

The Decline in Water Supply

Though many of us are aware that water is a valuable source, we fail to realize just how important its decline is to us citizens of Hawaii. Being that Hawaii is a chain of islands, we remain very reliant on the importing of outside resources. As such, it is rather important we remain independent regarding our water sources. This predicament is not only due to an increase in demand. We also happen to cut down our rainforests, which act as natural reservoirs. Now there are fewer trees to retain rainfall and empty such water into a reservoir. Another reason for our predicament would be the introduction of invasive species. Plants such as the strawberry guava take in three times the amount of water native plants use, decreasing the water for our native plants. We're predicted to see a decrease of 5-10% in rain season by the end of the century. Being that the issue has a plentiful amount of causes it would seem rational to address it with urgency.

Hawaii has a growing population, and with it, growing demands for clean water. Combined with the decreases in rainfall and such, some drier areas of Hawaii are predicted to run out of supply in 20 years. Imagine what kind of struggles we'd face in 50 years if we had left such a problem untreated. Once we reach our limit regarding our water supply, it would be very hard to receive water, as it all would need to be imported in. This process would last days, and many of us here would find it quite hard to function without our everyday necessities, water playing a major role in our lives. It is easy to say that left untreated, this issue could spiral out of proportion in 50 years time.

Being that there are many causes for the issue, it is only natural there are many solutions. Considering cost and efficiency, I would recommend the citizens of Hawaii to invest in rain barrels. They cost much less than desalination plants or new innovations involving the collection of water. Rain barrels provide a rather resourceful method, utilizing rainfall to minimize the amount of water you'd use on outdoor purposes. People tend to use 30% of their water outdoors, and they'd be able to take water collected by their rain barrel and use it for their outside purposes. As such, even the solution is tailored to the person, in that they are able to choose what size they buy based on how much water they'd use from the barrel. It also provides incentive to citizens, as the water they utilized from a rain barrel would reduce their water bill. Rain barrels also keep rainfall off the streets and reduce erosion. Not very many invest in such innovations as of the moment, but they are rather useful and hopefully people will give them a go in the future.

Of course, it is easy to wonder how my issue regarding such a widespread topic could possibly relate to the "Inspired in Hawaii" contest that urges students to "dream big and make Hawaii a better place". My topic is uniquely similar to Hawaii, as it is important to Hawaii in ways that involve native species and our natural reservoirs. My dream of addressing the water supply is a rather big topic to tackle, but it was dreamt up in hopes of making Hawaii a more enjoyable place to live. Through tending to their rain barrels and tackling a serious issue together, we residents of Hawaii can unite. My solution is multi-sided, and it unites the community as many of Clarence T. Ching's projects have.

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Though it may be rather obvious, it is important to know that we must act now, in order to change the future. Through acting now we are able to gradually relieve the pressure on the water supply, instead of launching a half-hearted attempt at getting many people to reduce their usage at once. We are able to lessen erosion on our roads and raise awareness of the need for rain barrels. If many of us invest in them now, later on they may become less expensive and readily available due to the supply and demand effect. This would allow more people to participate in the cause and would multiply the fruit of our efforts. Overall, this will allow us to create a brighter future for Hawaii.

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