



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BRIDGE, STRUCTURAL, ORNAMENTAL AND REINFORCING IRON WORKERS

Affiliated with A.F.L.-C.I.O.

LOCAL UNION NUMBER 625

94-497 UKEE STREET • WAIPAHO, HAWAII 96797

T.G. Paris
President Emeritus

March 28, 2023 - 9:30 am

House Committee on Water and Land
Via Videoconference
Conference Room 430
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Re: HR113 & HCR 107 – Relating to Real Property Tax Exemption Request

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Honorable committee members,

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HR113 & HCR107. These resolution urges the City and County of Honolulu to exempt from real property tax those property owners of residential units within one-half mile of an active landfill on Oahu.

Landfills cause harm to those that live, work, and play next to them. Our members and their families in Nanakuli, Oahu have experienced this reality for decades with the start of the privately held landfill operated construction and demolition landfill that has taken almost 40% of the island's trash since the mid-eighties. No one should have to live next to trash. We believe that this resolution is a step in the right direction as a matter of environmental justice. For far too long our neighbors in West, Oahu, and in Nanakuli in particular have been burdened by Oahu's trash while everyone across the island benefits. Please consider passing resolutions HR113 and HCR107. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Joseph O'Donnell

Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer

IRON WORKERS STABILIZATION FUND

March 28, 2023
9:30 am

House Committee on Water & Land

Conference Room 430 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Re: HCR107/HR113 – URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO EXEMPT FROM REAL PROPERTY TAX THOSE PROPERTY OWNERS OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE OF AN ACTIVE MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE LANDFILL OR CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION LANDFILL

Aloha Chair Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe and Members of the Committee:

We **SUPPORT** HCR107/HR113. These resolutions urge the City and County of Honolulu to provide a real property tax exemption for those residents living within ½ mile of the operation of an active landfill on the island of O‘ahu.

The scientific consensus affirms what the communities of West O‘ahu, especially Nānākuli, have been experiencing for decades, that landfills are a health hazard. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention/National Center for Health Statistics Neighborhood Life Expectancy Project (see attachments for visual maps), our members and their families in the two census tracts abutting the PVT Landfill operated in Nānākuli live 10 years less than the state average of 82 years, being the 2nd and 3rd lowest life expectancies in the entire state. This is unacceptable. As a matter of fairness, every community in Hawaii deserves a “clean and healthful environment” (HI State Const. Art. XI, Sec. 9). No one should suffer the ill effects of landfills, so we need to decrease our reliance upon landfills and eventually stop using them altogether.

The total waste generated on O‘ahu in 2021 was over 1.5 million tons, with 255,135 tons representing 25% of the total waste stream being Construction and Demolition Recycling; 222,238 tons representing 4% of the total waste being Construction and Demolition landfilling; 437,578 tons representing 28% of the total waste being General Material Recycling; 513,635 tons representing 30% of the total waste being H-Power Waste-to-Energy; 157,531 tons representing 11% of the total waste being H-Power Ash and Residual that was landfilled; and 106,723 tons representing 2% of the total waste being Municipal Solid Waste landfilling (City and County of Honolulu, *Status Report on Reducing and/or Continuing the Use of Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill*, 2023)

Nearly all landfilling, waste-to-energy processing, and recycling of O‘ahu’s waste occurs in West O‘ahu at the City-owned Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill (WGSL) in Kahe valley adjacent to the Honokai Hale and Makakilo communities, the City-owned H-POWER facility adjacent to the Kapolei community, and where both the H-POWER ash along with much of the Construction and Demolition waste passes through Makakilo, Kapolei, and Honokai Hale to

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either end up at WGSJ or in Nānākuli at the landfill operated by PVT Land Company, Ltd. (City and County of Honolulu, *Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan*, 2019).

Hawai'i recognized that "no one segment of the population or geographic area should be disproportionately burdened with environmental and/or health impacts resulting from development, construction, operations and/or use of natural resources" (Hawaii State Department of Health, *Hawaii Environmental Justice Initiative Report*, 2008). Many of those living within the ½ mile of the operation of an active landfill are living paycheck to paycheck. A real property tax break will bring about meaningful change and opportunity for those residents to better care for their health and safety, including through purchasing and maintaining air filters in their houses.

The people of West O'ahu, especially those living within a ½ mile of the active operation of O'ahu's landfills have born the brunt of our collective waste. Please urge the City to provide a tax break to those residents impacted so that they can take necessary actions to care for their health and safety.

We urge the committee to **PASS** HCR107/HR113. Mahalo for the opportunity testimony.

HR-113

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 9:31:40 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/28/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ed Werner	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha:

I support tax relief for those suffering from landfills.

Ed Werner

Nanakuli, Oahu

HR-113

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 10:31:14 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/28/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Henrietta Paris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators:

Mahalo for considering how we can help those whose health and wellness are being impacted by landfills. Please continue this good work. God bless.

Sincerely,

Henrietta Paris

Kapolei, Oahu

HR-113

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 10:44:07 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/28/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melvin Paris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators:

I support helping out our former neighbors that live next to the landfill in Nanakuli. They should get help because they take so much of our island's trash.

Sincerely,

Melvin Paris

Kapolei, Oahu

March 28, 2023

9:30 am

House Committee on Water & Land

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

HCR107/HR113 - URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO EXEMPT FROM REAL PROPERTY TAX THOSE PROPERTY OWNERS OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE OF AN ACTIVE MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE LANDFILL OR CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION LANDFILL.

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

This resolution urges the City and County of Honolulu to provide tax relief to those that suffer from the ills of landfills.

From Mā'ili, my name is Kamuela Werner. I graduated from Nānākuli High School, hold a Bachelors of Science in Environmental Management as well as a Masters in Public Health from the University of Hawai'i. I have worked at the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine as a Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander health disparities researcher, as a Native Hawaiian Congressional fellow for Senator Mazie Hirono in D.C., and now work as a teacher and farmer at Nānākuli High and Intermediate School.

Before moving to Mā'ili, I grew up in a multi-generational Native Hawaiian household on Mōhihi Street in Nānākuli. The Lualualei plain was my backyard where, at the time, you could see straight through to the base of Pu'u Heleakalā, the sacred and storied place of our ancestor Māui. Now we see "mauna 'ōpala" as the keiki call it, created by the PVT Land Company. Today, I speak on behalf of my 'ohana that live, work, or go to school in the shadow of "trash mountain".

We respectfully ask you to SUPPORT HCR107/HR113. Why? To advance environmental justice for our community who are victims of environmental racism.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention/National Center for Health Statistics in the U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project based in part on U.S. census data, the census tracts that include Nānākuli Homestead and the neighborhoods of Auyoung Homestead Road and Mōhihi Street have the 2nd and 3rd lowest life expectancies in the State. Our communities' life expectancy is 8 to 10 years less than the State average of 82 years. Immediately surrounding these communities, the life expectancy jumps between 4 and 6 years from the backside of Lualualei Valley behind the Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Center, to Ko'olina, Honokai Hale, and Makakilo. Something is not pono.

Current and available public health studies associate living in close proximity to a landfill of 1 to 4 miles with adverse pregnancy outcomes, increases in infant low birth weights, increases in the risk of birth

defects, self-reported headaches, sleepiness, respiratory and central nervous system problems, psychological conditions, and gastrointestinal issues. (See Health effects of residence near hazardous waste landfill sites: a review of epidemiologic literature, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 2000; Health effects associated with the disposal of solid waste in landfills and incinerators in populations living in surrounding areas: a systematic review, *The International Journal of Public Health*, 2013). As a Construction and Demolition landfill in specific, the current PVT landfill contains tons of gypsum drywall which breaks down to produce hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) gas (See Hydrogen sulfide generation in simulated construction and demolition debris landfills: impact of waste composition, *The Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association*, 2006). Residential exposure to H₂S within 3.1 miles of a landfill is associated with lung cancer deaths as well as with death, disease and hospitalizations from respiratory illnesses (Morbidity and mortality of people who live close to municipal waste landfills: a multisite cohort study, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 2016). Using the US Census 2017 ACS 5-Year Population Estimates for Nānākuli and Māʻili, it is estimated that over 18,000 residents live within 3.1 miles of the PVT landfill and are potentially exposed daily to H₂S in specific, and other landfill gasses and debris. In emergency situations, the State and City and County of Honolulu governments can place, and have placed, materials from disaster cleanups into PVT landfill.

The Hawaiʻi Department of Health (HDOH) has never clarified that there is no risk to the public for living in proximity to landfills in general, or the current or proposed PVT landfill in specific, especially within 3.1 miles. Further, HDOH has never reviewed the findings of independent studies which say that there is no risk to public health from landfills in general or from the current or proposed PVT landfills in specific, especially to the thousands of people that live, work, and play within a 3.1-mile radius of landfill operations. In fact, according to the PVT 2019 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the only HDOH air monitoring station that measures H₂S is located in Puna on Hawaiʻi Island. HDOH given the current regulations for landfills, has been unable to adequately protect the public health, despite kamaʻāina testimony presented since the 1980s, voicing concerns over the adverse health impacts of living and working in close proximity to landfills both in general and with regard to the operations and plans of PVT in specific. Lastly, it is not clear if the permit requirements issued by HDOH or the Department of Planning and Permitting of the City and County of Honolulu are being enforced by HDOH and the City and County of Honolulu.

As a Native Hawaiian Congressional fellow who worked in the Office of Sen. Mazie Hirono, I gained a greater understanding of the purpose and value of governmental policies, which are in part, to protect the health and safety of the public. The policies that regulate our landfills today are incomplete, because communities are still at risk, our communities of Nānākuli and Māʻili communities are at risk. According to the EPA, environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. I argue, the current regulations and policies that allow PVT to operate a landfill in the heart of Nānākuli and Māʻili communities are racist towards Native Hawaiians and/or Pacific Islands and prejudiced towards working families with low to medium incomes. Today, we can take a step towards environmental justice for all communities.

This resolution will encourage the City and County of Honolulu to financially support those most directly affected by the public health crisis currently occurring in Nānākuli and Māʻili.

Therefore, I urge the committee to PASS HCR107/HR113.

Mahalo.

Ke aloha 'āina

Kamuela Werner, MPH