



Subject: Stream Diversion Works Permit Application (SDWP.6389.3)
Restore Existing Po'owai at Pālāwai, Maunawili Stream

September 5, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

Dawn N.S. Chang, Chairperson
Ciara W. K. Kahahane, Deputy Director
State Commission on Water Resource Management
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96809
dlmr.cwrmm@hawaii.gov

Aloha mai e Chair Chang, Deputy Director Kahahane and Commissioners,

Hawaiian Islands Land Trust d/b/a Hawai'i Land Trust ("HILT") is honored to submit testimony **in support** of Ho'okua'āina's Stream Diversion Works Permit Application (SDWP.6389.3) to restore this traditional po'owai for the long awaited return of mahi'ai kalo, pilina, and 'āina momona at Pālāwai in Maunawili Valley. This is yet another example of community collaboration and initiative to promote healing and abundance for these lands.

The Pālāwai property, located in the ahupua'a of Kailua, is home to treasured resources vital to Hawai'i's mauili ola—its health and well-being. As part of the broader, highly anticipated Maunawili Valley land acquisition and protection effort—a collaboration among the landowner, government agencies, community and Hui partners, and the Trust for Public Land—HILT will join the City and County of Honolulu as co-holders of the conservation easement over Pālāwai. This effort secures a lasting foundation for this cultural kipuka to thrive for generations. The easement will offer permanent protection, preventing subdivision and overdevelopment while ensuring the land remains productive—providing food and resources for community. We are deeply grateful for the trust of Ho'okua'āina and the deep relationships that have made it possible to ensure generations of mo'opuna after us will inherit 'āina that is abundant and thriving.

For the past 18 years, Ho'okua'āina's work at the nearby Kapala property has played a vital role in advancing the community's vision for the area. Their steadfast kuleana to care for the springs on the land has had a meaningful "spillover" effect—sustaining approximately three acres of lo'i that yield 33,000 pounds of kalo annually, while also nurturing spaces for interns, volunteers, and community groups to learn and work in the spirit of aloha and mālama 'āina. Building on this proven track record, the po'owai restoration project at Pālāwai will continue to strengthen existing relationships with both upstream and downstream rights holders and stakeholders, supporting a shared commitment to ahupua'a health and community resilience.



Ho‘okua‘āina’s long-standing dedication to restoring ‘āina momona in Maunawili Valley strengthens the Kailua ahupua‘a by reestablishing vital connections between the mauka forests, kula lands, and makai systems like Kawainui fishpond and its surrounding areas. This work supports ecological balance and community-led climate resilience by reviving traditional land and water practices proven to sustain life over generations. Guided by ‘ike kūpuna, we continue to support Ho‘okua‘āina and the Kailua community on this journey to restore Pālāwai as O‘ahu’s umeke ‘ai, a thriving, regenerative system that feeds both land and people in the face of a changing climate here in Hawai‘i and beyond.

Mahalo piha for your consideration of our support.

Dane Kealoha, Director of ‘Āina Transactions
dane.kealoha@hilt.org, (808) 940-0639