
SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, STATE OF HAWAII, AND CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO EXPLORE MATTERS RELATED TO THE ALA WAI WATERSHED.

1 WHEREAS, the Ala Wai Watershed, located in the City and
2 County of Honolulu, encompasses approximately nineteen square
3 miles, or 12,064 acres, and extends from the ridge of the Koolau
4 Mountains to the nearshore waters of Mamala Bay; and
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6 WHEREAS, the Ala Wai Watershed is made up of Makiki, Manoa,
7 and Palolo Streams, which drain into the Ala Wai Canal, a two-
8 mile-long man-made waterway constructed during the 1920s, not
9 for major flood control, but rather to drain coastal wetlands
10 and allow for the development of Waikiki; and
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12 WHEREAS, the Ala Wai Canal is owned and maintained by the
13 State, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has
14 coordinated with the State and City and County of Honolulu since
15 2001 to develop a plan to mitigate flooding in the Ala Wai
16 Watershed in the event of a major, once-in-a-century storm; and
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18 WHEREAS, an October 2004 storm that flooded Manoa Valley
19 within the Ala Wai Watershed and was described as a twenty-five-
20 year event caused an estimated \$85,000,000 in damage; and
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22 WHEREAS, the likelihood of flooding all of Waikiki and the
23 canal's tributaries is approximately one percent, considered a
24 one-hundred-year event, with potential estimated damage to three
25 thousand structures and requiring more than \$1,000,000,000 in
26 repairs; and
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28 WHEREAS, the USACE is currently negotiating terms of an
29 agreement with the State and City and County of Honolulu to
30 proceed with the Ala Wai Canal Flood Risk Management Project,
31 which received approximately \$345,000,000 in federal
32 appropriations in July 2018; and



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2 WHEREAS, the appropriation requires local matching funds in
3 the amount of \$125,000,000 and a local government sponsor in
4 order to proceed with the project; and
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6 WHEREAS, structural elements of the USACE proposal includes
7 six debris/detention basins in the upper reaches of the
8 watershed's three major streams, one in-stream debris catchment
9 structure, three multi-purpose detention basins, and flood
10 control elements along the Ala Wai Canal including a three- to
11 five-foot tall wall; and
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13 WHEREAS, elements of the USACE proposal would directly
14 affect properties in the watershed, impacting and in some cases
15 displacing individuals and organizations that own or operate on
16 such properties; and
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18 WHEREAS, Oahu neighborhood boards were established by the
19 City and County of Honolulu to increase and assure effective
20 citizen participation in the decisions of government, and
21 several neighborhood boards with boundaries within the Ala Wai
22 Watershed and affected areas have expressed concerns over the
23 proposed project through meetings and adopted resolutions; and
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25 WHEREAS, issues related to the project have been brought to
26 the forefront and have now become a major area of concern to
27 members of the public, community stakeholders, and other
28 interested parties; and
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30 WHEREAS, while there have been opportunities for public
31 input and engagement in the past regarding the Ala Wai Canal
32 Flood Risk Management Project Draft Feasibility Study and
33 Environmental Impact Statement, this body finds that further
34 public engagement is warranted in order to consider those
35 concerns; now, therefore,
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37 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature
38 of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2019, that the United
39 States Army Corps of Engineers, State of Hawaii, and City and
40 County of Honolulu are requested to establish a working group to
41 explore matters related to the Ala Wai Watershed and, in
42 particular, the Ala Wai Canal Flood Risk Management Project; and



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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to:

- (1) Facilitate public meetings to encourage dialogue among members of the public, community stakeholders, representatives from the State, City and County of Honolulu, and United States Army Corps of Engineers, and other interested parties;
- (2) Record and compile concerns submitted to the working group; and
- (3) Develop and assess good design options to address community concerns, including but not limited to mitigating disruption to schools and institutions that have cultural or historical significance, minimizing adverse impacts on private property owners, and implementing appropriate traditional land management practices for ecosystem preservation and restoration including strategies for floodable development in lieu of hard structures and barriers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to include the following:

- (1) A representative of the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu's administration, who is requested to serve as the chair of the working group;
- (2) A representative or representatives of the USACE;
- (3) A representative or representatives of the Governor's administration;
- (4) A member or members of the Hawaii State Senate;
- (5) A member or members of the Hawaii State House of Representatives;
- (6) A member or members of the Honolulu City Council;



- 1 (7) Researchers from the University of Hawaii, including a
2 representative of the Community Design Center and
3 other experts knowledgeable in flood risk management
4 or watershed and ecosystem restoration;
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- 6 (8) A representative or representatives of the School for
7 Examining Essential Questions of Sustainability; and
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- 9 (9) Other persons as may be invited by the working group;
10 and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
13 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
14 including any other actions taken pursuant to this measure, to
15 the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening
16 of the Regular Session of 2020; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Resolution be transmitted to the Commander and District Engineer
20 of the United States Army Corps of Engineers Honolulu District,
21 Governor, President of the University of Hawaii System, Mayor of
22 the City and County of Honolulu, Chairperson of the Honolulu
23 City Council, Director of the University of Hawaii Community
24 Design Center, and Chair of the Governing Board of the School
25 for Examining Essential Questions of Sustainability.

