



March 11, 2008

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 219
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813.

Via email: sentaniguchi@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Aratani@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Dear Senator Taniguchi:

On behalf of the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) I want to thank you for your introduction of Senate Bill 2075, a bill that would protect the titles and provide legal recognition for the professions of industrial hygiene, safety and health physics. As I understand it, the legislation has died in Committee; however Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 has been proposed – A resolution requesting the Auditor to conduct a sunrise review of the industrial hygiene, safety, and health physics professions. AIHA fully supports the legislation that was introduced and fully supports adoption of SCR 41.

Professional recognition and title protection for occupational and environmental health and safety professionals would make it much more difficult for unqualified individuals to represent themselves to the public as qualified. With the many hazards facing America's workers, families and our communities, it is imperative that individuals charged with protecting our citizens have met minimum educational and experience requirements prior to using these titles. Independent, nationally accredited bodies award the designations within these specific professions.

Future legislation for the professions of industrial hygiene, safety and health physics would address many concerns, yet would not infringe on other professions or the individuals within those professions.

Hawaii is not the first state to consider and enact some form of "professional recognition/title protection" for the professions of industrial hygiene, safety and/or health physics. Nineteen other states have enacted similar laws. None of these states have experienced any problems; and just as important is the fact that none of these laws involve any financial cost to the state or the individuals covered by the legislation.

These laws simply afford the public with some assurance that individuals have met minimum educational/experience levels. This can be more of a concern than you might imagine. With continuing concerns about mold abatement, methamphetamine laboratory cleanup, asbestos,

radon, and who knows how many additional occupational and environmental hazards, enacting legislation to define and protect these titles becomes even more important. The public should not have to concern themselves with whether an industrial hygienist, safety professional, or health physicist is qualified.

But let me again be very clear that protecting these titles would not infringe on any other occupation or professional. In no way are we saying that individuals without these professional designations are not qualified in a specific profession. What we are saying is that professionals with designations awarded by accredited bodies should be protected. Frankly, the last time I checked there were over 350+ designations in occupational health and safety; yet less than 20 are awarded from accredited bodies. We need to ensure that individuals who receive designations by simply attending three-day courses are not prohibited from plying their profession, but are not afforded the same legal definition as those with accredited designations.

This legislation is a proper role for government intervention – to provide legal recognition for the professions by stating the qualifications necessary to be considered competent.

Founded in 1939, AIHA is the premier association of occupational and environmental health and safety professionals. Our members are individuals who work for many diverse employers, including private and public companies, labor organizations, government, academia and those engaged in private consulting. As with the members of the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), the association representing those in the safety profession; and the Health Physics Society (HPS), representing professionals in the field of radiation safety, AIHA members serve on the front line of occupational health and safety to protect workers, their families, and the community from hazards. AIHA, ASSE and the HPS have many things in common and strive to work together whenever possible.

AIHA national headquarters and our Hawaii members stand ready to assist you in any way possible as you move forward with this legislation. Each of the nineteen current state laws was enacted with assistance from AIHA. If I or our Hawaii members can be of any assistance to you in providing additional comments, personal testimony or writing letters to other elected officials, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Again, thank you for your efforts. Worker health and safety is a goal everyone shares.

Sincerely,

(signature)
Aaron K Trippler

Director Government Affairs

cc: AIHA Hawaii Local Section Officers
Steven Davis, AIHA Executive Director