



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

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Manager, CZM

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

Before the House Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Tuesday, January 28, 2025
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 309
RELATING TO FISHPONDS

House Bill 309 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.**

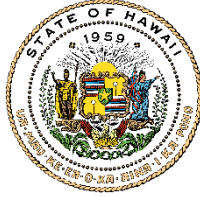
The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different departments, committees and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation in a manner that is clean, equitable and resilient. 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 | 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
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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, January 28, 2025
9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 309
RELATING TO FISHPONDS

House Bill 309 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. In support of this, the Department would like to offer the following amendments that we feel will strengthen the bill by acknowledging that not all ponds on state land are "state owned," that some practitioners classify ponds by function rather than form; and that vast archives of Hawaiian-language newspapers have been digitized and are now available to include in literature reviews:

At Section 2, page 3, lines 1 to 5, of this bill:

(b) The working group shall create an inventory of all ~~state-owned fishponds~~ fishponds on state land that includes the following information for each fishpond:

- (1) The traditional name;
- (2) The type ~~or~~, style, or function;

At Section 2, page 3, lines 18-20, of this bill:

(3) A literature review, including a review of Hawaiian language newspapers, that includes any relevant sources used for collecting the inventory data.

At Section 3, page 5, lines 5-9 of this bill:

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$250,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to create an inventory of all ~~state-owned fishponds~~ fishponds on state land.

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



House Committee on Water and Land

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

January 28th, 2025 at 9:00am; Conference Room 411

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

HAPA is testifying in support of HB309 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 lokoi'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.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 7:22:33 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of Committee,

On behalf of the Green Party of Hawai'i, we are in support of HB309 the Fish Pond Inventory. By creating an inventory of all state-owned lokoi'a this measure provides an important step towards identifying next steps to revitalize more lokoi'a across the Hawaiian Islands. Please support HB309

Green Party of Hawai'i

Susan RobertsEmery

Co Chair GPH

Paauilo



HISTORIC HAWAI'I FOUNDATION

680 Iwilei Road Suite 690, Honolulu HI 96817 • (808) 523-2900 • preservation@historichawaii.org • www.historichawaii.org

TO: Representative Mark Hashem, Chair
Representative Rachele R. Lamosao, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land (WAL)

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

Committee: Tuesday, January 28, 2025
9:00 a.m.
Via Video Conference and Conference Room 411

RE: HB 309, Relating to Fishponds

On behalf of Historic Hawai'i Foundation (HHF), I am writing in **support for HB 309**. 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 appropriates 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.



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Water and Land (WAL)
IN SUPPORT OF HB309
January 28, 2025, 9:00 AM, Room 411 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 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'aha'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.

Aloha 'Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the House Water & Land Committee,

Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber
Kohala, Hawai'i

The Hawaii 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.**

Tony Vera
East Hawai'i

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.

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawai'i

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.

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i



January 27, 2025

Committee on Water Land

Representative Mark Hashem, Chair, Representative Rachel L. Lamosao, Vice Chair

Date: January 28, 2025

Time: 9am

Regarding: HB 309 Relating to Fish Ponds

SUPPORT

HFACT is a not-for-profit, IRS 501c(5) organization, that advocates for small boat commercial, non-commercial, and recreational fishermen throughout Hawaii. HFACT board members sit on a number of federal fisheries management and endangered species advisory committees as well as state marine and coastal zone advisory committees; and HFACT is thoroughly familiar with and participates in ocean and marine resource management in Hawaii and the central Pacific.

HFACT supports any efforts to restore Fish Ponds, wherever and whenever possible, as we believe that the original fish ponds were an integral part of the sustainability of marine life in our nearshore waters. We believe that Fish Ponds enhance the reproduction of nearshore fish species and give them a more protected environment to grow and to be released and repopulate the nearshore waters. Also, predatory fish need to be managed within the ponds.

HFACT thanks the chair, vice-chair, and committee members for this opportunity to provide comment and to assist in providing food to the people of Hawaii and to assist in the conservation of Hawaii's natural resources.

Sincerely and Aloha,

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

Edwin Watamura
Executive Director.
watafishing @ gmail.com

***Hawai'i Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition, Inc.
2015 Leiloke Drive, Honolulu, HI.96822***

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:42:48 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ian Kennedy	Strata Farms	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. I support this bill- Ian Kennedy

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 5:31:38 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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.

Mahalo,

Emelia Briscoe, Honolulu

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 5:34:37 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Loko i‘a systems are a key part of 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, which benefits everyone! More fishies!

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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 6:04:44 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
yvonne mahelona	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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 9:18:41 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Support.

- U'ilani

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 9:48:53 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB309. **Why Is This Important?** 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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 1:05:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this measure.

This measure is important to identifying and revitalizing fishponds, loko i'a across Hawai'i.

I support HB309.

please support HB 309

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 4:52:48 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lela Kalama	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.

mahalo,

Lela Kalama, Kea'au, HI

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 7:02:30 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Irena Bliss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support HB 309 - Fishpond Inventory.

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.

It is vital to continue to live the values of Aloha ‘Āina, Mālama ‘Āina and make decisions that support the well-being and thriving of all future generations on island.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

Irena Bliss

Ha‘ikū, Maui 96708

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 7:18:17 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl hendrickson	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 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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 8:41:01 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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.

Fishponds once were the ice box of Hawaiian communities. Bringing back sustainable, culturally-based subsistence systems goes far to ensure cultural resiliency. We have much to learn from ancestral life ways in the face of climate change. We must also do everything we can to promote food sovereignty for our islands.

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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 9:09:41 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra M Javar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully SUPPORT HB 309. It is essential that Hawai'i becomes more self sufficient. This will increase our food/fish supply for our consumption. Funding will help to improve these projects.

Mahalo

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 9:45:57 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support HB309, which will create an inventory of all state-owned loko i'a (fishponds), a first and necessary step for finding ways to revitalize more loko i'a across Hawai'i.

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 can improve the health of nearshore fisheries.

Thank you

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 9:50:04 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	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.

Mahalo.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 9:52:25 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
De Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, House Committee on Water and Land (WAL) committee members,

Please support HB309.

Hawai'i history included a robust technology for sustainable agriculture: managed fish ponds.

This was a tool which helped to provide for the native Hawaiians with food in an assured and ecologically sound manner.

The loko i'a (fishpond) systems play an important cultural and ecological role as part of larger ahupua'a restoration.

Reactivated loko i'a provide opportunities for building community connection through collaborative stewardship efforts. Cultural 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.

This part of our history can be also utilized as part of the growing eco-tourism movement, which would sate regular tourists with possibly a refreshing tour or guided activity; and attract more tourists who have to visit.

Understanding the loko i'a systems will also highlight the importance of developing Hawai'i independent food production for visitors and kamaaina alike, and the gravity of a potential future nearly wholly dependent on imported foods.

With respect,

D. Austin

Kihei, Maui

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 10:00:54 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	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.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 12:37:09 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	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.

Mahalo, Bill Best, Wailuku

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 3:41:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Hashem, Vice Chair Representative Lamosao and Members of the Committee on Water and Land.

Please support HB309 to create a fishpond inventory and map of all state owned fishponds, and to appropriate funds for this.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 3:41:55 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

Please support this vital work.

Mahalo,

Isis “Izzy” Usborne (they/them)

Kapahulu Ave resident (96815)

2026 JD Candidate at William S. Richardson School of Law

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 3:47:01 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Necessary information need. Loko i‘a are foundational to sustainability, collective resilience, and climate adaptability.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 5:48:07 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB309 STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Representatives. I'm writing to ask you to support HB309.

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.

Mahalo your consideration!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 4:21:31 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Walter Ritte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Walter Ritte and I am in strong support of HB 309. Traditional Hawaiian fishponds have the capacity to produce an abundance of food and acts as a nursery of ripe females that can be released to restock our existing reefs. The state has left their ponds in disrepair and dorment. A large food producing resource is being neglected by the State of Hawaii.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:14:49 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Kevin Kekoa Dolan-Ma	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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:24:20 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Priscilla Stuckey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Priscilla Stuckey, and I am writing in strong support of HB 309, in regard to fishponds.

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.

Mahalo,

Priscilla Stuckey

Kihei HI

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:53:47 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Ruidas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB309

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jordan Ruidas, and I am writing in strong support of HB309, which establishes a fishpond inventory working group within the University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program. This measure is critical to preserving and revitalizing loko i‘a (fishponds), which hold immense cultural, ecological, and community significance.

Loko i‘a are more than just historical artifacts; they are living systems that connect us to our ancestors’ ingenuity and their sustainable practices. Reactivating these fishponds plays a vital role in ahupua‘a restoration and supports efforts to strengthen food security in Hawai‘i. These spaces not only serve as sources of nourishment but also as places of learning, cultural connection, and community building. Efforts for ealing our ‘āina through efforts like loko i'a are directly connected to healing our people.

Additionally, practitioners and stewards of loko i‘a are seeing firsthand how restoring these systems improves the health of nearshore fisheries and strengthens our local ecosystems. By creating an inventory of state-owned loko i‘a, this bill provides an essential foundation for identifying pathways to restore and steward these invaluable resources.

As a proud member of the Lahaina community and a mother, I believe strongly in the need to mālama ‘āina and restore our natural and cultural resources for future generations. Supporting HB309 is a step forward in perpetuating these efforts and ensuring that loko i‘a continue to be a source of sustenance and connection for our communities.

I respectfully urge you to support HB309 and help lay the groundwork for loko i‘a revitalization across Hawai‘i. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

With aloha always,

Jordan Ruidas

Lahaina Community Member

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 8:04:44 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lory Ono	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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 8:46:42 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sven Sorge	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.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:26:06 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Committee Member,

I am writing to respectfully as that you support HB309 which would appropriate funds 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.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:41:32 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:39:26 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Riley Bond. I strongly support HB309, which aims to create an inventory of state-owned fishponds and take an important step toward restoring and revitalizing these cultural and ecological treasures.

Last year, I had the privilege of visiting ‘Alekoko Fishpond, also known as the Menehune Fishpond, near Līhu‘e, Kaua‘i. This experience opened my eyes to the vital role fishponds play in strengthening our food security and connecting us to the expert knowledge and traditions passed down through generations of Native Hawaiian stewardship. Fish Ponds embody a powerful synergy of ecological balance, community sustenance, and cultural preservation.

Restoring fishponds is about more than just food—it’s about restoring the ahupua‘a system and the relationship between people and the land. By revitalizing these systems, we create opportunities for sustainable food production, educational programming, and community well-being. This is critical for ensuring that our keiki can thrive in the islands for generations to come.

HB309 is a much-needed step to assess the condition and potential of our fishponds. A comprehensive inventory will provide the information necessary to guide restoration efforts, informed by indigenous knowledge and values. I am particularly encouraged by the inclusion of stakeholders such as Hui Mālama Loko I‘a, who are already leading the way in fishpond restoration and stewardship.

I urge you to pass this bill and support the funding needed to create this inventory. Fishponds are a gift from our ancestors, and it is our kuleana to ensure they are cared for and restored for future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB309.

Mahalo,
Riley Bond
Lahaina, Maui

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 2:32:12 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Yagodich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT of HB309 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

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:18:49 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this measure and the benefits it and restored loko i‘a may help to provide for our cultural integrity, coastal environment, food security, climate resilience, and social fabric.

HB-309

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 1:15:50 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/28/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure that provides a starting point to revitalize loko i'a and further restore the larger ahupua'a system.