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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Friday, March 15, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 1900 HD1, Relating to Hydrologic Data Collection.

Dear Chair Inouye and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 1900 HD1, which appropriates funds to improve the State's water resource management and hydrologic data collection.

Data-driven management decisions about our fresh water resources cannot occur without the data on the health of those resources. Since the closing of Hawai'i's last sugar plantation, there has been a steady decline in the number of stream, aquifer, and rainfall data collection stations. These stations provided critical information on the impact that seasonal weather changes and water management decisions had on our streams and aquifers.

Through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Geological Survey and partnerships with the University of Hawai'i, the State of Hawai'i Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM) has attempted to create a hydrologic monitoring network that provides the data needed to address serious water disputes in areas such as Na Wai 'Eha and West Hawai'i. However, monitoring data still does not exist for vital aquifers such as those in urban Honolulu, where current pumpage exceeds the sustainable limit of those aquifers. If we are serious about leaving the future generations of Hawai'i with thriving freshwater resources, then we must provide CWRM with the funding the commission needs to excel in its mandate to protect the public trust for this vital resource.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i