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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND  
Thursday, March 14, 2024 — 10:00 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2814 SD1, Relating to Water Infrastructure.**

Dear Chair Ichiyama 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 SB 2814 SD1**, which directs the Department of Agriculture (DOA), in collaboration with the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) and the counties, to conduct a water infrastructure study for the State of Hawai'i.

Ulupono supports funding for critical agricultural infrastructure across Hawai'i, much of which resides within the management of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), the State's two entities tasked with agricultural infrastructure management and development. This bill seeks to take inventory of the agricultural water infrastructure needs of the State, similar to the efforts to develop the Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan of 2019.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, we would like to note that SB 2932 identifies the current state agricultural water infrastructure needs for both DOA and ADC.

From 2020 to 2023, Ulupono Initiative actively engaged with agricultural stakeholders across the state seeking to understand the greatest needs of the industry and how best to coordinate funding and resources toward those needs. In most cases, local producers identified access to affordable, reliable water resources as a top issue that will determine the success and financial viability of their operations. This measure presents a singular opportunity to meet those needs of our hard-working, local farmers and ranchers with dedicated state resources, and to directly support the State's local food production goals.

If we are serious about the future of our state's agriculture, key ag water infrastructure investments are needed, and they are needed **now**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> [https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/cwrm/planning/awudp2019update/AWUDP\\_2019.pdf](https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/cwrm/planning/awudp2019update/AWUDP_2019.pdf)