina restoration and my development as a kanaka, a community member, and as a researcher. Loko i'a continue to be sources of resilience on our 'āina as the climate continues to change. They take flows of water and nutrients from mauka to makai to create abundance of i'a, limu and other food and cultural resources. These on-going restoration projects continue to provide a critical space for kānaka and local communities to ground their lives in cultural practices and to develop young leaders in the next generation.

Loko Ea provided the first space for me to conduct culturally grounded research to identify ways that we can draw on 'ike kūpuna (Hawaiian knowledge) and contemporary scientific methods to advance our understanding of how to restore loko i'a. I have been fortunate to engage in research at He'eia Fishpond and Kalou in Waiale'e, O'ahu. I have also participated in restoration at Pāhonu in Waimānalo, Waikalua Loko, Huilua, and Pā'aiau all on O'ahu. I have also been lucky to visit loko i'a across Hawai'i from Alakoko on Kaua'i to Haleolono on Moku o Keawe. It has been amazing to see the progress that has come from the energy that community members have poured into loko i'a individually and through the network Hui Mālama Loko I'a that Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo plays a key role in facilitating.

Just as many of these organizations have raised the kuapā (walls) surrounding many of these fishponds to create a space for fish to thrive, they provided an environment where I could thrive as a culturally grounded researcher. There is no limit on the ways that loko i'a can uplift generations of kānaka and local community members. In order for these stories of success rising out of the loko i'a restoration movement to continue, we have to turn to the leaders who have the expertise and decades of experience conducting restoration before now. Please continue to support this movement by creating a working group drawing on experts from KUA and Hui Mālama Loko I'a.

Mahalo and please pass HB309 HD1!

**LATE**

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:51:58 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House Committee on Higher Education and House Committee on Education,

My name is Molly Mamaril and I am writing in strong support of HB309 HD1 which "Establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to create an inventory and map of all fishponds on state land and conduct a literature review. Appropriates funds."

I support this measure as a conservationist, fishpond volunteer and food security advocate. The more we know about our fishponds and historical ways of sustaining islands populations, the more resilient we can become as we face climate change and food security threats in the coming decades.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Molly Mamaril

Kaimukī resident

**LATE**

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:47:51 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Tyndall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: February 04, 2025

Subject: HB 309

My name is Justin Tyndall. I wanted to express my strong support for HB 309. I believe this bill makes an incremental but important step in valuing and promoting the preservation and rehabilitation of Hawaii's fishponds.

Mahalo.

**LATE**

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:48:20 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelli McLeod	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I am writing to express my strong support for HB309. The working group created by this bill will do valuable and necessary work relating to preserving and rehabilitating Hawai‘i’s fishponds. I believe Hawai‘i’s fishponds are vital to the islands’ ecosystem, and this bill will allow us to protect and strengthen the health of those systems.**

**LATE**

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:24:52 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kellee Hearther	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Kellee Hearther from 'Aiea representing myself as a loko i'a restoration volunteer. I have given my time at Loko I'a Pā'aiau for going on four years leading invasive plant removal, setting up a plant nursery and educating visitors on the mo'olelo of the Mō'i, Queen Kalanimanuia, and her complex of fish ponds along the shores of Pu'uloa. I have also volunteered at Pahonu and Waile'e.

**Along with many of my fellow loko i'a practitioners and volunteers, I support HB309 as an incremental step on a pathway towards 'āina momona.** After the successful passage of Act 124, HB2626 HD1 SD2 last year to ensure that any state-owned fishpond lease management plan utilizes time-tested practices through Native Hawaiian scientific knowledge best-adapted to Hawai'i's environment, we found from both internal and public discussions that no current or active inventory of state-owned fishponds exists or is maintained by Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

The Hō'ala Loko I'a program was implemented in 2015 for state-owned fishpond permit streamlining, with to-date over 20 fishpond permits approved on six of the main Hawaiian islands.

Momentum is growing for communities to restore and steward Hawai'i's fishponds once again. HB309 adds to this momentum. It will establish a working group to develop an inventory that could then be easily and actively maintained by DLNR. This enables more multi-sector partnerships where our shared responsibility to care for our island resources, including loko i'a, would benefit all those who love Hawai'i.

**I appreciate creative and collaborative approaches like HB309 that build the capacity and skills of the next generation with intention, and in a way that benefits ongoing community efforts at loko i'a as a catalyst for ecosystem regeneration.**

The communities I work with and am a part of are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources that they have cared for and depended on for generations. **I believe our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of 'āina momona.**

Getting there requires taking the steps necessary for greater self-sufficiency, development of a pipeline of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships, and resources for mālama 'āina efforts. Passing HB309 out of your committee continues the pathway toward reaching this vision.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support. **Please pass HB309.**

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Kellee Hearther

**LATE**

**HB-309-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:52:09 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Avalon Paradea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Avalon Paradea and I am in support of HB 309 HD1. Inventorying and monitoring loko i'a are crucial actions for continued efforts toward their ongoing health and living legacy.

Mahalo,

Avalon Paradea

Waikōloa, Hawai'i