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GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE
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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER & LAND**

**Monday, March 19, 2018
2:55 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2617, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO OCEAN WATERS**

House Bill 2617, House Draft 2 proposes to add a new section to Hawai'i Revised Statutes to prohibit bathers from consuming liquor when within 1,000 yards of any beach or shoreline in the State. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The Department recognizes that there has been an increasing number of "floatilla" events that have been occurring in the O'ahu nearshore ocean waters in the past few years and the negative impacts of each event. In addition to the massive amounts of litter left by participants in ocean waters and on beaches after these events, officers from the Department's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement and lifeguards from the City and County of Honolulu Ocean Safety Division have needed to rescue hundreds of floatilla participants.

Although there may be enforcement difficulties because floatilla events have no fixed time or location, the Department believes that the language in the House Draft 1 has addressed the Department's previous concerns regarding passengers consuming alcohol onboard vessels.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HB-2617-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2018 3:44:10 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/19/2018 2:55:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
	Testifying for Honolulu Police Department	Support	Yes

Comments:

Acting Major Gordon Lum Kee, District 6, will be presenting the testimony at the hearing.

HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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LATE

KIRK CALDWELL
MAYOR



JAMES D. HOWE, JR.
DIRECTOR

IAN T.T. SANTEE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Water and Land
The Senate
Twenty-Ninth Legislature
Regular Session of 2018

Re: HB2617 HD2 Relating to Ocean Waters

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members:

The Honolulu Emergency Services Department provides both Ocean Safety and Emergency Medical Services for the Island of Oahu. The Department has the responsibility to act as the primary responder for all emergencies that arise on the beach, in the near shore waters, and as the EMS responder for all 911 calls for medical service.

As noted in the preamble to HB2617 HD2, flotilla events have and will continue to present a significant challenge to the Department. These events are highly problematic from a public safety perspective.

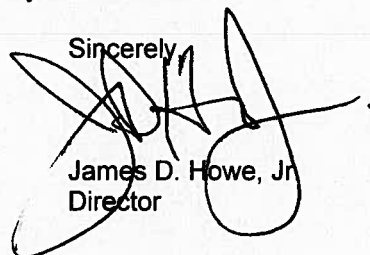
Consumption of alcohol while in bodies of water is a well known and documented contributor to drowning (<http://www.thejournal.ie/drinking-alcohol-swimming-980116-Jul2013/>).

With these well known risk factors, the Ocean Safety Division has taken a proactive approach to flotilla events by redirecting ocean safety assets from general community use to specifically manage these events. There are both direct and indirect costs associated with this allocation of limited resources.

The Emergency Medical Services Division has also been impacted by these events as noted in the Bill.

We support HB2617 HD2, as it would act as a preventive measure that may reduce ocean injuries and deaths. It would also minimize the impacts of "flotillas" on our ability to manage the ocean safety needs of the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Sincerely,

James D. Howe, Jr.
Director

Testimony in support of HB2617, HD2, Relating to Ocean Waters



Chair Rhoades and members of the Water and Land Committee,

Aloha. My name is Cynthia Okazaki and I serve as Chair of the Hawaii Partnership to Prevent Underage Drinking (HPPUD).

HB 2617, HD2 prohibits liquor consumption by bathers within one thousand yards of any beach or shoreline in the State.

HPPUD supports passage of this bill for the following reasons:

- The 2017 Waikiki Floatillas on the 4th of July holiday weekend attracted approximately 8,000-10,000. The event resulted in hundreds rescued, over 20 were medically treated and many were under the age of 21. Alcohol was noted as the primary reason for individuals having to be rescued by ocean safety for injuries and intoxication.
- Many participants exploited loopholes in the law to engage in underage drinking.
- Previous similar events in Waikiki resulted in an enormous amount of litter and in particular plastics left behind in the form of coolers, float toys and cups.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 2617 for the benefit of the people of Hawaii.

Cynthia Okazaki, Chair
Hawaii Partnership to Prevent Underage Drinking

HB-2617-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2018 8:51:49 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/19/2018 2:55:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Ke Kōmike no ka Wai a me ka 'Āina
Committee on Water and Land
Kenekoa/Senator Karl Rhoads, Luna Ho'omalua/Chair
Kenekoa/Senator Mike Gabbard, Hope Luna Ho'omalua/Vice Chair
Pō'akahi, Malaki 19, 2018 / Monday, March 19, 2018 2:55 p.m.

Subject: HB 2617 HB2

Aloha Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Kari Benes and I am blessed to call Oahu my home. I am in **strong support of HB 2617 HB2**. I live walking distance to Waikiki Beach and I absolutely love being able to walk down to go for a swim, surf, or to just watch the sun go down.

Over the past few years I have witnessed the “floatilla” parties grow to uncontrollable masses of highly intoxicated young people gathering around major summer holidays like 4th of July. These parties contradict Hawaii’s environmentally conscious efforts by their emphasis on using cheap plastic float toys and the over consumption of litter producing alcohol. In addition, multiple social media posts brag about how these events are a way for youth to partake in unruly and tasteless intoxication. HB 2617 HB2 closes the loophole this unofficial group is exploiting, while giving responsible operations or commercial businesses an exemption or opportunity to acquire a permit to serve alcohol.

Reasons why you should support HB 2627 HB2

Environmental:

- Large ocean parties or “Floatillas” leave behind waste that is toxic to marine life.
- Previous events in Waikiki have led to enormous amounts of litter and in particular plastics left behind in the form of coolers, float toys, alcohol beverage containers, and cups.¹
- Plastics do not biodegrade, but instead break down into small particles that persist in the ocean, absorb toxins, and enter our food chain through fish, sea birds and other marine life.²

¹KHON2 report on the litter left behind after the 2016 floatilla
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlQiuCW8obg>

² http://www.beachapedia.org/Plastic_Pollution_Facts_and_Figures

Legal:

- Visitors exploit loopholes in the law to engage in underage drinking.³

Disproportion of local resources exhausted in rescuing and treating attendees:

- The 2017 Waikiki Floatillas on the 4th of July holiday weekend attracted approximately 8,000-10,000. The event resulted in hundreds rescued, over 20 medically treated and many were under the age of 21. Alcohol was noted as the primary reason for individuals having to be rescued by ocean safety and medically treated for over intoxication.⁴

Mahalo Nui Loa for your working to keep our moana clean and keiki safe by supporting HB 2617 HB2.

Kari Benes
Kapahulu Resident

³ YouTube post promoting Floatilla 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIQiuw8obg>

⁴ KHON2 report on 10 hospitalized after floatilla, one treated as young as 17 years old.
<https://youtu.be/wQEzVnTjgoA>

HB-2617-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2018 5:05:37 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/19/2018 2:55:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gerald Jay D. Ganaden	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB 2617 and appreciate your consideration!

Gerald Jay D. Ganaden

Waipahu, HI

HB-2617-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2018 5:12:10 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/19/2018 2:55:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Krystal Baba	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB 2617 in interest of reducing underage drinking, which happens at events hosted in our beautiful waters (e.g. Floatilla Hawaii).

Those attending Floatilla Hawaii have found a loophole in our system. It is time for policymakers to step up to prevent future disasters!

FACT

The 2017 Waikiki Floatillas on the 4th of July holiday weekend attracted approximately 8,000-10,000 people. The event resulted in hundreds rescued, over 20 medially treated and many were under the age of 21. Alcohol was noted as the primary reason for individuals having to be rescued by ocean safety for injuries and intoxication.

Thank you for your consideration!

K. Baba

HB-2617-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/19/2018 11:26:35 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/19/2018 2:55:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Dau	Testifying for Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition support HB2617 HD2. Drowning prevention is essential and this bill will help discourage people from consuming alcohol in and around the waters of our island. Consuming alcohol and being intoxicated in and around water (beach, ocean, pool) is known to increase the chance of a person drowning. We believe this bill will help decrease injuries and deaths associated with risky behavior as noted above.

Thank you,

Lisa Dau, RN
Injury Prevention Coordinator