

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FEBRUARY 24, 2017
11:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 1557 HD1
RELATING TO COMPOSTING

Chairperson Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1577 HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to establish on-site campus composting pilot projects in the Department of Education (DOE) schools, and the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) issuing grants pursuant to recommendation of the composting grant pilot project working group. HDOA supports the intent of this measure as it relates to increasing nutrient recycling for building healthy soils and using agriculture as a platform to educate students in science, technology, engineering, and math. However, the HDOA does not have the administrative capacity to manage such a grant program, and would not be logistically able to carry-out such a program without additional funding for staff.

Act 218 (SLH 2015) established a Farm to School Program within the HDOA, directing the Farm to School Coordinator to “address the issues of supply, demand, procurement, and consumption of Hawaii-grown foods in state facilities” (HRS §141-11(b)). One of the five goals of the program is to “[a]ccelerate garden and farm-based education for the State’s public school students” HRS §141-11(a)(4). Through our Farm to School Coordinator’s work with community members, school principals, DOE’s



Facilities Branch, and Department of Health, the lack of regulatory clarity and policy guidance has been identified as a barrier to composting programs in public schools.

HDOA acknowledges the importance of increasing soil health with nutrient cycling as a low-cost alternative to imported soil amendments, which increases productivity while decreasing input costs to producers. Funding such a pilot project in DOE is an opportunity to invest in articulating legal requirements of campus composting activities while collaborating on effective policy to safely guide on-site composting projects. However, as HDOA does not possess composting subject matter expertise or administrative capacity to execute effective campus composting projects, HDOA respectfully defers the administration of this DOE Campus Composting measure to either DOE or University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH-CTAHR) to administer. The Department is willing to participate in its advisory role on the working group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



KATHRYN S. MATAYOSHI
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/24/2017
Time: 11:00 AM
Location: 308
Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1577, HD1 RELATING TO COMPOSTING.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes the Department of Agriculture to issue grants to establish a composting grant pilot project in DOE schools. Establishes a composting grant pilot project working group. Requires report to legislature. Appropriates funds. (HB1577 HD1)

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports HB 1577 HD1 to create a composting pilot project in Hawaii public schools. Together with our farm-to-school and "green" efforts, this measure will foster student learning and positive social practices integral to sustainable living in our world today.

The Department looks forward to partnering with the Department of Agriculture on this pilot project.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1577 HD1.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, 2017**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1577, H.D. 1, RELATING TO COMPOSTING.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DATE: Friday, February 24, 2017

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 308

TESTIFIER(S): Douglas S. Chin, Attorney General, or
Melissa Kolonie, Deputy Attorney General, or
Margaret S. Ahn, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to establish composting grant pilot projects in Department of Education schools. This bill also establishes a “composting grant pilot project working group” (Working Group) within the Department of Agriculture and authorizes the Department of Agriculture to issue grants pursuant to the recommendations of the Working Group.

Section 2(b) of this bill on page 3, lines 18-20, and page 4, lines 1-4, provides that the members of the Working Group shall include the “chair of the senate committee on education,” the “chair of the house of representatives committee on education,” the “chair of the senate committee on agriculture and environment,” and the “chair of the house of representatives committee on energy and environmental protection.” The inclusion of legislators in a working group that will perform executive functions might be challenged as a violation of the constitutional separation of powers doctrine. The Working Group’s functions specified in this bill include, “[i]n conjunction with the department health, develop guidelines and provide oversight for campus composting,” and “issue grants to schools pursuant to this section.” These would likely constitute executive functions. We therefore recommend this bill be amended to provide for appointments from lists provided by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the

House of Representatives. The President and the Speaker could internally consult with the relevant committee chairs in assembling their lists.

Section 2(a) of this bill on page 3, lines 4-6, provides that the Department of Agriculture shall issue grants pursuant to the recommendation of the Working Group. Article VII, section 4, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii provides, “[n]o grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law.” This bill does not include any standards for making the grants, and without such standards, the Department of Agriculture cannot make the administrative grants intended by this bill. We therefore recommend this bill be amended to insert standards for making these grants.

For clarification purposes, we also recommend the following amendments:

1. Section 2(c)(4) of this bill on page 5, line 6, provides that the Working Group shall “[i]ssue grants to schools pursuant to this section.” To be consistent with the bill’s provision that the Department of Agriculture shall issue the grants pursuant to the recommendation of the Working Group (discussed above), this paragraph should be amended to provide that the Working Group shall “Make recommendations to the department of agriculture regarding the issuance of grants to schools pursuant to this section.”

2. Section 2(b)(11) of this bill on page 4, line 7, provides that the Kokua Hawaii Foundation shall be a member of the Working Group. This line should be amended to instead reference, “a representative from the Kokua Hawaii Foundation.”

We respectfully recommend that this bill be amended as set forth above to avoid potential constitutional challenges and for clarification purposes.

Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui

Coordinated through The Kohala Center



TESTIMONY

House Committee on Finance
February 24, 2017, 11:00 a.m.

Island Networks & Organizations

Farm to Keiki (Preschool)
FoodCorps Hawai'i
Grow Some Good
Hawai'i Island School Garden
Network/The Kohala Center
'Iolani School
Ka Ohana O Na Pua
Kaua'i School Garden Network/
Malama Kaua'i
Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation
(ĀINA In Schools)
Maui School Garden Network
Moloka'i School Garden Network/
Sustainable Moloka'i
O'ahu Farm to School Network

State Agencies

Hawai'i Department of Agriculture:
Farm to School Program
Hawai'i Department of Education:
Hawai'i Child Nutrition Programs
Hawai'i Department of Education:
School Food Services Branch
Hawai'i Department of Health:
Healthy Hawai'i Initiative
UH CTAHR O'ahu Master Gardeners

HB1577, HD1: RELATING TO COMPOSTING.

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui **supports HB1577, HD1.**

Over one hundred active composting projects are taking place in schools across our state. The Hawai'i State Legislature is taking prudent action by hearing and passing this bill to develop a working group, composting guidelines, and a grant program for the healthy continuation and expansion of composting in schools.

Successful and duplicable methods of composting in schools have been developed through the Resource Recovery program at Lanikai Elementary Public Charter School on O'ahu, facilitated by Waikiki Worm Company. Their "Zero Waste Revolution" monthly report for December 2016 states that a total of 9,308 pounds, or 4.65 tons of food waste was recovered and composted during the Fall 2016 semester at Lanikai Elementary. A food waste audit conducted at Kainalu Elementary on O'ahu in November 2016 revealed that an average of 244 pounds of food waste is generated daily at the school during breakfast and lunch, presenting the opportunity for an annual food waste recovery of 22 tons.

Learning to reduce waste, recycle nutrients, and regenerate soils through composting are critical 21st century skills for Hawai'i's students to obtain. Composting in schools has the potential to play a major role in helping our state meet its goals for waste reduction and local food production. The Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui is available to assist with this effort through the expertise of our members and our direct access to school garden networks on all islands.

Formed in 2010, the Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui is a statewide network comprised of five island-level networks, active organizations, and representatives of the Hawai'i Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Health. Our mission is to strengthen Hawai'i's statewide farm to school and school garden movement.

Thank you very much for hearing this bill.

Aloha,

Lydi Morgan Bernal
Coordinator
Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui
schoolgardenhui@kohalacenter.org
www.hawaiischoolgardenhui.org

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 8:01 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: megan.pittsley@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1577 on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM*

HB1577

Submitted on: 2/22/2017

Testimony for FIN on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Megan Fox	Malama Kaua`i	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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RESOURCE RECOVERY • KA'ŌHAO PROTOCOL

A partnership of Windward schools working cooperatively in the pursuit of waste reduction, soil restoration, and applied environmental education. All members participate annually in the U.S. EPA's Food Recovery Challenge and adhere to strict, safe, standardized operational procedures.

SUMMARY • JANUARY 2017

LANIKAI ELEMENTARY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Start: January 2014 • Number of students: 330 • Annual food waste: 8 tons • Food waste collection: 100% cafeteria lunch, campus-wide snacks • Other: 98% HI-5 cans and bottles, green waste, paper, cardboard, mylar • Technologies: thermal composting, vermicomposting, bokashi

Food waste recovered: 1,936 pounds. Organized by KUPU intern Jordan Nelson, Ag teachers and students from Castle High School spent two productive days at Lanikai and Kainalu helping with food catch and compost pile building. Castle Ag students will be conducting their own food waste audit in February.

Sixth grade science students designed an ingenious apparatus that captures the heat generated by compost piles to heat water to 130° to create a bucket-washing station right on site! When fully developed, this will be a very useful addition to operations at all ZWS campuses.

KA'ELEPULU ELEMENTARY

Start: August 2016 • Number of students: 185 • Annual food waste: 8 tons • Food waste collection: 100% cafeteria breakfast and lunch • Other: 100% HI-5 cans and bottles, green waste • Technologies: thermal composting

Food waste recovered: 1,548 pounds. Ka'elepulu's resource recovery program is under the leadership of parent volunteer Lindsey Whitcomb. With both KUPU interns Samantha Luhn and Tawni Kerr on hand in January, we were able to offer two-day-a-week support, bringing Ka'elepulu's all six active compost piles up to speed.

Jayne Grzebik, Director of the UH Master Gardener program in Waimanalo, met with principal Jaime Dela Cruz to discuss a formalized relationship with Ka'elepulu to assist with garden restoration and composting.

KAINALU ELEMENTARY

Start: January 2017 • Number of students: 460 • Annual food waste: 18 tons • Food waste collection: 100% cafeteria breakfast and lunch • Other: 100% HI-5 cans and bottles • Technologies: thermal composting, vermicomposting

Food waste recovered: 3,189 pounds. The newest – and biggest – school to join the Windward ZWS Hui, Kainalu's first month of resource recovery was a huge success. Their vermicomposting system, started a year ago, is now operating at full capacity of 30 pounds per week; four hot compost piles were built to accommodate over 1.5 tons of food waste. A program for sharing finished compost from the estimated annual 36 piles has been proposed.

Administration and custodial support was unequivocally enthusiastic and helpful. Children quickly picked up the sort-and-separate procedure. The cafeteria rubbish bag count decreased from 12 bags to 4 bags starting on Day One.

COMBINED JANUARY 2017 TOTALS

Period from January 9 through February 3. Includes 19 days at Lanikai, 18 days at Ka'e'epulu and Kainalu

Total students participating daily: **975**

Total food waste recovered in January: **6,673 pounds**

2017 total to date: 6,673 pounds

kōkua hawai'i foundation



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1577 SD1 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE February 24, 2017, 11 a.m., Room 308

Aloha Representatives,

The Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2003 to support environmental education in the schools and communities of Hawai'i. Our programs include 'ĀINA In Schools, 3R's School Recycling, Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation Field Trip Grants, Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation Mini-Grants, and Plastic Free Hawai'i. In the last 13 years, we have supported several island schools in reducing, diverting, and recycling all types of waste through mini-grants, recycling drives, teachers' trainings, distribution of our 'ĀINA In Schools composting curricula, and coordination with the DOE and other governmental, private, and non-profit partners.

Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation strongly supports HB1577 SD1. Key reasons for our support of this bill are:

- 1) We have seen a marked increase in on-campus composting education and efforts statewide through the Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation Mini-Grant Program and the Hawai'i Youth Sustainability Challenge. Schools such as Lanikai Public Charter School and Sunset Beach Elementary Schools are two examples of schools that have implemented on-campus composting programs. Much more support is needed to develop and grow composting initiatives at schools statewide.
- 2) The potential for the DOE to cut its disposal pickup frequency and tipping fees by 50%, resulting in an estimated 7-9 million fewer pounds of wet, organic waste and paper entering Hawai'i's landfills and incinerator(s).
- 3) Governor Ige, as well as the Aloha+ Challenge, have called for doubling local food production by 2020. For this to work, students have to be engaged early to learn about building soil through composting and utilizing organic resources.
- 4) The Aloha+ Challenge calls for reducing the solid waste stream prior to disposal by 70 percent by 2030 through source reduction, recycling, bioconversion, and landfill diversion methods. This goal, signed by the Governor, four county Mayors, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, State Legislature, and Hawai'i Green Growth public-private partners across the state, has no hope of being achieved unless the largest producers of waste, like DOE, are addressed.
- 5) On-site composting systems and programs provide a much-needed opportunity for students to practice diverting resources to their highest and best use and watching as they are transformed into "black gold" to support their school gardens.
- 6) The requirement for DOH to participate in the working group ensures that schools, and those responsible for public health, can together create an appropriately-sized set of regulations and safety measures that allow food grown on campus to be sold to benefit the school, because they have been confirmed as pathogen free.
- 7) The introduction of composting systems on campus provides science and math curriculum opportunities to meet national standards.

In addition, we strongly encourage the addition of administrative funding to this bill to administer a grant program. The Dept. of Agriculture Farm to School program already has no budget to conduct their own program, and this would amount to an unfunded mandate for DOA in spite of its broad support across the constituents and the state agencies.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jack Johnson,
Co-Founder, Vice-President

Kim Johnson,
Co-Founder, President

Natalie McKinney,
Executive Director

www.kokuahawaii.org

P.O. Box 866, Hale'iwa, HI 96712 • Tel: (808) 638-5145 • Fax: (808) 638-0757 • info@kokuahawaii.org

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kōkua hawai'i foundation



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1577 SD1
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
February 24, 2017, 11 a.m., Room 308

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Mahalo for your consideration,

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Co-Founder, Vice-President

Kim Johnson,
Co-Founder, President

Natalie McKinney,
Executive Director

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HB1577, HD1: RELATING TO COMPOSTING.

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee,

Māla‘ai: The Culinary Garden of Waimea Middle School supports HB1577, HD1.

Over one hundred active composting projects are taking place in schools across our state. The Hawai‘i State Legislature is taking prudent action by hearing and passing this bill to develop a working group, composting guidelines, and a grant program for the healthy continuation and expansion of composting in schools.

Successful and duplicable methods of composting in schools have been developed through the Resource Recovery program at Lanikai Elementary Public Charter School on O‘ahu, facilitated by Waikiki Worm Company. Their “Zero Waste Revolution” monthly report for December 2016 states that a total of 9,308 pounds, or 4.65 tons of food waste was recovered and composted during the Fall 2016 semester at Lanikai Elementary. A food waste audit conducted at Kainalu Elementary on O‘ahu in November 2016 revealed that an average of 244 pounds of food waste is generated daily at the school during breakfast and lunch, presenting the opportunity for an annual food waste recovery of 22 tons.

Learning to reduce waste, recycle nutrients, and regenerate soils through composting are critical 21st century skills for Hawai‘i’s students to obtain. Composting in schools has the potential to play a major role in helping our state meet its goals for waste reduction and local food production. The Hawai‘i Farm to School and School Garden Hui is available to assist with this effort through the expertise of our members and our direct access to school garden

networks on all islands.

[See More from Amanda Rieux](#)

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Lydi Morgan Bernal, Coordinator
Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui
Coordinated through The Kohala Center
[808-887-6411](tel:808-887-6411) The Kohala Center
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www.hawaiischoolgardenhui.org

The Kohala Center is an independent, community-based center for research, conservation, and education. We turn research and traditional knowledge into action, so that communities in Hawai'i and around the world can thrive—ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 3:11 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: kalanitm@hawaii.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1577 on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM

HB1577

Submitted on: 2/22/2017

Testimony for FIN on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kalani Matsumura	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am providing personal testimony, based on my experience as a CTAHR extension agent in urban horticulture. I work closely with the Hawaii Farm to School and School Garden Hui and with individual schools on gardening and composting. I testify that the technical knowledge and experience to safely and properly compost 100% of school food waste and greenwaste already exists in the state. Food waste composting is already being done at many schools. All that is needed to make it a successful program statewide is funding. A full-time statewide coordinator is essential to provide guidance and training to schools. A full- or part-time sustainability or garden coordinator in each school is then necessary to implement composting operations and related curriculum. Many schools already have such a position. For example, my wife Juliet is a teacher and sustainability coordinator at Kaimuki Middle School, and successfully composts school cafeteria waste. Please provide the funding necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this program. The benefits will outweigh the costs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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To: Honorable Chair and Committee members of Finance

Hearing date 02-22-2017

RE: HB1577 HD1 Relating to Composting

In Support of HB1577 HD1

On-site campus composting programs involving students have been extremely successful in providing a beneficial method of waste diversion. These programs foster learning about scientific principles and social practices while allowing students to take responsibility for the amount of waste generated. As a mother of a child that will enter the Hawai'i public school system in the fall, I have been doing my research on our schooling options. Those schools that provide on-site campus composting stand out to me.

Having the students learn first-hand the relationships between food waste, composting, nutrient cycling, healthy soils, and local food production is a cost-effective, efficient, enjoyable and worthwhile endeavor for our keiki. And in our natural, cultural, and economic environment, it seems like an obvious solution to help us address some of our State's serious issues, including waste management, access to healthy, nutrient-rich soils, and more. Furthermore, proper guidance from the departments of health and education regarding campus composting would increase the safety of existing programs while expanding opportunities for new programs in state schools.

Thank you for taking the time to consider funding for this bill in order to help perpetuate a healthy lifestyle for our keiki.

Aloha,
Melissa Iwamoto
Kāne'ohe, HI

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 9:28 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: malahoffkamei@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1577 on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM

HB1577

Submitted on: 2/22/2017

Testimony for FIN on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melissa Malahoff-Kamei	Individual	Support	No

Comments: To Whom it May Concern: I am writing in support of HB1577, as my child participates in this program at Kaelepulu Elementary School. We have seen first-hand the school's positive and innovative program that provides this hands-on learning opportunity for our kids. The program allows students to engage in sustainable and socially responsible activities. By composting the waste generated on-site, students can experience the entire process from start to finish and have a chance to interact with practical learning outside the classroom walls. Not only does this teach our children to be environmentally conscious but it gives them real skills that can be applied at home. The school's garden also benefits from the compost generated, furthering the outdoor learning environment opportunities as the children learn about real food production. If the future goal is to make Hawaii's citizens socially responsible, environmentally conscious and innovatively sustainable, this is a program that deserves your consideration and support. Afterall, not every child is going to grow up and work in a cubicle at a desk. Hands-on learning with composting and gardening gives all our children a chance to explore other opportunities and discover new skills and interests. Mahalo, Melissa Malahoff-Kamei Parent of a 5th Grader at Kaelepulu Elementary School

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 10:49 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: milholen.jennifer@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1577 on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM

HB1577

Submitted on: 2/23/2017

Testimony for FIN on Feb 24, 2017 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Milholen	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments: Aloha, Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and committee members. Mahalo for taking the time to hear this bill. On-campus composting programs have proven enormously successful in diverting 10s of thousands of pounds of heavy, wet organic waste from dumpster disposal. In the process students are taught the high value of resource conservation, building healthy soils and becoming young farmers, which is precisely what Hawaii needs more of to achieve self sufficiency. There is no denying the support for these programs, but they remain isolated and short-lived because they often depend on one time grants. Given the enormous benefits to students and the potential of the DOE to lower its disposal delivery in renegotiated contracts, we need to see on-campus food waste diversion and composting programs system-wide. The only way that will happen is with guaranteed funding for basic equipment and a support staff member. I ask that you please pass this bill and consider adding on administrative funding allocation so that the HIDOA Farm to School Program that would administer it will have the capacity to do so. Otherwise, this may become an unfunded mandate in effect. I also support the working group mainly because bringing the DOA, DOE, and DOH together would ensure that a standardized set of appropriately-sized regulations are created in regards to pathogen testing, food safety, leachate, aeration, fire plans, etc. Mahalo for your time. Jennifer Milholen Kokua Hawaii Foundation Waste Reduction Coordinator

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LATE



**O'ahu
Chapter**

House Bill 1577: Relating to Composting
In Strong Support
Hearing Date: Friday February 24th, 2017
Hearing Time: 11:00 AM
Place: Conference Room 308
Committee: Finance

Aloha Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am writing on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation's Oahu Chapter in strong support of HB 1577 relating to composting pilot projects in the Department of Education (DOE).

One of Surfrider Oahu's most innovative and successful program is the Ocean Friendly Gardens (OFG) initiative and the Surfblitz program. Our members and volunteers have engaged in landscape revitalization by understanding the connection of health soils and at home food production to the future health of our nearshore ecosystems and oceans. In the past 3 years we have built more than 20 OFG's around Oahu following a program directive of CPR – Conservation, Permeability, and Retention. These concepts are the foundation of having healthy watersheds. In designing landscapes under this umbrella of sustainability we have come to realize the high value of composting to amend our soils. By transferring nutrients from our food waste to the soils we are creating a closed loop system in which natural processes are used to amend the soil that provides us food.

This program has engaged home owners, but because we are using the power of a volunteer network we are also engaging keiki in the program. At each of our garden builds we have workshops where the youth are engaged in the process of creating healthy soils, a living landscape, and a food sources at home. This early childhood education is a living laboratory with immense educational potential.

Already on Oahu, schools have shown a model of progress in diverting food waste into composting systems that are then in turn used to have mini-agriculture systems on campus. While traditional systems of classroom education still have a place, hands-on experience shows much higher learning retention and engagement possibilities. Farming and agricultural systems in particular have the potential to cross multiple disciplines of study in one living classroom. Students are connected to biology, botany, chemistry, mathematics, economics, engineering, resource management, cultural knowledge, and team work all in one space.

Our food waste problem is one that could be considered tragic considering the amount of people going without. Nearly 30% of all consumer food is wasted – going to landfills or incinerators which are not part of a closed loop that maximizes the potential for a regenerative economy.

This program would have the potential for the DOE to cut its disposal pickup frequency and tipping fees by 50%, resulting in an estimated 7-9 million fewer pounds of wet, organic waste and paper entering Hawaii's landfills and incinerator(s). Governor Ige, as well as the Aloha+ Challenge, have called for doubling local food production by 2020. For this to work, students have to be engaged early to learn about building soil through composting and utilizing organic resources. The Aloha+ Challenge calls for reducing the solid waste stream prior to disposal by 70 percent by 2030 through source reduction, recycling, bioconversion, and landfill diversion methods. This goal, signed by the Governor, four county Mayors, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, State Legislature, and Hawai'i Green Growth public-private partners across the state, has no hope of being achieved unless the largest sources of waste, like DOE, are addressed.

Surfrider is very excited about the possibilities of introducing these systems to schools. Healthy soils are great filters for stormwater runoff and a future generation versed in growing their own food will lead to a more stable economy with less reliance on imported materials.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Bergstrom', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Rafael Bergstrom
Oahu Chapter Coordinator, Surfrider Foundation