

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB0425 HD1
RELATING TO WATER QUALITY MONITORING**

REPRESENTATIVE SYLVIA LUKE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: February 20, 2019

Room Number: 308

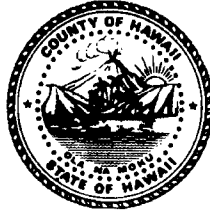
1 **Fiscal Implications:** Funding appropriation is needed to establish one full-time equivalent
2 position (1.0 FTE) to conduct water quality assessments on streams and coastal waters on the
3 island of Hawaii.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health appreciates and supports the intent of this
5 initiative as long as it defers to the Governor's Budget Request for appropriation priorities.
6 Timely monitoring helps to assure Hawaii's stream and coastal waters meet established water
7 quality standards and protects those in the public who engage in recreational activities such as
8 swimming and fishing and helps to assure the aesthetic beauty of Hawaii's streams and coastal
9 waters.

10 **Offered Amendments:** No amendments offered.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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February 19, 2019

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Committee on Finance

Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Committee Members:

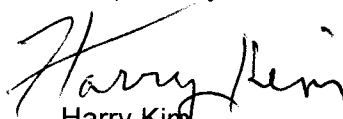
RE: HB 425, HD1 Relating to Water Quality Monitoring

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB 425, HD1.

The Department of Health has only one water quality resident inspector for the entire County of Hawai'i. This has been an ongoing issue, especially for the Keaukaha community in Hilo, and really should be remedied. As can be seen from HB 425, HD1, the investment is small, but apparently it has never quite made the priority list of the Administration.

Please act favorably on HB 425, HD1, or even better, please consider including this position in the House version of the State budget.

Respectfully Submitted,


Harry Kim
MAYOR

HB-425-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2019 1:41:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III	Hawaii County Council	Support	No

Comments:



Feb. 20, 2019

In Support of HB425 HD1 (Relating to Water Quality Monitoring)
House Committee on Finance (FIN)
Feb. 12, 2019, 9:00am, Room 329

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

The Surfrider Foundation's Hawaii Chapters strongly support HB425 HD1 to appropriate funds for an additional Water Quality Monitor position on the Big Island of Hawaii. Volunteer leaders from Surfrider's five Hawaii Chapters have been monitoring water quality in each county through our Blue Water Task Force. We have also worked with the Dept. of Health's Clean Water Branch (CWB) to improve public notification about Brown Water Advisories, sewage spills and possible leaks from cesspools. We recognize that the Big Island needs another CWB water quality specialist to help with monitoring.

Non-point source discharge from cesspools in Hawaii is a serious threat to our water quality (WQ), and this bill offers a way to monitor and report WQ conditions. With about 88,000 across the state, Hawaii has the highest number of cesspools in the country, and many pose a threat to water resources. These substandard wastewater systems leach an estimated 53 million gallons per day of untreated human waste, harmful pathogens and nutrients into nearby waters. Cesspools are a leading source of water pollution, and their effluent can contaminate drinking water sources, streams and oceans with disease-causing pathogens, algae-causing nutrients and other harmful substances.

As the Hawaii Regional Manager of Surfrider, I was invited to join and currently serve on the Hawaii Dept. of Health's (DOH) Cesspool Conversion Working Group. We need commitments from the State to help monitor water quality conditions on the Big Island, where we have the most cesspools in the state and there is evidence of significant leakage. There was also a major sewage spill in the Hilo Bay last year, and there wasn't enough staff to monitor the water after the heavy rains or post signs about the spill.

Because cesspools, sewage spills and stormwater runoff pose serious public health and environmental problems, we need the funding to create this position to help monitor water quality on the Big Island. Mahalo for your consideration and leadership in dealing with these water quality and waste issues and help make Hawaii a leader in wastewater treatment.

Aloha,

Stuart Coleman

Stuart H. Coleman, Hawaii Manager