



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES | KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT | KE KAHUWAI PONO
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STAFF SUBMITTAL

COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

October 28, 2025
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Request and Delegation of Authority to Chairperson to
Enter into a Joint Funding Agreement with U.S. Geological Survey for
Streamflow Monitoring at Locations Losing Cooperative Funding from
Federal Agencies for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026; and
Declare that this Project is Exempt from the Preparation of an Environmental Assessment Under
Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 343

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Staff recommends that the Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) enter into a Joint Funding Agreement (Agreement) with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to support the monitoring of streamflow at two critical gaging locations that are losing cooperative funding from Federal agencies.

BACKGROUND

The cooperative monitoring program funded by the Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) supports the assessment and management of climate, surface water, and groundwater resources. Each fiscal year, the Commission approves an Agreement before the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) begins. For FFY 2026, the Commission approved the annual cooperative monitoring program Agreement on August 19, 2025.

With respect to streamflow monitoring, the Agreement in FFY 2026 anticipated that two Federal agencies, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the US Department of Agriculture, would provide matching dollars for two (2) gaging stations. These stations are:

- 1) USGS 16638500 Kahoma Stream at Lahaina, Maui (\$9,340)
- 2) USGS 16717815 Manowai'ōpae Stream near Spencer Road, Laupāhoehoe, Hawai'i (\$7,000)

However, the FFY 2026 budgets for both these Federal agencies were reduced by Congress, requiring the Commission to increase its support for these two stations or risk losing these stations and the public benefit they provide.

In the FY 2026 State Budget, the Commission received an increase of \$400,000 in general funds to cover the costs of additional stream gaging related to the establishment or monitoring of interim IFS, especially in streams impacted by potential water leases and water management areas. The additional costs anticipated for these two stations can be covered by the Commission’s existing funds.

OTHER

I. Chapter 343 – Environmental Assessment (EA) Compliance

Environmental Assessment (“EA”) Triggers

Under HRS §343-5, the use of state funds triggers the need for an EA unless an exemption applies.

EA Exemption

The proposed action is exempt from an EA based on the Exemption List for the Commission on Water Resource Management approved by the Environmental Council on January 5, 2021, and falls under Exemption Class 5, Part 1, No. 3, which provides for “Installation of new, small groundwater, surface water, or climatological monitoring and data collection equipment, structures that house or protect this equipment, and installation of electrical, telemetry, or communications systems to service these equipment or structures.” No exemption notice is required.

Consistency with the Hawai‘i Water Plan

Water Resource Protection Plan 2019 Update – The 2019 Update to the Water Resource Protection Plan identified a need to monitor the hydrological consequences of climate change across the State and the need for reliable, long-term data to make sound water management decisions. Chapter 3 of the WRPP includes an Action Plan that recommends the Commission have “a solid and up-to-date foundation of data on Hawai‘i water resources, water use, and water dynamics is used to make water resource management decisions” (Goal: 1). Monitoring of rainfall, groundwater and surface water allows for an accounting of the quantity and variability of water, whether streamflows are sufficient to meet environmental and cultural needs, and how water is made available for human use.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Commission:

- 1) Authorize the Chairperson to enter into a Joint Funding Agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey for FFY 2026 to undertake the specified monitoring activities at a cost no greater than \$16,340 to the Commission; and
- 2) Delegate authority to the Chairperson to modify the Joint Funding Agreement, provided that there is no increase in cost to the Commission; and
- 3) Find that this Joint Funding Agreement is exempt from the preparation of an environmental assessment under HRS chapter 343 based on the Exemption List for the Department of Land and Natural Resources approved by the Environmental Council on January 5, 2021.

The terms of this Agreement are subject to the approval of the Department of the Attorney General. Agreements with a federal agency are exempt from procurement under HRS §103D. As such, the Agreement will be executed in accordance with HRS §103D-102(b)(3).

Ola i ka wai,



CIARA W.K. KAHANE
Deputy Director

Exhibit (s): 1. Proposed Scope of Services
2. Monitoring Stations to be funded in this Agreement

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Statewide Hydrologic Data Collection and
Water Resource Monitoring for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026

PROPOSED SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. This Joint Funding Agreement (“Agreement”) is a continuation of the joint funding agreement for the collection of hydrological data in the State of Hawai‘i between the U.S. Geological Survey, United States Department of the Interior and the Commission on Water Resource Management (“Commission”), Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai‘i (“customer”).
2. The scope of services involves the collection and computation of data on water resources collected in multiple locations throughout the State of Hawai‘i (“program”).
3. U.S. Geological Survey shall collect data at an agreed upon list of surface water stations, ground water monitoring stations, and rainfall stations, as set forth in Exhibit 3 which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.
4. U.S. Geological Survey shall provide data summary reports and review of historical data sets.
5. U.S. Geological Survey shall host the maps, data, and reports resulting from this program in a publicly accessible website and shall provide the Commission Staff direct and easy access to acquire, download, or transfer the data and report from a USGS server. The parties shall use good faith efforts to resolve any disagreements in the scope and validation of data acquisition and the contents of the report.
6. U.S. Geological Survey shall provide a readable statement of cooperative relations and visually identifiable symbol of the Commission as a cooperator in print, digital, and online publications of the data and reports of the monitoring stations that are included in the current cooperative program, and as well as the stations that were historically supported and funded by the Commission.
7. At least quarterly and upon request by the Commission on Water Resource Management, the U.S. Geological Survey will update Commission Staff on the progress of its work on this Joint Funding Agreement.
8. The Commission on Water Resource Management shall assist the U.S. Geological Survey in its work under the Joint Funding Agreement to the extent feasible and practicable under existing resources of the Commission.

MONITORING STATIONS TO BE FUNDED IN THE AGREEMENT

- 1) USGS 16638500 Kahoma Stream at Lahaina, Maui
- 2) USGS 16717815 Manowai‘ōpae Stream near Spencer Road, Laupāhoehoe, Hawai‘i