

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **KCA, MMNA, and Wailea808 Petition the State to Designate the Kamaʻole Aquifer as a Ground Water Management Area**

KĪHEI, MAUI — The Kīhei Community Association, the Maui Meadows Neighborhood Association, and Wailea808 have submitted a petition asking the State’s Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM) to designate the Kamaʻole Aquifer Area as a Ground Water Management Area (GWMA) just like it has already done for the Central Maui’s Na Wai Eha and W. Maui aquifers.

This designation would provide stronger, transparent oversight of groundwater withdrawals to protect South Maui’s water future in the face of growing demand, and climate-driven reductions in recharge and rising ocean levels.

**Current and planned withdrawals in Kamaʻole exceed 90% of the aquifer’s estimated sustainable yield** (11 million gallons per day), meeting a key statutory criterion for GWMA designation.

**Climate science forecasts significantly reduced recharge** ahead; for Kamaʻole, the U.S. Geological Survey forecasts approximately a 23% (about 16 mgd) decrease in annual mean rainfall recharge under a mid-century dry climate scenario.

**Groundwater levels documented in monitoring data also show a significant trend of water level decrease**, including a decrease of 0.07 feet per year over the past 23 years at the Waiohuli observation well.

### **What Petitioners are requesting**

Petitioners are asking the Commission to designate Kamaʻole aquifer as a GWMA, which means developers of existing and new water sources must obtain a permit that requires them to disclose their uses, whether they’ve considered alternatives, and to show their uses are not harming the ecosystem, Hawaiian customary rights, domestic water uses, or DHHL’s water uses. The Commission has already taken these steps for the West Maui GWMA. It has also designated every one of Oahu’s aquifers, as well as the entire island of Molokai.

## **Why a Ground Water Management Area matters**

When an aquifer remains undesignated, the Commission lacks power to comprehensively manage groundwater uses. Petitioners argue that a GWMA designation is a common-sense planning step to ensure South Maui's groundwater is managed sustainably, with transparency and enforceable protections, before over-withdrawal becomes irreversible.

### **Quotes**

"Every credible signal is pointing in the same direction: less recharge in the future and rising demand today. It would be reckless to keep adding withdrawals without stronger oversight. A Ground Water Management Area is a practical step to protect this aquifer and the community that depends on it." *John Laney, President, Kīhei Community Association*

"This is basic risk management. Climate models point to reduced recharge, and South Maui's demand pressures aren't slowing down. If we don't designate Kama'ole now, we're locking in future scarcity, exactly when we should be prioritizing water for resident housing and essential uses." *Les Iczkovitz, President, Maui Meadows Neighborhood Association*

"It is reckless for the County and large landowners to plan on adding thousands more homes in S Maui when we don't know how much more water the aquifer holds. We have maps and diagrams of this massive amount of proposed developments that make it easy to see why the current system is like an uncontrolled land rush, where it is better to be early than late, to start pumping groundwater. We need the State to use its supervisory authority to assess and regulate the aquifer." *Kay Anderson, President, Wailea808*

### **What's next**

Petitioners urge community members, water users, and decision-makers to participate in the public process and provide testimony supporting the designation of the Kama'ole Aquifer as a Ground Water Management Area.

### **Attachments / visuals available:**

- Petition and Exhibits (including recharge projections + monitoring well trends)
- Table of Approved and Proposed Developments
- List of Additional South Maui (Kamaole Aquifer) Projects
- Diagram of Proposed South Maui Projects
- Map of Kama'ole Aquifer boundaries

### **About the Petitioners**

KCA, MMNA, and Wailea808 are South Maui nonprofit community organizations focused on education, advocacy, and the well-being of our community and residents, including those living directly atop the Kama'ole Aquifer System Area.

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