

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committees on
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
and
TOURISM**

**Tuesday, March 20, 2018
8:55 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 114/HOUSE RESOLUTION 102
REQUESTING THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH A
CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE VISITORS TO THE STATE ABOUT THE HARMFUL
EFFECTS OF OXYBENZONE SUNSCREEN ON CORAL REEFS AND TO
ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO THE STATE TO REFRAIN FROM USING
OXYBENZONE SUNSCREENS**

House Concurrent Resolution 114/House Resolution 102 requests the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) to establish a campaign to educate visitors to the state about the harmful effects of oxybenzone sunscreen on coral reefs and to encourage visitors to the state to refrain from using oxybenzone sunscreens. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports these measures.**

The Department conducts outreach efforts to help the public understand the issues regarding using oxybenzone and similar chemicals in the ocean so they can be better informed and make better choices regarding sun protection. These efforts include information on the Department's Division of Aquatic Resources website, focused one-on-one outreach and distribution of oxybenzone-free sunscreen samples at public events, outreach at the 'Āhihi-Kīna'u Natural Area Reserve, news releases, videos, interaction with partner organizations, and meetings with boat tour operators and vendors who sell sunscreen to spread the word. A campaign by HTA to educate visitors about oxybenzone use would greatly expand the reach of this message.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
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LAND
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David Y. Ige
Governor

George D. Szigeti
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of
George D. Szigeti
Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on

LATE

HCR114/HR102

**Requesting the Hawaii Tourism Authority to Establish a Campaign to Educate Visitors
about the Harmful Effects of Oxybenzone Sunscreen on Coral Reefs**

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

House Committee on Tourism

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

8:55 a.m.

Conference Room 325

Chairs Lee and Onishi, Vice-Chairs Lowen and Fukumoto and Committee Members:

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) offers the following **comments on HCR114/HR102**, which seeks a resolution by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2018, the Senate concurring, that HTA is requested to establish a campaign to educate visitors to the State about the harmful effects of oxybenzone sunscreen on coral reefs, encourage visitors to the State to refrain from using oxybenzone sunscreens and submit a report to the Legislature prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2019 on these efforts.

HTA agrees that visitors should be educated on the harmful effects of sunscreen containing oxybenzone and the availability of alternative forms of sun protection. The Department of Land and Natural Resources has an ongoing visitor education campaign entitled "Protect Yourself, Protect the Reef" that seeks to educate our guests on these important topics. HTA proposes that HCR114/HR102 be amended to request that HTA support the existing campaign, in order to broaden its reach in the visitor industry, instead of establishing a new campaign.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

HR-102

Submitted on: 3/19/2018 8:42:12 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2018 8:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

FRIENDS OF HANAUMA BAY

**To: House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Representative Chris Lee, Chair
Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Vice-Chair**

**House Committee on Tourism
Representative Richard H.K. Onishi, Chair
Representative Beth Fukumoto, Vice-Chair**

**House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice-Chair**

Re: HCR114 and HR102

REQUESTING THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH A CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE VISITORS TO THE STATE ABOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF OXYBENZONE SUNSCREEN ON CORAL REEFS AND TO ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO THE STATE TO REFRAIN FROM USING OXYBENZONE SUNSCREENS

Hearing: Tuesday, 20 March 2018, 8:55 am, Room 325

Position: STRONG SUPPORT with amendment to include octinoxate in the campaign

The Friends of Hanama Bay strongly supports HCR114 and HR102 requesting the Hawaii Tourism Authority to establish a campaign to educate visitors to the State about the harmful effects of sunscreen containing oxybenzone on coral reefs, and to encourage visitors to the State to refrain from using sunscreen with oxybenzone. We request that the Resolutions be amended by adding “octinoxate “ to this vital education campaign since both of these chemicals have been scientifically demonstrated over the last 20 years to be toxic to coral reefs. These two ingredients in chemical sunscreens also have scientifically proven linkages to serious human health conditions, so it is clearly imperative to mitigate their harmful presence in our environment.

It is estimated that over 500 tons of sunscreen pollute the waters surrounding Hawaii. With the 2,600 swimmers per day that visit Hanauma Bay, it is estimated that over 150,000 pounds of sunscreen pollute Hanauma’s waters, of which is 6,800 pounds of oxybenzone/octinoxate a year. A recent water sampling study of Hanauma Bay measured levels of oxybenzone 450 times that considered safe for corals. Hanauma Bay is Hawaii’s first Marine Life Conservation District, a part of the Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, and one of Hawaii’s 12 Class AA

marine embayments under the Federal Clean Water Act. We can — and should — do better to protect and preserve Hawaii’s fragile and irreplaceable marine ecosystems like Hanauma Bay.

The Hawaii Tourism Authority’s mission includes providing an exceptional visitors experience while valuing and perpetuating Hawaii’s natural and cultural resources and honoring its people and heritage. Its Natural Resources Program is ideally suited to partner with leading coral reef biologists, ecotoxicologists, businesses, organizations and residents of Hawaii to bring its formidable educating and marketing genius to bear to mitigate this clear and present danger to our coral reefs.

Further, the International Coral Reef Initiative declared 2018 as the third International Year of the Reef, encouraging concerned countries, organizations and citizens to:

- strengthen awareness globally about the value of, and threats to, coral reefs and associated ecosystems;
- promote partnerships between governments, the private sector, academia and civil society on the management of coral reefs;
- identify and implement effective management strategies for conservation, increased resiliency and sustainable use of these ecosystems and promoting best practices; and
- share information on best practices in relation to sustainable coral reef management.

Since the State of Hawaii led the world by earning the honor of hosting the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) conference in 2016 - the first time this prestigious international conference has ever been held in the United States - we urge Hawaii to continue leading the effort to protect and preserve coral reefs by resolving that the Hawaii Tourism Authority start educating visitors on the reef-toxic danger of sunscreen containing oxybenzone and/or octinoxate.

Please amend the Resolutions to add “octinoxate” to this vital education campaign in addition to “oxybenzone”.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of these important resolutions.

Lisa Bishop
President
Friends of Hanauma Bay



TO: Honorable Chairs Lee and Onishi and Members of Energy and Environmental Protection and Tourism Committees, 3-20-18 855am

SUBMITTED BY: Inga Gibson, Policy Consultant, For the Fishes
ponoadvocacy@gmail.com, 808.922.9910

RE: SUPPORT for HCR114-HR102; REQUESTING THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH A CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE VISITORS TO THE STATE ABOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF OXYBENZONE SUNSCREEN ON CORAL REEFS AND TO ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO THE STATE TO REFRAIN FROM USING OXYBENZONE SUNSCREENS.

For the Fishes supports this Resolution requesting HTA develop and establish an educational campaign for visitors regarding the harmful effects of oxybenzone sunscreen to our reefs.

This Resolution would complement, but not replace, the needed legislation proposed in SB2571 which, if enacted, would prohibit the sale, offer for sale, or distribution for sale of non-prescription SPF sunscreen products containing octinoxate or oxybenzone, unless the product is sold or distributed to fulfill a prescription, at an extended date to allow for education and awareness-building campaigns such as this, which will encourage compliance.

Numerous studies have shown that oxybenzone in the marine environment can be harmful to coral reefs and marine life (Kim et al. 2014; Kim & Choi 2014; Tsui et al. 2014; Downs et al. 2015). These studies clearly indicate that oxybenzone poses a risk to fishes, through endocrine disruption and reproduction performance, for example, and to hard corals through bleaching. These threats are heightened in marine recreational areas frequented by beach goers, swimmers, snorkelers and divers whose sunscreen washes off when they enter the water. Worldwide, it is estimated that 90% of snorkeling or diving tourists are concentrated on 10% of the reefs (US National Park Service). Hawaii's MLCs have an abundance of fishes compared to the majority of the state's reefs which are severely depleted. This abundance of wildlife is a major draw to tourists and, Hawaii's most beautiful and popular reefs are likely exposed to the most sunscreen pollution.

It has been estimated that 4,000 – 14,000 tons of sunscreen enters coral reef areas around the world annually (U.S. National Park Service, Downs et al. 2015). Surveys around Hawaii's coral reefs found oxybenzone levels at concentrations 12 times higher than the level at which it impacts juvenile coral (Downs et al. 2015).

The unprecedented coral bleaching events of 2014 and 2015 had devastating effects on Hawaii's corals. A 2016 report by The Nature Conservancy found that 32 – 90% of bleached coral colonies died in some West Hawaii areas. New research shows that by mid-century, coral reefs will annually experience the heat stress that causes bleaching, and the authors conclude that the future conditions of reefs depends on both the reduction of global emissions and our capacity to build resilience to bleaching through management of local stressors (Hughes et al. 2018). Though oxybenzone may be just one of many stressors impacting Hawaii's coral reefs, the inevitability of future ocean warming events and subsequent coral bleaching makes it imperative to reduce the stressors to corals and increase their potential to recover and survive.

We respectfully urge the Committee's support of this measure which will help reduce oxybenzone pollution and harm to Hawaii's coral reefs and wildlife.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

HR-102

Submitted on: 3/17/2018 10:39:27 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2018 8:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rene Umberger	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HR-102

Submitted on: 3/18/2018 4:27:15 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2018 8:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joan Gannon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To: EEP and TOU Committees meeting on 3/20/18 at 8:55 in room 325

Re: HR 102 Please pass this bill. This is an important bill to protect our reefs. It stops the sale of sunscreen with oxybenzone. And as we know oxybenzone causes damage to the reef so it stands to reason we would ban the use of oxybenzone in sunscreen. Thank you for your affirmative action.

Joan Gannon resident, voter and snorkeler

LATE

HR-102

Submitted on: 3/19/2018 5:02:21 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2018 8:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
susan chouljian	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Tourists would feel awful is they knew the chemical sunscreens they are putting on their bodies is destroying the reef. The Hawaii Tourism Authority should take on a leadership role and educate tourists about alternative sunscreen choices. It's a win -win- win for the Authority, tourist and reef. A no-brainer.