

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-D008
Title: Protection of Water “Ola i Ka Wai - Water is Life”
Proposer: Costa, The Ven. Steven
Topic: Environment, Human Rights

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-B025 Recognize Clean Water as a Human Right and Public Trust
1973-B106 Calls on the Church to Protect the Earth and Oppose Environmental Threats

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2018-C064 Support Tribal Opposition to a Minnesota Pipeline
1979-B058 Urge Congress to Establish a Hawaiian Native Claims Commission

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

D008 - Protection of Water “Ola i Ka Wai - Water is Life”

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Costa, The Ven. Steven

Endorsed by: Carpenter, Ms. Mary, Kusumoto, Mr. Ryan, Arakawa, Ms. Kimberly

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: Yes

Directs Dioceses: Yes

Directs Executive Council: Yes

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 07 - Social Justice & United States Policy

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention reaffirm the work of previous General Conventions regarding the protection of water, such as 2018-C064, 2018-B025, and 1973-B106, and that the General Convention recognize the “grave injustice wrongfully committed with the aid of American militia to the sovereign nation of Hawai‘i” as noted in the whereas clause of the 1979-B058 resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention support and encourage the Presiding Bishop and Staff, the Executive Council and its Committees, and each of the Dioceses of The Episcopal Church to continue affirmation of the above with actions, statements, prayers, and witness that are consistent with the recognition of Native Hawaiians in their stewardship of water; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention adds its voice to those of Native Hawaiians calling for the protection of the water of O‘ahu that continues to be threatened by the storage and removal of jet fuel and the closure of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility which the U.S. Navy manages; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention instructs the Office of Government Relations to advocate for safe and complete defueling and closure of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, restoration of the land on which the facility sits, and transparency by the U.S. Navy and other government agencies in this process; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention instructs the Office of Government Relations to advocate for indigenous and native people's rights to safety, transparency, and restoration in cases where the U.S. government and/or its agencies and military forces threaten or damage clean water and other natural resources; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, and Hawai'i's U.S. Congressional delegation.

Explanation

In Hawaiian teaching, *ola i ka wai* (water is life), and in Christian teaching, water is the source of life, renewal, and rebirth. For many years the drinking water on the island of O'ahu has been threatened by the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, maintained by the U.S. Navy. In the latest leak in 2021, the fuel tanks leaked thousands of gallons of jet fuel into the local aquifer that provides drinking water to the residents of O'ahu. Many families suffered and continue to suffer from the physical and emotional consequences of unknowingly using tainted water. Though the Navy has attempted to clean the water and has defueled most of the fuel from the tanks, the water still shows signs of contamination. The Navy's actions were too late, inadequate, and resulted in a loss of trust of the people of Hawai'i as well as permanent damage to the aquifer.



Resolution Number: 2018-B025
Title: Recognize Clean Water as a Human Right and Public Trust
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urges the Church to learn about the watersheds and aquifers in the regions in which our faith communities and institutions are located; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize the public trust that protects the waters and community uses in the watersheds and aquifers of the communities and regions that make up the Church; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recognize water and sanitation as human rights and water as a commons (a publicly held natural system); and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church urge the phase out and eventual ban, by 2021 the sale or distribution of bottled water in Church-related facilities and at Church events except when local water supplies are deemed unsafe; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church promotes and advocate for publicly financed, owned, and operated safe water and wastewater infrastructure and services.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), p. 688.



Resolution Number: 1973-B106
Title: Calls on the Church to Protect the Earth and Oppose Environmental Threats
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 1973 General Convention

(1) Recognize the relation between Christian stewardship and prudent use of the Earth,

(2) Encourage responsible and thoughtful use of our natural resources (including air, water, and all living things), and

(3) Instruct Churchmen in their responsibilities as stewards of God's Earth, its inhabitants, and its environments; and be it further

Resolved, That the 1973 General Convention ask all Dioceses, parishes, and missions of the Episcopal Church to administer their own vehicles, buildings, and properties so as never to contribute unnecessarily to the deterioration of the Earth's natural environment; and be it further

Resolved, That all Dioceses, parishes, and missions be alert to those plans and actions of peoples and governments which in their judgment threaten, degrade, or waste our natural environment, and take appropriate public steps to oppose them.

Citation: General Convention, Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Louisville, 1973 (New York: General Convention, 1973), pp. 436-437.