



Aloha Deputy Director Kahahane and Commission,

Mahalo for this opportunity to speak with you today on your project “Analysis of Groundwater Flow in the Central Aquifer Sector, Maui, Hawai’i.”

“CONSISTENCY WITH THE HAWAI’I WATER PLAN The Water Code, HRS §174C-2(b), requires that the Commission implement and utilize comprehensive, long-range water resources planning in its regulation and management of the State’s water resources. To accomplish this mandate, the Hawai’i Water Plan (HWP) is intended to serve as the long-range guide for managing water resources in Hawai’I by providing direction and general guidance for making water use decisions, including the issuance of permits as set forth in the Water Code.”

CWRM acknowledges that.....

"Furthermore, the 2020 USGS Hydrological Monitoring Needs Assessment for the State of Hawai’i identified the Kahului, Pā’ia, Makawao, and Kama’ole aquifer systems, among others, as “high groundwater monitoring priority areas. The result of this study is a first step to more accurately monitor groundwater resources in the Central aquifer sector."

Finally....

"Water Resource Protection Plan (WRPP) - the 2019 update to the WRPP recognizes that aquifer-system boundaries were established with limited subsurface information and do not necessarily constitute hydrologic boundaries. It identified a need for up-to-date data on Hawai’i water resources, water use, and water dynamics to make water resource management decisions. Staff Submittal May 19, 2026, of the WRPP includes an Action Plan that recommends the Commission improve recharge estimates and update aquifer sustainable yields with new and best information."

For these reasons, the following actions should be implemented, in this order, to complement the joint CWRM–USGS study and effectively achieve your goals:

1. **Direct designation recommendation:** The Director of the Commission on Water Resource Management should recommend to the Commission that the petition to designate the Kama’ole Aquifer Area as a Ground Water Management Area be granted as soon as possible. This designation will allow CWRM to exercise clear authority over groundwater allocation and use during the study period, ensuring that data are collected under controlled management conditions while also satisfying the statutory criteria and factual requirements we have documented in support of this petition.



- 2. Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) survey of Central Maui aquifers: CWRM and USGS**, in coordination with the Maui County Department of Water Supply should implement an Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) imaging and mapping survey for the four Central Maui aquifers, targeted for FY 2026 or FY2027. This work, led by qualified hydrologists and geophysicists, will provide higher-resolution information on sustainable yield and recharge, refine hydrologic boundaries, and better characterize the interconnectedness among these aquifers and the potential impacts of additional withdrawals.

We agree that further evaluation and study are urgently needed, as water resources on Maui are becoming increasingly stressed by climate-driven reductions in recharge, sea-level rise, and accelerating land use and development pressures, particularly in Central and South Maui. Taking these steps now is a prudent, common-sense planning measure to ensure that groundwater in the Kama'ole Aquifer is managed transparently, sustainably, and consistent with the State's public trust duties before over-withdrawal becomes irreversible.

Mahalo for your time,

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