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## House committee to take new stab at adopting unified state water code

A state House committee will consider a re-drafted state water code this week in what could be the bill's last chance of passage this session.

The House Water, Land Use, Development and Hawaiian Affairs Committee will meet Wednesday at 3 p.m. to discuss the new proposal.

State lawmakers were ordered by a 1978 constitutional amendment to develop a comprehensive, statewide water management system. Presently a mix of laws governs water use.

The issue also is affected by conflicting court rulings. In a landmark case, the state Supreme Court ruled that water resources were owned by the state. However, a U.S. District Court overturned the decision, saying it was a taking of private property without adequate compensation. The matter is now before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Two commissions have offered suggested codes, and a number of versions have been considered this session.

The latest bill differs from earlier ones in a number of areas. One of the most important is in control of ground water, such as streams. The new version takes them out of government control except during droughts.

The committee will receive written testimony through Tuesday. Oral testimony may be allowed at the Wednesday meeting, but only at the discretion of the chairman, Rep. Calvin Say.