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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO NOISE.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The department of health currently uses the dBA  
2 weighting system to measure noise. The dBA system measures  
3 sound in decibels (dB) using the "A weighted" measurement, dBA,  
4 such that sound levels measured in dBA correspond to what the  
5 human ear hears. An alternative dBC weighting system also  
6 measures sound levels but includes measurement of the lower  
7 frequencies that cause physical objects such as windows and  
8 walls to vibrate. Despite these tangible effects, however,  
9 because these lower frequency sound waves are not perceived by  
10 the human ear as measured by the dBA weighting system, the sound  
11 levels generated do not currently constitute a violation of the  
12 community noise control law.

13           The purpose of this Act is to:

14           (1) Require the department of health to add the dBC  
15           decibel weighting system to the current dBA decibel  
16           weighting system for community noise control;

17           (2) Require the department of health to adopt a range of  
18           fifty to sixty decibels (using the dBC weighting



1 system) as the maximum sound level permissible at  
2 nighttime in any urban land use district, as  
3 designated pursuant to section 205-2 Hawaii Revised  
4 Statutes; and

5 (3) Direct the county liquor commissions, with the  
6 assistance of the department of health and the  
7 department of labor and industrial relations, to  
8 develop recommendations for a permanent maximum sound  
9 level, in decibels.

10 SECTION 2. The county liquor commissions, with the  
11 assistance of the department of health and the department of  
12 labor and industrial relations, shall develop recommendations  
13 for a permanent maximum sound level, in decibels, for liquor  
14 establishments licensed under chapter 281, Hawaii Revised  
15 Statutes, by no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
16 the 2010 regular session. The recommendations shall address the  
17 following:

18 (1) Protection of hearing of employees and patrons of the  
19 liquor establishment; and

20 (2) Protection of hearing of residents whose homes are  
21 adjacent to or abut the liquor establishment,



1 including noise levels resulting from early morning  
2 trash and bottle disposal.

3 SECTION 3. Chapter 342F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately  
5 designated and to read as follows:

6 "§342F- Noise measurement; rules. (a) The department  
7 shall adopt rules in accordance with chapter 91 that shall use  
8 both the dBC and the dBA sound level measurement systems for  
9 community noise control. The department and the county liquor  
10 commissions may enforce nighttime noise levels in any urban land  
11 use district measured from over fifty to sixty decibels,  
12 measured using the dBC weighting system, in certain areas they  
13 deem appropriate and not adversely affecting public health and  
14 safety.

15 (b) In any urban land use district, a sound level of more  
16 than sixty decibels for bass sound (using the dBC weighting  
17 system), measured at a complainant's site, shall be deemed to  
18 exceed the maximum permissible sound at nighttime; provided  
19 that, where the complainant's site is within or in close  
20 proximity to an area zoned mixed-use or residential, the maximum  
21 permissible sound at nighttime shall be fifty decibels dBC.

22 (c) For purposes of this section:



1       "Nighttime" means the time between the hours of 10:00 p.m.  
2 and 7:00 a.m.; and

3       "Urban land use district" means property designated as such  
4 pursuant to section 205-2."

5       SECTION 4. Section 342F-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
6 amended by adding three new definitions to be appropriately  
7 inserted and to read as follows:

8       "dBA" means the A-weighted sound level or unit of  
9 measurement describing the total sound level of all noises as  
10 measured with a sound level meter using the "A" weighting  
11 network.

12       "dBC" means the C-weighted sound level or unit of  
13 measurement describing the total sound level of all noises as  
14 measured with a sound level meter using the "C" weighting  
15 network.

16       "Decibel" means the unit for measuring the volume of sound,  
17 equal to twenty times the logarithm to the base ten of the ratio  
18 of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure,  
19 which is twenty micropascals (0.0002 dynes per square  
20 centimeter)."

21       SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

22       SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon approval.



S.B. NO. 605  
S.D. 1  
H.D. 3  
C.D. 1

**Report Title:**

Noise; Decibel Weighting

**Description:**

Requires the department of health to add the dBC decibel weighting system to the current dBA decibel weighting system for purposes of community noise control. Sets permissible maximum sound levels for nighttime in any urban land use district and grants the DOH and the county liquor commission the authority to enforce these limits. Directs the county liquor commission, with assistance from DOH and DLIR, to develop recommendations for a permanent maximum sound level, in decibels. (CD1)

