



The Senate
Ka 'Aha Kenekoa

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 11, 2026

Ryan Kanaka'ole, Chair
Board of Land and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, HI 96809

Aloha Chair Kanaka'ole and Members of the Board,

RE: Testimony in Strong Support for Acquiring the Wahiawa Irrigation System

I strongly support the proposed acquisition of the Wahiawā Irrigation System, authorized under Act 218, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2023, transferring critical water infrastructure and lands to the State from Dole.

The Wahiawā Irrigation System plays a vital role in supporting the viability of agriculture on O'ahu. Farmers and ranchers depend on consistent and reliable access to water to maintain their operations, plan for future planting cycles, and remain resilient during periods of drought and changing climate conditions.

O'ahu growers, particularly those across Central O'ahu, rely on the Wahiawā Irrigation System as a dependable source of water that allows them not only to sustain their farms but also to expand agricultural production. Maintaining this system will help meet the growing demand for locally produced commodities, strengthen Hawai'i's food security, and support the long-term growth and resilience of our agricultural sector.

I strongly urge approval of this acquisition and associated actions.

Mahalo,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Board of Land and Natural Resources

Friday, March 13, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Department of Land and Natural Resources Board Room
Kalanimoku Building, Room 132
1151 Punchbowl Street, 1st Floor/ & Online via Zoom

Item D.6 Approval of: 1) Acquisition of Private Lands Associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System as Provided for in Act 218, 2023 Session Laws of Hawaii for Addition to the Wahiawā Freshwater State Recreation Area Identified as Tax Map Keys (1) 7-3-001:003 and 019; 7-3-006:023; 7-3-007:001; 7-3-008:001; 7-3-010:003; 7-3-011:003, 006, and 007; 7-3-012: 006; 7-4-001:003; and 7-4-012:001, Located in Wahiawā , Oahu; 2) Rescission of the Wahiawā Dam Remediation Schedule issued to Dole Food Company Hawai'i by the Board on April 9, 2021, as Item L-3 (which was subsequently amended by the Board), upon Transfer of Tax Map Keys (1) 7-3-001:003 and 019; 7-3-006:023; 7-3-007:001; 7-3-008:001; 7-3-010:003; 7-3-011:003, 006, and 007; 7-3-012: 006; 7-4-001:003; and 7-4-012:001 to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Tax Map Keys (1) 7-1-001:013 and 017; 7-1-012: 003, 004, 007, and 014; 7-3-005: 005; 7-3-012:002; and 7-3-013:003 to the Agribusiness Development Corporation, including the Wahiawā Dam and the Ditch System Associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System; 3) Delegation to the Chairperson to Negotiate the Terms and Conditions of the Transfer Agreement; 4) Delegation to the Chairperson to Enter into the Transfer Agreement; 5) Issuance of Management Right-of-Entry to the Division of State Parks; and 6) Issuance of Set Aside to the Division of State Parks for Addition to the Wahiawā Freshwater State Recreation Area for Park Purposes.

Acting Chair Kanaka'ole and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

The Office of the Governor supports this request, recognizing the need to ensure that the transfer is recorded with the BOC before the June 30, 2026, deadline for Act 218, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023.

The transfer of the Wahiawā Irrigation System ("WIS") is critical to the State of Hawai'i meeting its food security goals and for the effective management of the watershed systems in Central and North O'ahu. Our Office is pleased to see the Board taking this important step to advance our State's local food production goals and natural resource management goals.

Testimony of the Office of the Governor
March 13, 2026
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Pursuant to Act 218, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023 (“Act 218”), funds were appropriated to upgrade the dam’s spillway and various state agencies were authorized to acquire the Wahiawa Irrigation System (WIS), which includes the Wahiawa Dam, and the other assets and easements associated with the WIS.

The Act 218, Section 3(a), Session Laws of Hawaii 2023. specifies that:

The office of the governor shall negotiate with Wahiawa Water Company, Inc.; Dole Food Company, Inc.; Sustainable Hawaii, LLC; or any other appropriate owner for the State's fee simple acquisition of the Wahiawa irrigation system.

Additionally, Part V, specifies that:

SECTION 8. If the transfer of all properties authorized to be acquired by this Act are not filed or recorded with the bureau of conveyances by June 30, 2026, the governor shall notify the legislature and the revisor of statutes by June 30, 2026, that the conveyance was not filed or recorded with the bureau of conveyances, and this Act shall be repealed in its entirety on July 1, 2026.

SECTION 9. If the transfer of all properties authorized to be acquired by this Act are filed or recorded with the bureau of conveyances by June 30, 2026, the governor shall notify the legislature and the revisor of statutes by June 30, 2026, that the transfer of all properties authorized to be acquired by this Act were filed or recorded with the bureau of conveyances, and this Act shall not be repealed and the appropriations authorized pursuant to this Act shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year for which the moneys were appropriated; provided that all moneys that remain unexpended or unencumbered on June 30, 2026, shall lapse.

Our office understands that the implementation of Act 218 is in its final stages and supports the Board taking the steps outlined in this agenda item to fully implement the acquisition of the Wahiawa Irrigation System. We encourage the Board to instruct the Chairperson to enter into the Transfer Agreement as soon as possible to ensure that the timelines set out in Act 218 are fully complied with.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



NORTH SHORE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 27

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD SUITE 106 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-3710 • FAX: (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco>

March 11, 2026

Subject: Testimony on Item D-6: A Approval of: Acquisition of Private Lands Associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System as Provided for in Act 218, 2023 Session Laws of Hawaii for Addition to the Wahiawā Freshwater State Recreation Area Identified as Tax Map Keys (1) 7-3-001:003 and 019; 7-3-006:023; 7-3-007:001; 7-3-008:001; 7-3-010:003; 7-3-011:003, 006, and 007; 7-3-012: 006; 7-4-001:003; and 7-4-012:001,

Aloha Acting Chair Kanaka'ole and Members of the Board:

The North Shore Neighborhood Board No. 27, together with our community—particularly our farmers and ranchers—strongly supports approval of the acquisition of private lands associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System, as authorized under Act 218, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2023.

The Wahiawā Irrigation System is essential to the long-term viability of agriculture on O'ahu. Reliable access to water enables farmers and ranchers to sustain operations, plan future production, and adapt to drought and changing climate conditions.

The system also serves a critical flood management function. Without the dam and associated infrastructure, surrounding communities would be highly vulnerable to flooding, even during minor rainfall events.

This water and flood control system is a vital public resource. The State must approve this acquisition to protect agricultural sustainability and community safety.

Mālama 'āina,

Kathleen M. Pahinui
Chair, North Shore NB #27

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY
BEFORE THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026
9:00 A.M.
DLNR BOARDROOM, KALANIMOKU BLDG**

Agenda item D. LAND DIVISION – item 6. Approval of: 1) Acquisition of Private Lands Associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System as Provided for in Act 218, 2023 Session Laws of Hawaii for Addition to the Wahiawā Freshwater State Recreation Area Identified as Tax Map Keys (1) 7-3- 001:003 and 019; 7-3-006:023; 7-3-007:001; 7-3-008:001; 7-3-010:003; 7-3-011:003, 006 and 007; 7-3-012: 006; 7-4-001:003; and 7-4-012:001, Located in Wahiawā , Oahu; 2) Rescission of the Wahiawā Dam Remediation Schedule issued to Dole Food Company Hawai'i by the Board on April 9, 2021, as Item L-3 (which was subsequently amended by the Board), upon Transfer of Tax Map Keys (1) 7-3-001:003 and 019; 7- 3-006:023; 7-3-007:001; 7-3-008:001; 7-3-010:003; 7-3-011:003, 006, and 007; 7-3- 012: 006; 7-4-001:003; and 7-4-012:001 to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Tax Map Keys (1) 7-1-001:013 and 017; 7-1-012: 003, 004, 007, and 014; 7-3-005: 005; 7-3-012:002; and 7-3-013:003 to the Agribusiness Development Corporation, including the Wahiawā Dam and the Ditch System Associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System; 3) Delegation to the Chairperson to Negotiate the Terms and Conditions of the Transfer Agreement; 4) Delegation to the Chairperson to Enter into the Transfer Agreement; 5) Issuance of Management Right-of-Entry to the Division of State Parks; and 6) Issuance of Set Aside to the Division of State Parks for Addition to the Wahiawā Freshwater State Recreation Area for Park Purposes.

Chair Kanaka'ole and Members of the Board:

The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) is in strong support of the state acquiring, repairing and maintaining the Wahiawa Irrigation System as per Act 218/SLH 2023 wherein the system was deemed critical in providing water to farmers in Wahiawa, Waialua and Haleiwa.



Testimony of Sharon Hurd

March 13, 2026

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To ensure the longevity of this critical water resource to support farmers, ranchers and entrepreneurs that rely on the system, the Department has committed to the repair of the dam, to bring it to dam safety standards. The Department has partnered with the Agribusiness Development Corporation and the Department of Land and Natural Resources to keep this valuable resource available to agriculture operations and sustain food production on Oahu.

The Department respectfully requests the Board Members to approve this agenda item. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

March 13, 2026

Testimony in Strong Support of Acquisition of the Wahiawā Irrigation System

To: Chairperson and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Chairperson and Members
Agribusiness Development Corporation
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

From: Robert Fitzgerald

BLNR Hearing Date: March 13, 2029

ADC Hearing Date: March 19, 2026

Submitted via email to:

blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

dbedt.adc@hawaii.gov

stacie.sasagawa@dole.com

Aloha Chairs and Members,

I am writing in strong support of the State of Hawai'i's immediate acquisition of the Wahiawā Irrigation System, which is scheduled for consideration by the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Agribusiness Development Corporation at their respective hearings noted above. The system represents one of the most critical pieces of agricultural and water infrastructure on O'ahu, and its continued public stewardship is essential to advancing Hawai'i's goals for food production, food security, flood risk reduction, and watershed management.

Food Production and Food Security

The Wahiawā Irrigation System has long supported agricultural activity across Central O'ahu and remains foundational to the region's ability to produce food locally. As Hawai'i works to reduce its dependence on imported food and strengthen local supply chains, maintaining reliable access to irrigation water is essential.

Public acquisition will help ensure that agricultural lands remain viable for diversified farming, local producers, and future agricultural innovation. The system provides the water backbone necessary to sustain farming operations that contribute directly to local food supply and economic resilience.

Supporting this acquisition is therefore a direct investment in Hawai'i's long-term food security and the stability of its agricultural sector.

Flood Protection and Watershed Management

The Wahiawā Irrigation System also plays a critical role in managing water flows across the broader watershed. Through its reservoirs, ditches, and control structures, the system helps regulate runoff and reduce downstream flooding risks in Central and North O‘ahu during heavy rainfall events.

In the context of increasing climate variability and more intense storms, maintaining this infrastructure under coordinated public management is essential for protecting communities, agricultural lands, and public infrastructure while supporting watershed health.

Coordinated Public Stewardship

Consideration by both BLNR and ADC reflects the system’s dual importance as both natural resource infrastructure and agricultural backbone. As ADC operates within DBEDT’s broader mandate to support economic development and agricultural viability, public ownership enables coordinated management that can align:

- Agricultural productivity and farmer access to water
- Flood mitigation and stormwater management
- Watershed restoration and conservation priorities
- Climate resilience planning
- Long-term infrastructure maintenance

Ensuring that the system remains functional and accessible will provide lasting benefits to farmers, communities, and the environment.

Conclusion

The Wahiawā Irrigation System is a legacy of Hawai‘i’s agricultural history that continues to serve a vital role today. Its acquisition represents a forward-looking investment in food security, watershed stewardship, and community resilience.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge both the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Agribusiness Development Corporation under DBEDT to support the acquisition, close on the transfer as soon as possible, and to recognize the system as essential infrastructure for the future of agriculture and water management in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Robert Fitzgerald

Private Farmer in Waialula

510 418-4500 or bob@fitzfarm.net

[EXTERNAL] Support of Act 218 and purchase of the Wahiawa Irrigation System

From Malia Pietsch <akubelly@gmail.com>
Date Wed 3/11/2026 9:31 PM
To DLNR.BLNR.Testimony <blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov>

Aloha Acting Chair Kanaka'ole and Members of the Board:

I am an active rancher along Kaukonahua stream in Waialua.

I strongly support the approval of the acquisition of private lands associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System, as authorized under Act 218, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2023.

The Wahiawā Irrigation System is essential to the long-term viability of agriculture and ranching on O'ahu.

Reliable access to water enables farmers and ranchers to sustain operations, plan future production, and adapt to drought and changing climate conditions.

The system also serves a critical flood management function. Without the dam and associated infrastructure, surrounding communities would be highly vulnerable to flooding, even during minor rainfall events.

This water and flood control system is a vital public resource. The State must approve this acquisition to protect agricultural sustainability and community safety.

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Aloha, Dr. Malia Kamisugi
Kaala Ranch

SB4800, SB1

Testimony in Favor, by Boyd Ready, RP

Lead Docent, Local Historian, Haleiwa Waialua Historical Society

Member, North Shore Neighborhood Board Water and Land Committee

Research in newly archived, found collections of original Waialua Sugar Company documents and maps, and other research reveals significant facts.

- ‘Lihue,’ the royal center for Oahu’s ruling chiefs was in the vicinity of the ‘Lihue Pali,’ the steep-sided gulch that is now the site for this reservoir
- Senator Inouye helped provide \$8,000,000 in grants, in 2006, to renovate the tunnel and restore the siphons to continue to allow irrigation water to cross the ravines.
- The 1904 notebook of 1st manager, William Goodale shows cost proposals from engineers for the 1898-1899 stream flow studies, and for dam construction in 1904.
- The primarily immigrant, contract-labor Japanese workforce at the time (1898-1905), under engineers’ supervision, performed the hard labor to create this reservoir.
- Thirty eight tunnels, excavated by hand, with dynamite, donkeys and wheelbarrows, bring water from across multiple Koolau Mountain watersheds into the reservoir.
- Original 1911 hand drawn map, in detail, shows an 11,000 foot tunnel, hand excavated, bringing water from the dam, parallel to Kaukonahua Stream, to an outfall well above the stream, allowing gravity flow to upper fields, avoiding pumping up from the river, and allowed hydropower from water flowing back down to the river,
- It is the largest freshwater reservoir in the State. It’s gravity-distributed supply eliminates large electricity demands for pumping.
- It was key to Waialua Sugar’s best plantation water system, with sixty million gallons of irrigation water per day, compared to current Board of Water Supply’s potable water supplies of about two to three million gallons for North Shore demand today.

This testimony is IN FAVOR of SB4800, SD1, to preserve, improve, and use this irreplaceable infrastructure for agriculture. This is my opinion only, not authorized or issued by the Haleiwa Waialua Historical Society.



Boyd Ready, RP
59-661 Alapio Road
Haleiwa HI 96712



March 12, 2026

Subject: **Item D.6** Approval of 1) Acquisition of Private Lands Associated with the Wahiawā Irrigation System as Provided for in Act 218, 2023 Session Laws of Hawaii; . . . 3) Delegation to the Chairperson to Negotiate the Terms and Conditions of the Transfer Agreement; 4) Delegation to the Chairperson to Enter into the Transfer Agreement; etc.

Dear Chairperson Kanaka'ole and Members of the Board,

Dole Food Co. Hawaii ("Dole"), with the full backing of its parent company Dole plc, is writing in support of agenda item D.6. Since the enactment of Act 2018 in 2023, Dole and the Department of Land and Natural Resources have been working cooperatively to ensure that Act 218 is implemented as the Legislature and Governor intended. We have made great progress and are now in a position to complete the transfer of the Wahiawa Irrigation System ("WIS") to the Department of Land and Natirya Resources ("DLNR") and the Agribusiness Development Corporation ("ADC"). The matters brought before the Board under Item D.6., especially matters 1, 3, and 4, are needed to ensure that the transfer occurs on time and as intended by Act 218.

The WIS is essential to continued agricultural production on Oahu and food security for Hawaii. It serves as the sole irrigation source for the majority of North and Central Oahu, providing irrigation water to over fifty farmers, who in turn support over 500 employees and an additional approximately 500 indirect jobs. These employment numbers will only increase as the ADC fully leases out its farmland. The WIS also serves important community needs: Lake Wilson is a freshwater State Recreation Area (managed by the DNLR) and the Wahiawa dam provides critical flood control protecting North Shore communities. The WIS as a whole is a critical asset and its three regulated reservoirs (Wahiawa, Helemano 6, and Kemoo 5), 10 holding basins, over 30 miles of ditches, siphons, and pipelines, and numerous filter stations and irrigation infrastructure are best owned and managed by the State to ensure that the entire community will always have access to the many benefits the WIS provides.

Regarding the items before the Board for approval today, it has been two years and eight months since Act 218 was made law, and Dole and DLNR are now in a position to speedily effectuate the transfer of the WIS as that law requires. During that time, the DLNR has diligently executed its due diligence responsibilities with Dole's full support. Through that diligence process, for example, the DLNR identified three pieces of property on which neighboring landowners were encroaching or that had license agreements that the DLNR did not believe adequately protected the landowner. Dole approached those three neighbors and entered into new or amended license agreements that fully protect the landowner (Dole currently, the State post-transfer) from liability. The DLNR, the ADC, and Dole have also significantly progressed the drafting of a Land Transfer Agreement that will ensure the

proper agencies receive their appropriate portions of the WIS, that the BLNR and ADC are fully protected in that transfer, and that the transfer fully complies with State law. Dole expects that if the Chairperson is granted the authority to negotiate the final terms of the Land Transfer Agreement and enter into that Agreement when he deems it complete, the transfer of the WIS will take place imminently and well within the timeline required by Act 218.

Act 218 was passed to ensure that the many critical benefits the WIS provides to not only North and Central Oahu but to the State as a whole are preserved and protected for future generations. The WIS needs State ownership and the resources and expertise it has to offer, especially given the alternative of a forced decommissioning of the WIS.

After much hard work by the DLNR, the ADC, and Dole, we are now in a position to complete the transfer of the WIS to the State. Dole strongly supports approval of the State's acquisition of the WIS and the granting of authority to the Chairperson to negotiate and execute a transfer agreement.

Sincerely,



Jared Gale
Dole plc / Dole Food Company, Inc.
Chief Legal Officer & Company Secretary