

TITLE: Protection of water (Ola I ka Wai - Water is Life) and urge the Office of Government affairs to advocate on protection of indigenous water and other natural resource rights

SPONSOR: Jennifer Latham

BE IT RESOLVED, the Episcopal Church decries the efforts of government and other organizations that cause harm to native and indigenous lands by harming natural environments and polluting natural resources like water, land, and air and urges all dioceses and the Office of Government Relations to advocate for the protection of these natural resources.

RATIONALE/EXPLANATION. In 2021, the Indigenous Lands of Hawai‘i were threatened by the U.S. Navy’s fuel tank facility located on the island of O‘ahu. The fuel tanks were leaking into the local water reserves that provide drinking water to the residents of O‘ahu. Many families were displaced and continue to suffer the physical and emotional consequences of unknowingly using tainted water. Though the Navy is trying to clean the water, defuel the tanks, and restore trust with the people of Hawai‘i, the action is too late. The Navy’s response (like other actions across the globe and on other indigenous lands) has caused permanent damage to the aquifer, denying access to clean water and other resources. This is a Human Rights violation. In Hawaiian teaching, ola i ka wai. (Water is life.) Having no access to clean water hinders our ability to be in life-giving, spiritual communion with each other.