



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB2749  
RELATING TO WASTE**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS LEE, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hearing Date: February 4, 2016  
Time: 8:00am

Room Number: 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities as set forth in the Governor's  
2 Executive Budget.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department supports the intent of the bill and would like to offer  
4 the following comments.

5  
6 Section 1 of the measure, directs the proposed task force to examine: 1) the levels of sewage  
7 contamination in coastal areas as a result of runoff; and 2) methods of reducing sewage  
8 contamination. We would like to point out that the Department's Clean Water Branch, currently  
9 implements a coastal water quality monitoring program which measures water quality at beaches  
10 around the State. Though not directly targeting runoff events, the coastal water quality  
11 monitoring program includes measurements of sewage contamination such as sewage indicator  
12 bacteria. The water quality data collected from the coastal water quality monitoring program is  
13 used to determine beach sign posting and is comprehensively reported every two years in the  
14 State of Hawaii, Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report (i.e. Integrated Report). The  
15 next Integrated Report will be completed by the fourth quarter of 2016.

16  
17 The second item the proposed task force is directed to address is the examination of methods to  
18 reduce sewage contamination. The Department's Environmental Management Division, has  
19 three branches which regulate sewage systems. The Wastewater Branch regulates individual  
20 waste systems (e.g. cesspools, septic tanks, etc.). The Safe Drinking Water Branch regulates  
21 injection wells. Lastly, the Clean Water Branch regulates sewage systems that discharge to  
22 surface waters. The three regulatory programs take a coordinated approach to reducing sewage  
23 contamination which is described in the Hawaii Water Plan. The Hawaii Water Plan was  
24 recently updated in 2014.

1 Given the complexity of the subjects proposed for examination, the Department has concerns  
2 that there are inadequate resources to procure technical support services to operate under the  
3 direction of the task force. Further, the Department estimates that an additional year will be  
4 required to complete the two proposed tasks.  
5

6 The Department also supports the establishment of a sewage infrastructure review task force  
7 under Section 3 of the bill. Sewage infrastructure in the State are generally owned by the  
8 Counties and various private entities. The information to be collected from the task force can be  
9 beneficial to the State. However, the Department understands that the success will depend on  
10 the Counties and private entities commitment to participate in the task force. Information and  
11 data about the sewage infrastructure listed under (b)(1) to (b)(6) would have to be provided by  
12 these parties. Therefore, the Department supports the establishment of a sewage infrastructure  
13 task force as long as there is a commitment by the Counties and private entities to participate in  
14 this initiative.

15 Again, due to the complexity of the information that will need to be collected and analyzed, the  
16 Department requests that additional time be provided to submit the report of its findings and  
17 recommendations to the legislature as required by Section 3(e). The Department estimates that  
18 an additional year will be needed to complete this report.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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**Sent:** Tuesday, February 02, 2016 4:46 AM  
**To:** EEPtestimony  
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**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB2749 on Feb 4, 2016 08:00AM\*

**HB2749**

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

Testimony for EEP on Feb 4, 2016 08:00AM in Conference Room 325

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kaelan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the*

**LATE**

House COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Thursday February 4, 2016 8AM Room 325

**In Support HB2749** Relating to Waste

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Aloha Chairman Lee and members of the House EEP Committee,

On behalf of our 12,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **strongly supports** HB2749 to establish two task forces to recommend solutions to Hawai'i sewage run off problems.

Hawaii needs immediate action to address the failure of our infrastructure. Unfortunately, year after year, litigation, legislation and regulations to retire cesspools, improve county sewer infrastructure, and manage run-off are initiated, but then delayed. And year after year, our nearshore waters are contaminated with human waste, people are made sick, and fishing areas are closed. Decades of failure to properly manage our wastewater has compounded into a major threat to public health and the quality of our environment.

HB2749 is one solid step toward workable solutions to Hawaii's embarrassing sewage problem. This bill seeks to establish two short-term task forces: 1) to review the current state of sewage runoff, 2) to review our current sewage infrastructure. These task forces are comprised of the Department of Health, Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the mayors of each county. The task forces have a six-month window to research our sewage infrastructure and waste run-off, and then propose solutions to the Legislature.

We need real and immediate action to address the current failures of our system. That is why the Sierra Club strongly urges this Committee to move this measure forward. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,

Martha Townsend  
Director