



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Submitted to the  
Senate Committees on Higher Education and  
Agriculture and Environment  
Monday, March 20, 2017 at 1:45 p.m.

By

Darren T. Lerner, Interim Director  
Water Resources Research Center and  
Environmental Center  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CORAL

Chairs Kahele and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Riviere, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center (WRRC) was assigned administrative responsibility for the Environmental Center (EC) more than 10 years ago. Over that time, due to budget cuts, retirements, and the passing of one faculty member, the Environmental Center has been reduced to one individual supported on a 50% FTE. This temporary faculty appointment to the WRRC provides instruction for IS 489, Environmental Practicum in its service to the EC.

We agree with the legislature that understanding the environmental impacts of wastewater spills is critical to better protecting Hawai'i's coral reef ecosystems. We respectfully suggest that more important to this end is to understand the critical changes needed in our wastewater infrastructure (and the built environment especially with regard to flood mitigation and control) to prevent such spills (as well as other contaminant and sediment runoff issues that negatively impact coral reef health) from ever occurring. While expertise exists within the WRRC for research and outreach on the infrastructure issues mentioned above, no such expertise has existed from its inception to the present day at the EC (or WRRC) to conduct damage evaluations, identification of diseases, and recommendations for mitigating detrimental effects on reefs and other aspects of research called for in HB 1300. Certainly, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has faculty in possession of various aspects of the requested expertise, but these faculty are not members of the EC nor are they affiliated with the EC.

With this understanding, we respectfully oppose HB 1300 HD1.

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**To:** HRE Testimony  
**Cc:** mkhan@hawaiiantel.net  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1300 on Mar 20, 2017 13:45PM

**HB1300**

Submitted on: 3/19/2017

Testimony for HRE/AEN on Mar 20, 2017 13:45PM in Conference Room 224

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

Comments: Hawaii's coral reefs are important to support the marine environment, including many species of fish and hard corals. Too, according to NOAA, healthy reefs contribute to local economies through tourism. Diving tours, fishing trips, hotels, restaurants, and other businesses based near reef systems provide millions of jobs and contribute billions of dollars all over the world. Coral reefs buffer adjacent shorelines from wave action and prevent erosion, property damage and loss of life. Thus, the value of this measure is that the studies will help to identify the adverse environmental impact that sewage has on coral reefs and also provide justification for sewage system improvements. Please pass HB1300 HD1.

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**HB1300**

Submitted on: 3/15/2017

Testimony for HRE/AEN on Mar 20, 2017 13:45PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jerry Wayne FlowersJr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1300 on Mar 20, 2017 13:45PM\*

**HB1300**

Submitted on: 3/14/2017

Testimony for HRE/AEN on Mar 20, 2017 13:45PM in Conference Room 224

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

Comments:

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