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GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN  
LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection  
Tuesday, February 23, 2021  
9:30 a.m.  
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
S.B. 1021, S.D. 1, RELATING TO BURIALS**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ahlani Quiogue, and I am the Licensing Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Professional and Vocational Licensing Division (PVL). The Department appreciates the intent of and offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) prohibit selling, transferring, conveying, or otherwise disposing of or offering for sale any plots, crypts, or niches having an authorized capacity limit of fewer than ten sets of cremated human remains or burials prepared consistent with traditional Hawaiian cultural customs and practices; (2) include the use of alkaline hydrolysis, water cremation, and natural organic reduction as methods for the disposal of human remains; and (3) amend the procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding the right of disposition, the right to rely and act upon written instructions in a funeral service agreement or similar document, and provisions

for the disposition of a decedent's remains and recovery of reasonable expenses to include hydrolysis facilities and natural organic reduction facilities.

The Department appreciates how S.D.1 clarifies that the burial land is dedicated to cemetery use and free and clear of encumbrances and defines "traditional Hawaiian burial." To provide consistency with and clear enforcement of that definition, the Department requests replacing the language in paragraph (C) on page 18, lines 8 through 12, with the following: "Allows the interment of up to ten sets of human remains that are cremated or prepared consistent with traditional Hawaiian burial in a single plot, crypt, or niche[.]"

In addition, the Committee may wish to delete "prohibition of" on page 17, line 1, as the limitation on the number of sets of remains that may be interred in a single plot, crypt, or niche is not an absolute prohibition.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**SB1021 SD1**

RELATING TO BURIALS

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka ‘Oihana Kālepa a me ka Ho‘omalua Mea Kemu

Pepeluali 23, 2021

9:30 a.m.

Lumi 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB1021 SD1, a measure which would help to revitalize traditional Hawaiian burial practices, by 1) ensuring that burial plots can accept up to nine sets of cremated human remains or remains prepared consistent with traditional Hawaiian cultural customs and practices, and 2) allowing the Department of Health to facilitate the use of alkaline hydrolysis as a more culturally appropriate means to prepare human remains, compared to other methods such as full or partial cremation.

Native Hawaiian burial practices are deeply integral to Hawaiian culture and identity. The preparation of human remains and the return of deceased family members to the ‘āina are among the greatest kuleana held by the living generation. Unfortunately, state policy, as well as cemetery and mortuary industry practices, have prevented ‘ohana from carrying these practices forward to allow their kūpuna to be buried in their kulāiwi (the land of their ancestors bones) in culturally appropriate, family-style burials. Department of Health regulations also do not currently recognize certain methods of preparing human remains, such as alkaline hydrolysis, which are more consistent with the traditional treatment and preparation of the deceased than other recognized methods, such as cremation. **This measure would address these barriers to the restoration and revival of traditional Native Hawaiian burial practices and values, by allowing for multiple family members to be interred in family burial plots, and by enabling the Department of Health to recognize and accommodate the use of alkaline hydrolysis in the preparation of human remains for burial.**

OHA supports adjustments to laws and policies that would enable and encourage Hawaiian ‘ohana to reconnect with their traditional burial practices and restore pono for their ‘ohana and kūpuna.

For the reasons set forth above, OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** SB1021 SD1. Mahalo piha for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

**SB-1021-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2021 8:52:33 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/23/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mitchell Dodo	Testifying for Dodo Mortuary, Inc.	Oppose	No

Comments:

**Dodo Mortuary, Inc. opposes the passage of SB1021 S.D.1 in its current form based on the facts and information presented in testimony submitted by the Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Association.**

**Dodo Mortuary, Inc. is an independent family-owned mortuary and crematory business located on the island of Hawaii.**



**HAWAIIAN MEMORIAL**  
LIFE PLAN

Written Testimony in **Opposition** of  
SB 1021 S.D. 1 – Relating to Burials

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

To: COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Committee Members

HEARING DATE/TIME: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 / 9:30am

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Dear Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members

My name is Jay Morford, President of Hawaiian Memorial Life Plan, Ltd., (“HMLP”). HMLP is in **Opposition** to **SB1021 S.D. 1** (“Bill”) “Relating to Burials” due to a number of concerns outlined in the Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Associations (“HFCA”) testimony.

HMLP represents 7 Mortuaries and 3 Cemeteries throughout the State of Hawaii and we concur and support the position of the HFCA and the comments they have provided to this committee.

HMLP agrees there is not sufficient information to support the disposition of Natural Organic Reduction or Alkaline Hydrolysis and the overall effects to the environment. HMLP also supports the choice of alternative forms of disposition, however, because of the conflicting information concerning these processes, there should be a full discussion of regulatory agency(s) oversight regarding the technology, facilities, environmental impact and the operators licensing prior to moving this bill forward.

HMLP concurs with the HFCA’s comments that interring multiple set of remains into a single interment space is not practical and will create additional challenges for families and cemeteries.

We encourage the committee defer SB 1021 S.D. 1 at this time until there can be further discussion as to the environmental and community impact.

Sincerely,



Jay Morford  
President

STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO SB1021 FROM  
MILILANI GROUP, INC. d.b.a. MILILANI MEMORIAL PARK & MORTUARY

TO: COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: SENATE BILL 1021 "A Bill Relating to Burials"

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, February 23, 2021; 9:30 A.M.

This statement is made on behalf of Mililani Group, Inc., a company doing business as Mililani Memorial Park and Mortuary (hereafter called "Mililani").

Mililani **OPPOSES** the proposed changes to SB1021 "Relating to Burials" which advocate for the introduction of alternate methods for disposition of human remains. Mililani respects all cultural traditions of our island families, but as an operator is aware that adequate discussions have not taken place to address the full ramifications of each such disposal process, both from necessary requirements that should be issued by the overseeing governmental agencies as well as a statement of an operator's responsibilities prior to passage of this bill.

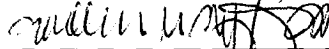
Further, the Bill outlines plot requirements to address Hawaiian burial practices; Mililani **strongly OPPOSES** the introduction of this portion of the Bill. Since the inception of the park, rules and regulations have been established concerning the ownership and use of cemetery plots. Altering these rules to permit the proposed standards for Hawaiian burial practices breaches our contractual obligations to the several thousand plots owners who support and abide by these rules and designated usages.

Mililani has been engaged in the business of funeral service and cemetery operations for more than 50 years and during this period of time, has been able to deliver our services in a professional and highly competent manner. Based on our years of expertise, we strongly contend that there is insufficient detail and conflicting information so as to permit this bill to advance.

FOR THE ABOVE REASONS, Mililani stands in opposition of the proposed SENATE BILL 1021.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

MILILANI GROUP, INC.



EADEAN BUFFINGTON, its Vice President



Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Association, Inc.  
1330 Maunakea Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Written Testimony in **Opposition** of  
SB 1021 S.D. 1— Relating to Burials

February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

To: COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Committee Members

HEARING DATE/TIME: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 / 9:30am

STATEMENT FROM THE HFCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*There has been public testimony given to committees during previous hearings on bills “Relating to Burials” and “Relating to Human Remains” that is false and misleading. It has been said the Service Corporation International (SCI) is a mainland corporation behind the opposition of these bills, including owning businesses it has no affiliation with. SCI does have affiliations with cemeteries and mortuaries in Hawaii; however, the statements that were made are untrue. They were made with no basis of fact and as such, need to be clarified for this committee. To clarify, the Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Association, Inc. is a Domestic Nonprofit Corporation, comprised of 12 independent Board of Directors representing 14 mortuaries and 10 cemeteries that serve the largest majority of Hawaii’s families. The HFCA is an independent association that acts in the best interest of its members and the community. The HFCA Board of Directors reviewed the bills and voted to oppose them in their current form based on the concerns provided in our previous testimony.*

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Dear Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair, Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair and Committee Members

My name is Jay Morford, President and Legislative Chair for the Hawaii Funeral and Cemetery Association, Inc. (“HFCA”). The HFCA is in **Opposition** to SB **1021 S.D. 1** (“Bill”) “Relating to Burials”.

The HFCA would like to provide comment why we oppose SB1021 S.D.1 in its current form.

We believe that this proposed bill creates multiple challenges for mortuaries and cemeteries, as well as Hawaii’s families.

We would like to highlight points of concern regarding the intent of this bill specifically relating to Hawaiian Burial Practices, Alkaline Hydrolysis and Natural Organic Reduction.

**1. Department of Health Permit Requirements; Burial Permit or Cremation Disposition Permit**

- a. The first relates to how to characterize the final disposition practice of “Traditional Hawaiian Burials”. HFCA spoke with the Department of Health’s (DOH) previous registrar, Dr. Alvin Onaka, prior to his retirement regarding how to characterize traditional Hawaiian burial in terms of disposition. Dr. Onaka explained that the final disposition permit would ultimately depend on each Hawaiian practitioner’s determination. HFCA does not believe this determination has occurred, and recommends that occur by engaging the Kapuna that initiated the legislation to change the penal code to specifically allow

Traditional Hawaiian Burials. The definition of Traditional Hawaiian Burials is captured in the bill; however, it does not take into account the volume of skeletal remains that remain after the Alkaline Hydrolysis process, nor the amount of human compost that will be discarded.

2. Given the manner in which the bill is currently drafted, the potential exists for disturbing already interred remains (iwi). Under most cemeteries' rules and regulations, it will necessitate the involvement and permission of the family of each of the previous burials every time a new burial is to be made (see 3.b. below). While this is possible, it is highly impracticable. **A possible solution to this challenge would be to limit the bill's application only to gardens that are specifically developed for traditional Hawaiian burials.** Doing so will allow the cemeteries to create specific regulations for those gardens and also limit the practical challenges, as well as the potential legal implications.
3. There are many practical considerations with interring multiple sets of remains in a single interment right, much less the "not less than 10" standard being proposed.
  - a. The first is that interment rights are not developed in such a manner. A Grave, Crypt and Niche is typically laid out for 1 – 2 interments. To have more than that, and comply with most cemetery standards imposes many challenges for families and the business operations.
  - b. You also have to consider authorization for interment. This requires the owner of the interment right, as well as the authorizing agent (usually the closest next of kin), to give permission for the interment. If multiple interments are made in a single interment right, it will require obtaining authorization from every owner and the next of kin of every decedent already interred before the interment right can be opened up. Similarly, if a disinterment was subsequently requested, it could not occur without the explicit permission of all of those individuals.
  - c. Cemeteries that are not regulated under the DCCA will be operating without any organized supervision which could lead to multiple burials in the wrong space, encroaching on other interments, disturbance of existing interments, interred families unlawfully moved without next of kin authority, etc.
  - d. Without proper oversight skeletal remains or human compost could be transferred from a facility with no knowledge of where the remains have been buried or discarded.

Endowment Care Cemeteries are designed and mapped appropriately to accommodate families that choose inurnment or casket burial. It should be no different with Traditional Hawaiian Burials. HCFA believes it is important to honor, recognize and protect Hawaiian heritage and we believe the legislature's desire to do so can be accomplished in an appropriate manner. As mentioned above, HCFA believes cemeteries can map and design gardens for traditional Hawaiian burials to provide those options to Hawaiian families. Doing so eliminates the challenges we have noted. As referenced in SB1021 SD1: *"Further, traditional Hawaiian burials is more cost effective than modern burial techniques. Smaller burial plots are required and the cost of caskets are avoided. Thus, the decrease in space required for a burial plot will result in an increase in the carrying capacities for cemeteries".*

### **Natural Organic Reduction or Alkaline Hydrolysis**

HCFA believes there is insufficient information to support the disposition of Natural Organic Reduction or Alkaline Hydrolysis, as little information has been provided regarding the overall impact to the environment. HCFA supports the choice of alternative forms of disposition, however, because of the conflicting information concerning these processes, HCFA believes there should be a full discussion of regulatory agency(s) oversight regarding the technology, facilities, environmental impact and the operators licensing prior to moving this bill forward.

We would like to highlight just a few points of concern regarding these forms of disposition.

#### **Natural Organic Reduction:**

TO HCFA's knowledge, the first human composting facility opened February 2021 in Seattle Washington. [\*Human composting facility begins operations February 8, 2021 | Rebecca Coons\*](#)

[\*In Seattle, the world's first human composting facility has begun operations, although it is unclear if it has had any "customers" yet.\*](#)



*Dubbed Recompose, the process uses “Recomposition Vessels” to turn human remains into soil that family can collect and use in their own gardens. For \$5,400, remains are covered with biomass, including wood chips, alfalfa, and straw grass under aeration to promote decomposition by microbes and bacteria. The average human can be converted into a square meter of soil—approximately seven wheelbarrows—in a month. The process also creates less carbon dioxide and requires far less energy than cremation.*

We have concerns with the length of time to transform the decedent into compost and questions regarding the appropriate state department that will have oversight. Other concerns that need to be addressed are:

- 1) The length of time the entire process takes. HFCA understands it takes approximately 30 days for the composting process to be complete, with the remains covered with wood chips and aerated.
- 2) Once the process is complete there is approximately “1.5 - 2” cubic yard of compost, including the decedent’s remains could weigh in excess of 1,000 pounds, for example, a cubic yard of soil weighs 2,000 pounds that will need to be delivered to, or taken by, the family. Due to the sensitivities associated with the care and handling of remains, HFCA believes that greater clarity needs to be provided regarding the entire process, the nature of the providers, and how the decedent’s remains will be transported upon leaving the compost facility.
- 3) The manner in which the decedent and the compost will be transferred to the family and the place of disposition of the composted remains. Most, if not all, cemeteries are not structured to receive 2,000 pounds of remains and compost, which makes it likely that the remains and compost be placed on private property. It is HFCA’s understanding that disclosures must be made when an interment is made on private property should that property subsequently be sold. These disclosures are important for subsequent buyers of that property so that they understand the nature of what is being purchased.

**Alkaline Hydrolysis (AH):** HFCA’s concerns regarding this process are:

1. The amount of water used per decedent. Hawaiian’s endeavor to be stewards of the environment. HFCA’s understanding is that approximately 300 gallons of potable water is used in this process.
2. HFCA understands that the discharge from an Alkaline Hydrolysis facility into the sewer system exceeds a PH level of 11. HFCA believes this is something that the Legislature must consider. In areas like San Francisco, the highest PH level that can be placed in the sewer system is PH 9.
3. HFCA understands that the overall process takes up to an entire day with approximately 20%-30% more remains than a traditional cremation. This increased amount could impact families negatively from the standpoint of needing either a larger container (Urn) or an additional container to hold the addition remains, which would likely have a greater cost.
4. With respect to Hawaiian burial practices, once the alkaline hydrolysis process is completed, the facility would not process the skeletal remains, as is customary in a crematory cremation process, as that the skeletal remains remain intact for interment. (Photo Attached).

**Hawaiian Burial Practices relating to Alkaline Hydrolysis:**

HFCA is in strong support with all cultural traditions and providing people choices of disposition. However, we have concerns as to whether this is a cleaner or more environmentally friendly process and believe those concerns should be studied prior to enactment. In regards to embalming fluid and other chemicals, there are no studies which show any water or ground contamination from embalmed bodies. To the contrary, there are studies that demonstrate otherwise. Hawaii has a 65% -70% cremation rate, much of that related to cultural preference. The Department of Health Clean Air Branch regulates the crematories in the State of Hawaii. To HFCA’s knowledge, there is no evidence or studies which show that crematories contribute to poor air quality.

With respect to Hawaiian burial practices, once the alkaline hydrolysis process is completed, the facility would not process the skeletal remains, as is customary in a crematory cremation process, as that the skeletal remains remain intact for interment. (Photo Attached).

Additionally, the cremation disposition permit does not currently require a place of burial to be documented. We have included California regulation Section 1. 7611.9 of the Business and Professions Code, which provides insight of regulation that needs to be considered for these facilities. When these regulations were adopted, they contemplated that the cremated remains would subsequently be processed further using a machine to pulverize the cremated remains. It did not consider the Hawaiian "long bone" iwi, which concerns the appropriate process, as well as the issue of what the disposition permit should capture.

**Department of Health Permit Requirements; Refer # 1A of this testimony.**

There should also be formal discussion with the Department of Health and other regulatory agencies regarding the necessary permitting that will be required to operate an alkaline hydrolysis or Natural Organic Reduction facility, where such a facility can be operated, and who can operate a facility. For instance, what requirements should there regarding the education, licensure and background of individuals operating the facilities, similar to the requirements placed upon mortuaries.

While it is ultimately the Legislature's determination, it is worth noting that groups have questioned whether this chemical process is a respectful and dignified way to handle human remains. For example, the Catholic Conference of Ohio addressed proposed legislation in that state and took the position that "Dissolving bodies in a vat of chemicals and pouring the resultant liquid down the drain is not a respectful way to dispose of human remains." *Source: nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/alkaline-hydrolysis*

**The HFCA does not agree that Alkaline Hydrolysis or Natural Organic Reduction process will be more cost effective.**

Alkaline hydrolysis equipment is expensive. Depending on the size of the unit, the cost to purchase an Alkaline Hydrolysis unit is between \$150,000 and \$400,000. This variance is due to the size of the machine as well as the temperature and pressure at which the system can operate. A higher temperature and greater pressure result in faster decomposition, which is also more expensive. Additionally, there are significant costs involved in the treatment of the waste water produced from the alkaline hydrolysis process. Because the equipment costs more than traditional cremation machinery, and the cost involved in operating the machinery and treating the water used, the service will likely be more expensive for consumers.

HFCA also believes Natural Organic Reduction will be more expensive than a simple cremation in Hawaii. *Source: 2021 in Seattle Washington. [Human composting facility begins operations](#)*

There was testimony given that alkaline hydrolysis would be approximately \$2,000 per disposition. Currently, Hawaii consumers can obtain a simple cremation for approximately \$1000. While this alone should not inhibit the ability to offer such services, it is a consideration that the Legislature should take into account.

Thank you for your consideration. HFCA remains in favor of offering consumers greater choice and believe that a full discussion should be had regarding the above issues before any legislation is advanced.

Mahalo,



Jay Morford, President  
Hawaii Funeral & Cremation Association

Cc: Elizabeth A Char, MD -Director of the Department of Health  
Catherine P. Awakuni Colón - Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

**LATE**

**SB-1021-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2021 2:50:13 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/23/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Malia Marquez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB1021. I believe as a native Hawaiian we should have a choice on how ones 'ohana wishes to honor their own. We had certain rituals. Kanaka of this land should be able to choose how they wish to care for their loved ones who have passed. Many of our traditions and rituals were stripped away and told it was wrong. Hawaiian traditions are not wrong and they should be welcomed back into the hands that chose to honor them. Mahalo for your time on this matter.

**LATE**

**SB-1021-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2021 3:15:47 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/23/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Supporting this bill, it supports native Hawaiian rights.



**LATE**

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

*Pō‘alua, Pepeeuali 23, 2021*

*Via Wikiō*

*Ke Kapikala Moku‘āina*

415 South Beretānia Street

Re: SB1021 SD1 - RELATING TO BURIALS

*Aloha Luna Ho‘omalu Rosalyn Baker, Hope Luna Ho‘omalu Stanley Chang and members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:*

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs **SUPPORTS** the intent of SB1021 SD1. This bill for an act prohibits selling, transferring, conveying, or otherwise disposing of or offering for sale any plots, crypts, or niches having an authorized capacity limit of fewer than ten sets of cremated human remains or burials prepared consistent with traditional Hawaiian cultural customs and practices, includes the use of alkaline hydrolysis, water cremation, and natural organic reduction as methods for the disposal of human remains, and amends the procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding the right of disposition, the right to rely and act upon written instructions in a funeral service agreement or similar document, and provisions for the disposition of a decedent's remains and recovery of reasonable expenses to include hydrolysis facilities and natural organic reduction facilities.

The Association has a kuleana to honor, protect, and preserve Native Hawaiian traditions, including those for burial (Association Const. Article II, Sec. 2e). The preparation of human remains and the return of deceased ‘ohana to the ‘āina is a traditional Native Hawaiian practice. The Association has no position on cremation, water cremation, alkaline hydrolysis, or natural organic reduction. However, the Association has adopted a number of resolutions at its annual conventions that recognize the need to update the laws and current cemetery and mortuary

practices to allow for increased access and decreased burden for all those that wish to perform culturally appropriate 'ohana burials.

Thus, the Association respectfully urges the committees to **PASS** SB1021 SD1.

The civic club movement was founded in 1918 by Congressional Delegate Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole with the creation of the Hawaiian Civic Club; the Association was formally organized in 1959 and has grown to a confederation of over sixty (60) Hawaiian Civic Clubs located throughout the State of Hawai'i and the United States. The Association is the oldest Hawaiian community-based grassroots organization. The Association is governed by a 16-member Board of Directors; advocates for improved welfare of Native Hawaiians in culture, health, economic development, education, social welfare, and nationhood; and perpetuates and preserves language, history, music, dance and other Native Hawaiian cultural traditions.

*Mahalo* for allowing us to share our *mana* 'o.

*Me ka 'oia 'i 'o,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hailama Farden', written in a cursive style.

Hailama Farden

*Pelekikena*

**LATE**

**SB-1021-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2021 9:08:40 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/23/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I note that there are three bills under consideration by the Senate and House on this issue, i.e., HB680 HD2; SB982; and SB1021 SD1. I gave testimony in support of SB982 that includes water cremation. In any case, I support these various bills that would allow the use of alkaline hydrolysis, water cremation, and natural organic reduction as methods for the disposal of human remains.

I note questions were raised about what constitutes traditional Hawaiian burials. Thus offer the following explanation to distinguish between Native Hawaiian traditional ways of preparing the human corpse and Native Hawaiian traditional ways of burial in the hopes that this explanation will be helpful.

Traditional Hawaiian cultural customs and practices

Preparing the human corpse and burial

Preparing the human corpse: Traditionally, human corpse was treated by umu (above ground ovens) and the use of caves for natural decomposition so as to result in leaving the bones intact and unharmed. Modern ways that result in similar effect is cremation and the use of alkaline hydrolysis or water cremation, or natural organic reduction as cleaner, gentler, and more environmentally friendly processes. Except for cremation, the use of the latter are not currently in statute; SB982, SB 1021, and HB680 propose to add the latter to certain provisions of Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Burial: The traditional ways of interring the remains was iwi (bones) in a kapa, lauhala, hina'I (woven basket), and 'umeke (bowl or calabash), in their natural state. These same methods continue today.

Bottomline: Urge passage of these bills as concerns the use of alkaline hydrolysis, water cremation, and natural organic reduction as methods for the disposal of human remain and as a means to support Native Hawaiian practices that are deeply integral to Hawaiian culture and identity.

