

RES24-204
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 392

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Sep 4, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 7

Oppose: 4

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Joseph Rozmiarek	Email: rozmiarej001@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 2, 2024 @ 12:24 PM
Testimony: Request Approval on Resolution 24-204		
Name: anson & Meymo rego	Email: regoa@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 2, 2024 @ 02:09 PM
Testimony: We, Meymo & Anson Rego strongly support resolution 24 - 204 authorizing City and County of Honolulu to approve an intergovernmental agreement with the Department of the Army to study and consider flood control measures for Wailupe Stream. We live adjoining the stream. Over 100 homes were damaged and millions of dollars of losses were incurred, not including the Waldorf school and Aina Haina library which was closed for months. The City and County of Honolulu later agreed to pay over \$2 million to settle lawsuits and would have paid lot more if residents didn't have federal flood insurance. Since the City owns Wailupe stream, except makai of Kalaniana'ole Hwy, the City acknowledges it has a legal obligation to keep surrounding areas safe from future flooding. The purpose of resolution24-204 is to study the viability and feasibility of flood control with recommendations which will come back to you, the City Council and to the community at large. Thereafter, there should be ample opportunity to discuss and decide what measures should be taken. We recall that immediately after the April, 2018 Wailupe Stream flooding , our then Governor and Mayor went to Aina Haina and promised no more flooding and that they would do everything to protect the families and homes and to address the flooding problem. Now 6 years later, resolution 204 simply fulfills the first part of their promise to look into the risk of continuous flooding and how to prevent same. Within a couple years of the 2018 flood, the Wailupe stream boulder basin was repaired by the City utilizing a \$1.7 million federal grant and also State of Hawaii monies were used for a stream bank stabilization project within Wailupe stream above E. Hind drive. However nothing---nothing has been done to study/ improve below East Hind Drive where the major flooding occurred in 2018. That is where the houses were demolished , then overflowing of the stream occurred into the neighborhood and across Kalaniana'ole Highway. Again, nothing has been done until this Resolution 24-204. The recent Star Advertiser "Our View" 8/30 article paints a picture of "traditional subsistence fishing and cultural		

practices” occurring in Wailupe stream. A more truthful observation is that below East Hind Drive, the Wailupe stream is polluted, dangerous to traverse, and overgrown with bushes and plants 20 feet high, including a toxic castor bean, since for many years there is poor or nonexistent maintenance. Few if any persons venture into the stream. And yes, it is a flood hazard.

The City and State and Federal Governments, by approving resolution 204, will be able to use their know-how, resources, and expertise together to present future options and plans pertaining to both flood control and the environment at the same time to the City and the Aina Haina community living adjoining to or near Wailupe Stream.

Thank you for supporting resolution 204.

Meymo L. Rego & Anson O. Rego

Aina Haina residents

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jeanne Ohta	jyohta@hawaii.rr.com	96821

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Aina Haina Community Association	Support	Sep 3, 2024 @ 12:06 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
SHAN Li	dashanzi@hotmail.com	96822

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Sep 3, 2024 @ 08:46 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Officer,

I'm the owner of a property on Papai St, on April 13th, 2018, my house was badly flooded. as my observation, there were too many bushes in the wailupe stream, and blocked the flood to enter the ocean.

Please clean the stream, and get it well maintained.

Thanks!

Shan Li

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Crystal Zhou	crystal.puti@gmail.com	96822

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Sep 3, 2024 @ 09:08 AM

Testimony:

Aloha,

I'm an owner of a property in Aina Haina, the property's backyard is right backing to the Wailupe stream, in 2018, got bad flooded.

I hope city can help us to clean and maintain the stream, I think that the best resolution is to build concrete walls along the water bank, so that the bushes cannot grow.

Best Regards!

Crystal

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rod Schultz	rschultz369@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Sep 3, 2024 @ 01:13 PM

Testimony:

I am opposed to the intergovernmental agreement because we don't need a study. We have studied the Wailupe Stream already and the Army CofE didn't want anything to do with it. We don't need the Army. We just need the city to do their job and maintain the stream on a regular basis, so the trees and shrubs don't grow to a dangerous size like they are right now. The city used to maintain the stream adequately, but the work hasn't been done satisfactorily for many years. It's time to get to work. Use the money that would be wasted on another study to pay for the maintenance.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Andrea Wagner	rickandrea@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Sep 3, 2024 @ 06:48 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chris Cramer	maunaluafishponds@gmail.com	96824
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Sep 3, 2024 @ 10:20 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kevin Mulkern	KevinJMulkern@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Sep 3, 2024 @ 11:33 PM

Testimony:

Dear Council members

Vote NO Honolulu City Council CR - 262 Resolution 24 -204 to study Wailupe Stream

All the stream needs is regular maintenance. Residents who have first hand knowledge have been asking for a regular maintenance program since 1949 when my parents built our Home.

I'm confident if you take the time to review the minutes of the Kuliouou Kalani Iki Neighborhood Board # 2 and the Aina Haina Community Association you will find a regular maintenance requested whenever the stream is discussed.

One of the better solutions was using inmates with line trimmers. Cutting the vegetation without disturbing the soil and leaving roots intact to hold the bank minimized flooding and silt damage to our reefs.

I do not understand the current practice of using heavy equipment to loosen the soil and remove the vegetation. This undermines the work the community has been doing to restore the bay. A contractor or homeowner would be fined.

We can continue to pay millions to compensate flood victims, hire high priced consultants and pass large capital improvement projects or listen to the community and cut the weeds 3 to 4 times a year.

Kevin Mulkern

808 396 6595

Would be appreciated if you followed the same rules as our neighborhood boards and gave the public 14 days to prepare testimony or request a day off to testify person.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Nen Esparza	lorenasesparza@gmail.com	95819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Sep 4, 2024 @ 06:05 AM

Testimony:
The army MUST take responsibility and clean up the mess it has made. Violence against the land is just as severe as violence against another.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chien-Wen Tseng	chocobunnyyears@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Sep 4, 2024 @ 08:40 AM

Testimony:
Hi, I have grown up and lived in a house along the stream since the 1970's.

Please support this bill to prevent flooding in the future, including finding a solution that preserves the nature of the stream while mitigating the flood impact on our community.

When the stream flooded due to obstruction at the bridge backing up the stream waters, it caused our property to be flooded as well. I had to pack my three kids into our car and drive up further into the valley. Luckily our house is elevated and was not damaged, but our yard was - we had to clean out so much debris. Additionally, our neighbor's pool was flooded and had to be repaired. I also went door-to-door to our neighbors on the streets across the stream to deliver pizza as they dealt with the aftermath of water, mud, and debris going through their yard and houses. Then I volunteered with a clean up crew for the houses on Kalanianaʻole Highway, clearing the mud, throwing away all the furniture, family photos, clothing, etc. I am grateful that people were safe but our lives were definitely negatively impacted. I am respectfully asking for help from our city and state to address the problem of future flooding for our valley, as well as preserve the nature and land that has been entrusted to us. Mahalo.



'ĀINA HAINA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

c/o 'Āina Haina Library, 5246 Kalanianaʻole Highway, Honolulu, HI 96821
ainahainaassoc@gmail.com; www.ainahaina.org

Jeanne Ohta, President • Melia Lane-Kamahele, Vice-President • Art Mori, Treasurer • Kathy Takemoto, Secretary • Directors At Large: Jeff Carlson, Wayson Chow, Meymo Rego, Marie Riley

September 4, 2024

To: Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
Councilmember Esther Kia'āina, Vice Chair and
Members of the Honolulu City Council

From: Jeanne Ohta, President

RE: Resolution 24-204 Relating to the Wailupe Stream Watershed Project

Position: Support with Comments

The Board of Directors of the 'Āina Haina Community Association (AHCA) write in support of Resolution 24-204 Relating to the Wailupe Stream Watershed Project which would authorize an agreement with the Department of the Army to conduct a study of the Wailupe Watershed to conduct a study to plan and design flood control features at the Wailupe Valley area to prevent potential funding.

AHCA appreciates the City Council's consideration of flood mitigation of Wailupe Stream. The residents of 'Āina Haina have advocated for flood mitigation measures since the 1960s. I have been personally involved in Wailupe Stream issues since 2000 since I live next to the stream.

We support and encourage continued funding, planning, and community engagement and outreach to engage in collaborative 'āina-based conservation and resource management. We support an approach that includes community involvement because many of the residents have valuable first-hand experience of the stream and past flooding.

Community involvement and outreach were part of the development of the East Honolulu Watershed Management Plan (EHWMP) which is also on this morning's agenda. The Board of Water Supply, the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), and their contractor SSFM International received input from community members and community organizations. AHCA participated as a member of the Kaiwi Maunaloa Watershed Hui. DPP also collaborated with East Honolulu residents and organizations on the East Honolulu Sustainable Communities Plan (EHSCP). We have found that community members have valuable insights and information about the places where they live and work and sharing their knowledge benefits the development of these community plans. In the same way, we strongly encourage community involvement in the development of flood mitigation plans for Wailupe Stream.

There have been numerous studies of Wailupe Stream that have been conducted since the 1960's. We are hopeful that this time the study will lead to solutions that might actually be implemented. Our experience with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) has been mixed. The last

study and design project ended because ACE conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the project and concluded that because our homes were older, they were not valued enough to meet the cost-benefit minimum required by the federal government. When we asked to review the study, our request was ignored; when we asked again and again, the study could not be found, when I personally asked again after the 2018 flood, I was told no such study had been conducted. We are hopeful that ACE will be more forthcoming and transparent with residents this time around.

In addition, the study of the “watershed” must include the entire stream (about 2.5 miles), including the mouth of the stream. The most recent flooding occurred in the lower portion of the stream, an area that was not given any attention in the stream bank stabilization project after the flood.

We also ask that the planners and designers consult with engineers that have been contracted to work on the stream in Malama Maunalua’s Ridge to Reef grant project funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We hope that this unprecedented federal grant, the city, and ACE will be able to work together to finally implement best-practices and unique solutions to reduce flooding in Wailupe Stream which remains the only unchanneled stream in East Oahu.

We will continue to be available as a resource on Wailupe Stream as we continue to have concerns about stream maintenance, flooding, bank erosion, and water quality of Maunalua Bay. Thank you for this opportunity to support Resolution 24-204 and express our concerns about Wailupe Stream.

I am writing in opposition to Resolution 24-204 to fund another study of flood risk management in Wailupe Valley. Wailupe Stream and watershed have been the subject of multiple studies dating back to at least the 1960s, when major storms caused flooding and heavy erosion of properties along the stream and led the City to seek assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to address stream flooding. What is needed now is to put those studies into action in coordination with local organizations already working to address watershed issues.

In May of 1973, a public hearing was held to discuss USACE plans to increase the capacity of Wailupe Stream by shaping and lining it with concrete from the existing debris basin to the mouth and 600 feet along the Kului Gulch Tributary. Residents were told that the plan would more than double the carrying capacity of the stream without exceeding existing stream widths and easements or altering existing bridges or home locations. When that hearing took place, the community was informed by USACE that the project would take twenty feet from properties along the stream. It was not clarified whether those twenty feet would be in addition to the ten or more feet already lost by some property owners in one storm alone during the late 1960s. The community, led by the Aina Haina Community Association, opposed the USACE's proposal on the basis that homeowners would have to relinquish part of their property, the project would deface the topography, and the USACE indicated that the finished project was not a guarantee that future flooding would not occur. That last admission was prescient as subsequent storms, most notably the April 2018 storm, have resulted in flooding in neighboring valleys that do have concrete-lined stream channels.

Since that initial USACE study in the early 1970s, there have been follow-up studies by USACE and others. Findings have included recommendations to enlarge the existing debris basin in upper Wailupe Valley, add a debris basin on the Kului Gulch Tributary at the east side of Hind luka, improve soil and water retention on valley walls, and engage residents and commercial interests to reduce water flow to the stream by reducing or mitigating hardened properties. Proposed stream project areas have been limited to that between the debris basin in the upper valley and the Kalaniana'ole Highway bridge (the area between Kalaniana'ole bridge and Maunaloa Bay is privately owned). USACE's continuing challenge has been that the cost to benefit ratio does not justify the expense of constructing and maintaining a concrete-lined channel in Wailupe Valley. Areas subject to ponding are generally outside the scope of these studies.

Concrete lining of streams is not a cure-all, as has already been acknowledged by USACE and experienced by neighboring communities in recent storms. As can be seen in the following images from East Honolulu streams, channelization means installation of concrete panels that become unstable over time as land settles and vegetation grows between panels, as well as sites of graffiti and homeless activity. Residents affected by flooding due to one channelized stream that failed said they had alerted the City to stream panel concerns for years without anything being done to correct problems.



Figure 1 Hahaione Stream View

Note graffiti along stream bank and vegetation growing on and between panels.



Figure 2 Niu Valley Stream

Note graffiti and vegetation growing on and between panels.



Figure 3 Waialae Kahala Stream

Note graffiti, homeless encampment, and vegetation between panels.

The time to study Wailupe Stream and watershed is past. Knowledge of the area has been collected. What is now needed is coordinated support and advancement of efforts to improve the Wailupe watershed and ease flood concerns related to the stream. Funds should be used intelligently to resolve community concerns, including actively engaging residents as part of the solution to valley problems. It does not appear that Resolution 24-204 will do anything more than expend funds on yet another study, further postponing action.

9-4-24

In Opposition to Resolution 24-204

Aloha Chair Waters and Council Members,

As one of the families affected by previous floods, we thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed planning and design agreement between the City and County of Honolulu and the Army, for Wailupe Stream Watershed flood control.

Without amendments, the resolution should not be adopted.

The resolution should be amended to include extensive consultation with Native Hawaiians and the community at large throughout the planning and design process. Subsistence and recreational fishers and gatherers rely on Wailupe Stream and the nearshore of Maunalua Bay. Please give voice to their expert and generational knowledge first before going any further and making agreements with the Army.

Excepting Wailupe, all neighboring valley streams along Maunalua Bay were destroyed by concrete flood control projects. Living streams and native species have been replaced by graffiti filled wastelands. Future flood control projects should require a net enhancement of the cultural and watershed values from mauka to makai.

Also missing from this resolution is the participation of the Dpt. of Environmental Services. They are working on an important project to reduce the thousands of gallons of raw sewage that spill into Wailupe Stream and Maunalua Bay after big rains infiltrate the sewer system.

Lastly, the City and County can mitigate flood hazards by enforcing a setback from Wailupe Stream. As seen in the photos below, landowners are dangerously building into the Wailupe Stream setback and even storing hazardous materials like propane in areas damaged by previous floods.

Mahalo for your consideration,

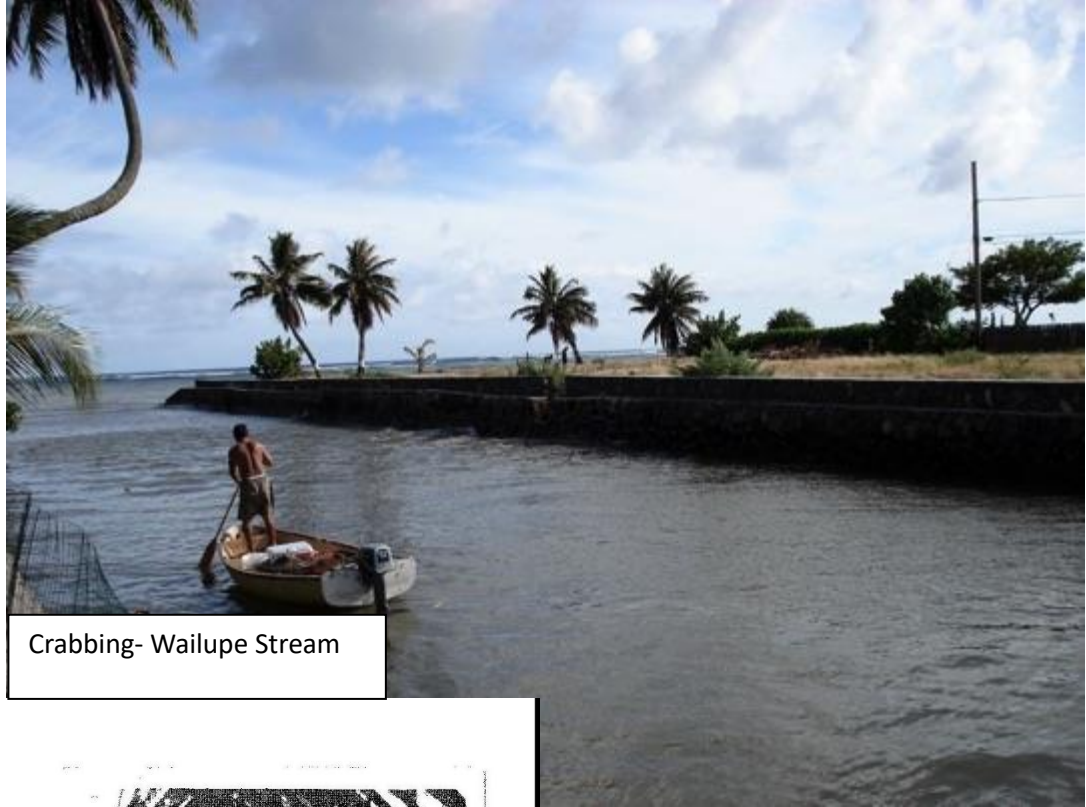
Chris Cramer

Wailupe



Wailupe Stream- new residence and propane tank in the stream setback. The wall section was rebuilt after the 2018 flood.





Crabbing- Wailupe Stream



Throw net fishing for mullet in Wailupe Stream circa 1930's with Uncle George Nakayama, a great fisherman. He had a fishpond and net house along Wailupe Stream.

George Nakayama - a great fisherman.