

# Chronological: Ala Wai Canal Watershed Improvement Project

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers  
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# Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



**REMARKS BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE  
ALA WAI CANAL WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
AHA HOOLAULEA, AUGUST 22, 1998  
HILTON HAWAIIAN VILLAGE**

In 1994, I received a letter from a constituent who detailed for me some of the deplorable conditions in the Ala Wai Canal. He told me about the canoe paddlers who suffer from infections after practicing in the Ala Wai; about areas where the silt level is so high that the canoes can't get through or where the paddles scrape the bottom. He told me about all the recreational activities that could make use of the Ala Wai if not for the pollution and junk in the canal. Of course, I already knew that the Ala Wai was a place that I would not have wanted to go swimming. But, it took one constituent to remind me of the potential of the Ala Wai, what it could and should be to the community.

I contacted the EPA and they were interested in a partnership with the State of Hawaii, the City and County of Honolulu and, most importantly, the people who live in the watershed surrounding the Ala Wai. The key to the success of this venture, are the communities. We could provide the financial resources. But, we need to empower the people to take responsibility for the long-term stewardship of the watershed.

With the EPA's support, my job was clear -- to convince my colleagues in the Congress that this was a model that the federal government should support and promote to other urban watersheds across the United States. For the last three years, I have secured \$1.15 million for the Ala Wai Canal Watershed Improvement Project. I anticipate an additional \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 1999.

I have been following along with your progress through your selection of an advisory committee, your community visioning process and town meetings, and your selection and approval of community based water quality projects that are soon to be funded and implemented. I am honored and proud to be here today to congratulate you on your hard work and commitment.

Oftentimes, people from Hawaii sell themselves short. They feel that they are far away and less sophisticated compared to the big cities. I am here to tell you that it is projects like this that are models for the rest of the country. This is a model based on the Hawaiian ahapuaa which stretches from the mountain to the sea. We must malama or care for our natural resources to ensure that we will have the resources to take care of us.

You have demonstrated to yourselves, Hawaii and our nation what you can do when you put your minds and hearts into it. You might not have been aware, but people outside Hawaii are watching you and taking a lesson in community based environmental restoration and management.

I am proud to return to Washington and report to the United States Congress on the innovation and success of the people from Makiki, from Papakolea, from Tantalus, from Punchbowl, from Manoa, from Palolo, Ala Moana and McCully, from Kakaako, from St. Louis Heights and Moilili, from Kaimuki, Kapahulu and Diamond Head, and last but not least from Waikiki.

One of the themes of this Hoolaulea, this celebration, is hookupu-- the giving of a gift. All of your hard work to date is your gift to your community. Your hookupu is also for your children and for their children. And, though you may not have realized it until today, your hookupu goes far beyond your community. The successful implementation of your stream bank restoration projects, your taro lo'i projects, your water quality monitoring projects is your gift to the nation as a shining example of what a community can do to bring environmentalism to life in an urban setting.

With this project, we add new words to our American dictionary -- hookupu and malama. Together, I believe they sum up this project - the gift of caring. Congratulations on a job well done and Godspeed for the important tasks that lie ahead.

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**\*\*PRESS ADVISORY\*\***

INOUYE TO SPEAK AT ALA WAI WATERSHED SUMMIT  
AND HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD 3RD ANNUAL DRUG FREE DAY  
CELEBRATION

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 1998

Honolulu, Hawaii -- On Saturday, August 22nd, U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye will attend and deliver remarks at the Ala Wai Watershed Summit at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Tapa Tower at 8:30 am.

In addition, Senator Inouye will deliver short remarks at the Hawaii National Guard and Hawaii Housing and Community Development's 3rd Annual Drug Free Day celebration at Bellows Air Force Station at 11:00 am.

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