SB 1928 would make an appropriation for the acquisition of land and water rights at Kawainui Marsh. This statement on the bill does not reflect an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Much of what we have to say on the importance of Kawainui Marsh is drawn from the Environmental Center Special Report 3, "Ho'ona'auao No Kawai Nui" prepared by Diane Drigot, former Assistant Director of the Environmental Center and members of an Environmental Studies practicum course. A copy of which is provided for the use of the committees.

Kawainui Marsh is important for its physical, cultural, and natural attributes. The marsh, in its natural state, is currently acting as a living sewage treatment plant, a flood control basin, a groundwater recharge aquifer, a sediment filter, a nutrient recycler, an open space vista, and a buffer protecting coastal communities against erosion and storm damage. The marsh's value as a flood control basin was formally recognized when the central 750 acres were purchased by the City and County of Honolulu to protect the Coconut Grove area of Kailua from repeated occurrences of flooding. The marsh's other values as a wetland were also recognized formally when the State's coastal zone management law included it among the areas to be treated as a "special management area".

Culturally, Kawainui is the site of two Heiau's and the focus of a rich folklore. The importance of Kawainui in the Hawaiian legends of Oahu is unique.
In addition to practical and cultural value, Kawainui Marsh is important as habitat for endangered wildlife. Four endangered water birds are found at the marsh: the Hawaiian Coot, the Hawaiian Gallinule, the Hawaiian Duck, and the Hawaiian Stilt. These endangered waterbirds, along with the more abundant Black-Crowned Night Heron and the introduced Cattle Egret, are the principal waterbird species associated with this largest of Hawaii's freshwater marshes. The Great Frigatebird also regularly visits the marsh.

In sum, Kawainui Marsh is an important and irreplaceable physical, biological and cultural resource which has been degraded by the activities of man, especially the discharge of sewage effluent into the marsh. These discharges, as well as landfill and junk car activities, have compromised what is one of the best native waterbird habitats on Oahu. In order to assure that the marsh resource is not permanently compromised, steps to preserve this area are prudent. Acquisition of land and water rights to the marsh are an important step in preserving Hawaii's natural heritage.
The attached statement on SB 1928-84 is equally applicable to the companion bill, HB 2447-84.

Attachment