



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB 2612
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

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

Hearing Date: February 06, 2018
Time: 8:30 AM

Room Number: 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Funds are appropriated to conduct a comprehensive statewide study of
2 sewage contamination in nearshore marine areas.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health offers comments with
4 reservations/suggestions on this bill. The Department of Health defers to the Governor's
5 Supplemental Budget Request for appropriation priorities. No single indicator can conclusively
6 determine whether contamination is due to sewage. A study to conclusively determine whether
7 contamination is due to sewage would require the use of multiple indicators involving the use of
8 multiple analytical methodologies. The Department currently lacks the resources, capacity, or
9 analytical capability to perform a study of this magnitude. The majority of nearshore waters in
10 the state are not expected to be impacted by sewage since most areas of the state are serviced
11 with municipal or private wastewater systems. All wastewater operators are required to notify the
12 Department in the event of a spill or detected leak. The areas that are expected to be impacted by
13 sewage are those areas in the state that are not serviced by a sewer system or are serviced by
14 cesspools or injection wells.

15 The Department of Health has consulted with the University of Hawaii Water Resources
16 Research Center and acknowledges that the University of Hawaii has the relevant expertise and
17 personnel to conduct a study of this magnitude. The Department of Health respectfully
18 recommends that the legislature direct the Department of Health and the University of Hawaii to

1 form a committee of qualified experts to develop research strategies to fulfill the intent of this
2 bill. These funds should be appropriated to the University of Hawaii with the Department of
3 Health being a full partner on the study designs, execution of the research project, and be part of
4 the peer review process. The UH has access to a variety of researchers with the requisite
5 methodologies, technical expertise, and capacity to work with the variety of indicators needed to
6 conclusively identify sewage contamination that would be required in a study of this scope and
7 magnitude. By appropriating the funds directly to the UH, the inefficiencies associated with
8 managing such a large-scale contract involving multiple independent researchers from different
9 UH departments by the Department of Health can be avoided.

10
11 Offered Amendments:

12 SECTION 1. (a) *The University of Hawaii, Water*
13 *Resources Research Center in cooperation and consultation*
14 *with Department of Health* shall conduct a comprehensive
15 statewide study of sewage contamination in nearshore marine
16 areas.

17
18 (b) *The University and the Department of Health*
19 shall submit a report of their findings and recommendations,
20 including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later
21 than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session
22 of 2020.

23
24 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
25 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much
26 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the
27 *University of Hawaii, Water Resources Research Center in*
28 *collaboration with the Department of Health* to conduct a
29 comprehensive statewide study of sewage contamination in
30 nearshore marine areas.

31
32 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the *University*
33 *of Hawaii* for the purposes of this Act.

34
35 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-2612

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 8:23:41 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities	Support	No

Comments:



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 8:30 a.m.

By

Darren T. Lerner, Director
Water Resources Research Center

And

Michael Bruno
Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2612 – RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Lowen, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i Water Resources Research Center (WRRC) supports the intent of this initiative, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents approved executive biennium budget. Following consultation with the Department of Health, we respectively suggest that an assessment of the magnitude and locales of wastewater impact on the nearshore environment will necessitate a multi-disciplinary effort. Further, no single indicator can conclusively determine whether contamination is due to sewage or some other natural process and, hence, multiple analytical methodologies will be required. In light of the complexity of the desired investigations, we suggest that this work would be more effectively undertaken by a collaborative effort between the University for Hawai'i and the Department of Health. The WRRC acknowledges that it has access to faculty with the relevant expertise to perform this study. Should the legislature agree and appropriate funds directed to the University of Hawai'i, the WRRC would engage their faculty and others from the university who have the required expertise to conduct the necessary investigations. The WRRC understands that the Department of Health would be a full partner and participant on the study designs, execution of the research project(s), and the peer review process. The WRRC would also engage other experts as necessary to accomplish the intended goals and outcomes of this assessment.

Studying sewage contamination of nearshore marine areas requires expertise in groundwater science and biogeochemistry, due to the mode of solute transport to the coast, and in marine biology and coastal processes, as endpoints of the impacted environments. The University of Hawai'i, and its Water Resources Research Center is strategically positioned to address those research needs. For example, WRRC affiliate faculty are currently completing two projects that provide a foundation for the research requested in HB 2612. The first project quantitatively modeled the impacts from coastal discharge of contaminated groundwater on two contrasting study areas by combining groundwater modeling with the physical and biological characteristics of the nearshore

environment. The second project evaluates a range of alternatives to cost optimize reduction in coastal contamination. As these projects show, the University of Hawai'i WRRC has access to research faculty and staff with the requisite methodologies, technical expertise, and capacity to perform the research needed to conclusively identify where sewage contamination has the most adverse impacts and to provide cost efficient solutions for reducing or removing the contamination threat.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Environmental Caucus
of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

February 3, 2018

To: COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Rep. Chris Lee, Chair
Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2547 – RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT.
Hearing: Friday, February 6, 2018, 8:30 am, Room 325

Position: SUPPORT

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i strongly supports HB 2612 Appropriating monies to the Department of Health to conduct a statewide study of sewage contamination in nearshore marine areas. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

Hawaii benefits from responsible, comprehensive studies and publicly documented research conducted to improve the quality of life for all residents, visitors, and wildlife in and around the islands.

We support this Act and its efforts to improve the quality of life for the people and visitors that inhabit this land and the future generations to follow and look forward to the results of all studies conducted with resources used. Thank you for your consideration.

Terry Jasper Jr, Co- Chair
Energy and Climate Change
Environmental Caucus
Democratic Party of Hawai'i
Tj2ndcgh@gmail.com
808.489.3007

HB-2612

Submitted on: 2/3/2018 4:45:32 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu	Support	No

Comments:

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Submitted on: 2/3/2018 8:55:37 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Richard Furst		Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this measure, as the problem of aging cesspools along our coastlines and the pollution they are causing must be studied. We need fast action to address marine pollution, and hopefully this research will help get cesspools remediated sooner. Please pass this measure into law.

HB-2612

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 7:04:00 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joan Gannon	West Hawaii CHC	Support	No

Comments:

I Joan Gannon, Chairperson for Protect Marine Life Committee, for Hawaii Island Democratic Party

Support HB2612.

I ask the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection to please pass HB2612.

Thank you Joan

HB-2612

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 8:44:52 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Milholen	Kokua Hawaii Foundation	Support	No

Comments:

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Submitted on: 2/6/2018 6:26:21 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
De Austin		Support	No

Comments:

Dear

Chair Lee,

Vice Chair Lowen, and

Committee Members,

Thank you for reviewing this bill. I earnestly support your decision to review the contamination of our ocean waters through sewage distribution. It is rumored that tour boats are permitted to release their sewage into the ocean, once they are oh, so many miles offshore.

We should not treat the ocean as an afterthought. It is as wrong to use her as a dumping station for sewage as it would be wrong for me to dump my sewage into a neighbor's yard or bedroom. We should protect her, depth and breadth, with as much ferocity as we would protect our own mother if she were in danger. In truth, the ocean is our mother, and she is in clear and present danger from the toxins we continually pour into her mouth from our human activities. She is the womb of life for us and we would not be able to justify our own lives if she were to die in our care or due to the lack of it.

Very sincerely,

Dezireen Austin