

IRON WORKERS STABILIZATION FUND

March 29, 2023

1:01 pm

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Re: SCR57/SR51 – 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 Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III and Members of the Committee:

We **SUPPORT** SCR57/SR51. 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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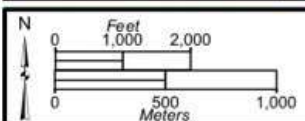
either end up at WGSJ or in Nānākuli at the landfill operated by PVT Land Company, Ltd. (City and County of Honolulu, *Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan*, 2019).

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 borne 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 SCR57/SR51**. Mahalo for the opportunity testimony.

Date Saved: 10/12/2018 4:02:03 PM Document Path: F:\Hawaii\GIS\Projects\IVT\Figure 1 - Project Site - 7/25/18.mxd



Location Map
 PVT ISWMF Relocation
 Nanakuli, Waianae District, Oahu, Hawaii

Figure
 1-1

Life Expectancies

Census tracks surrounding PVT Landfills including Nānākuli & Princess Kahanu Homesteads: **~72 yrs.**
 HI Average: **~82 yrs.**
A 10 year loss

CDC/US Department of Health



National Vital Statistics System

U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project - USALEEP

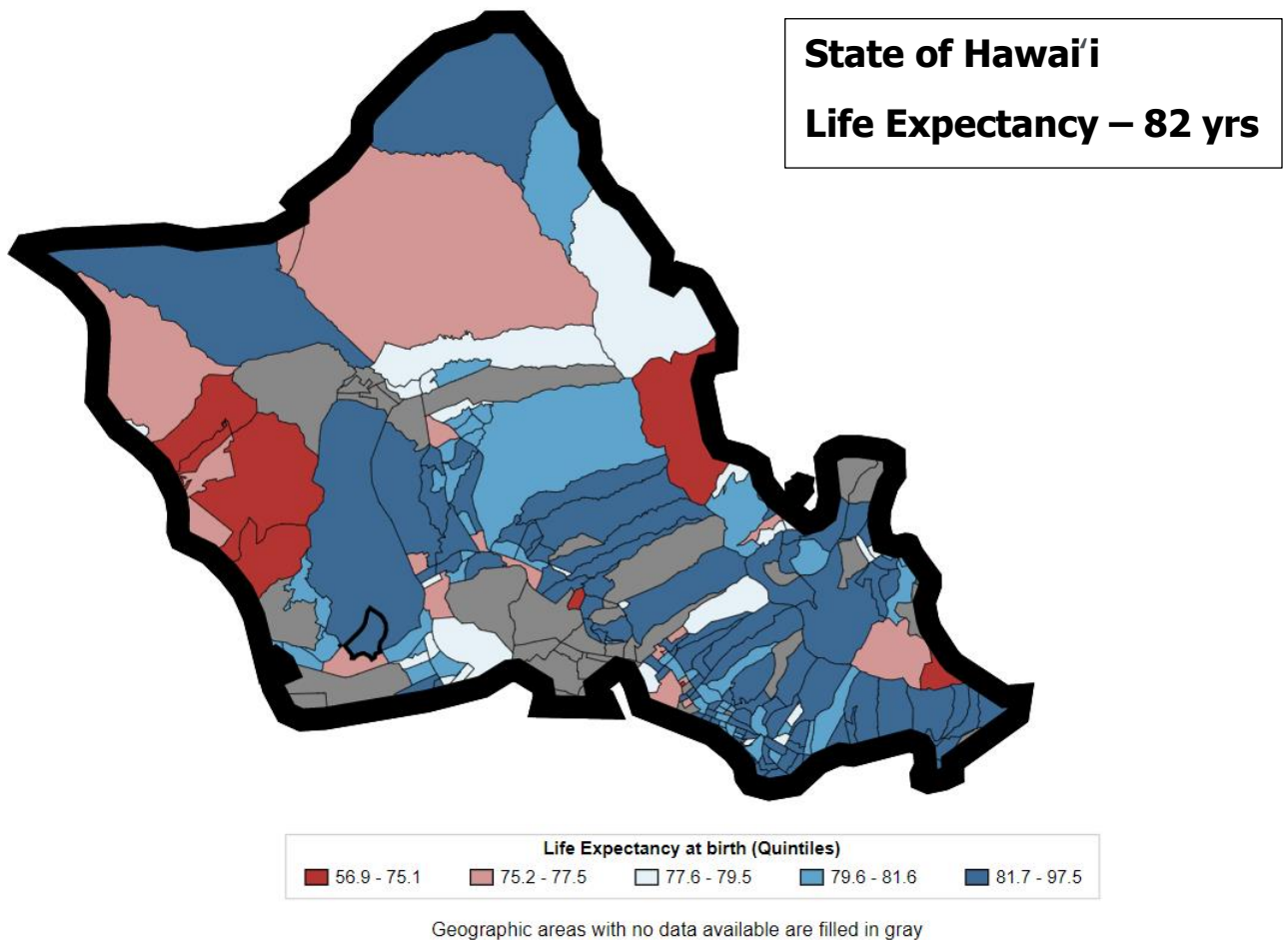
usaleep

Neighborhood Life Expectancy Project



Life Expectancy at Birth for U.S. States and Census Tracts, 2010-2015

LIFE EXPECTANCY* FOR THE ISLAND OF O'AHU, HAWAI'I



*The Life Expectancy at birth are for U.S. Census Tracts, 2010-2015. These estimates are the result of the collaborative project, “[U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project \(USALEEP\)](#),” between the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

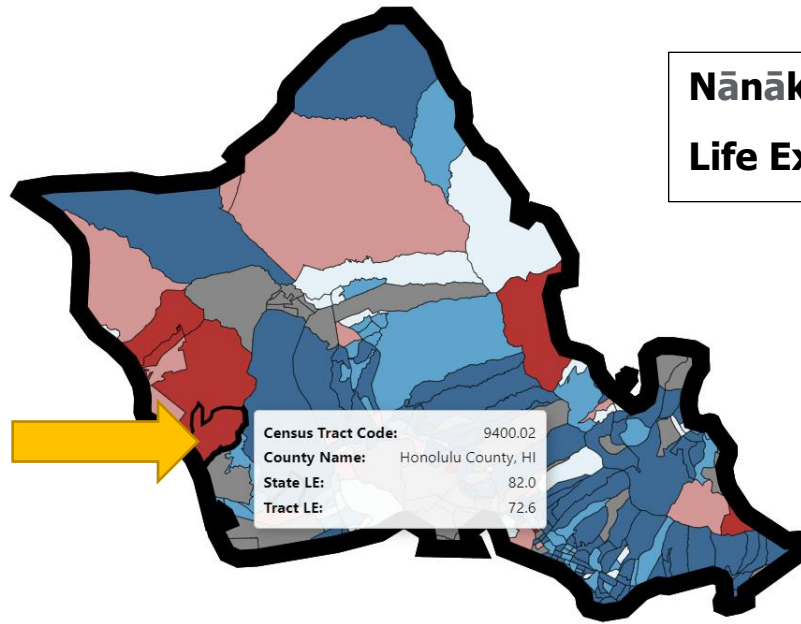
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, March 9). *Life expectancy data viz.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved March 9, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data-visualization/life-expectancy/index.html>.



NCHS Data Visualization Gallery

...Visualizing the Nation's Health

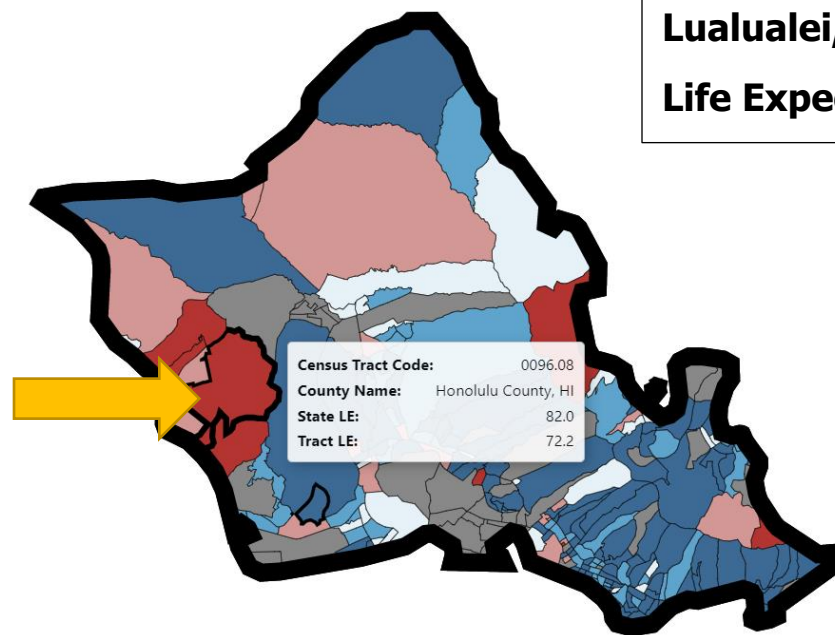
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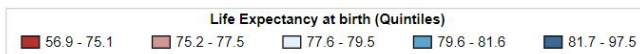
Nānākuli, O'ahu
Life Expectancy – 72.6 yrs



Geographic areas with no data available are filled in gray



Lualualei, O'ahu
Life Expectancy – 72.2 yrs



Geographic areas with no data available are filled in gray

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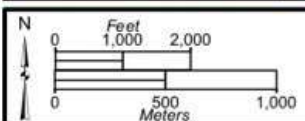
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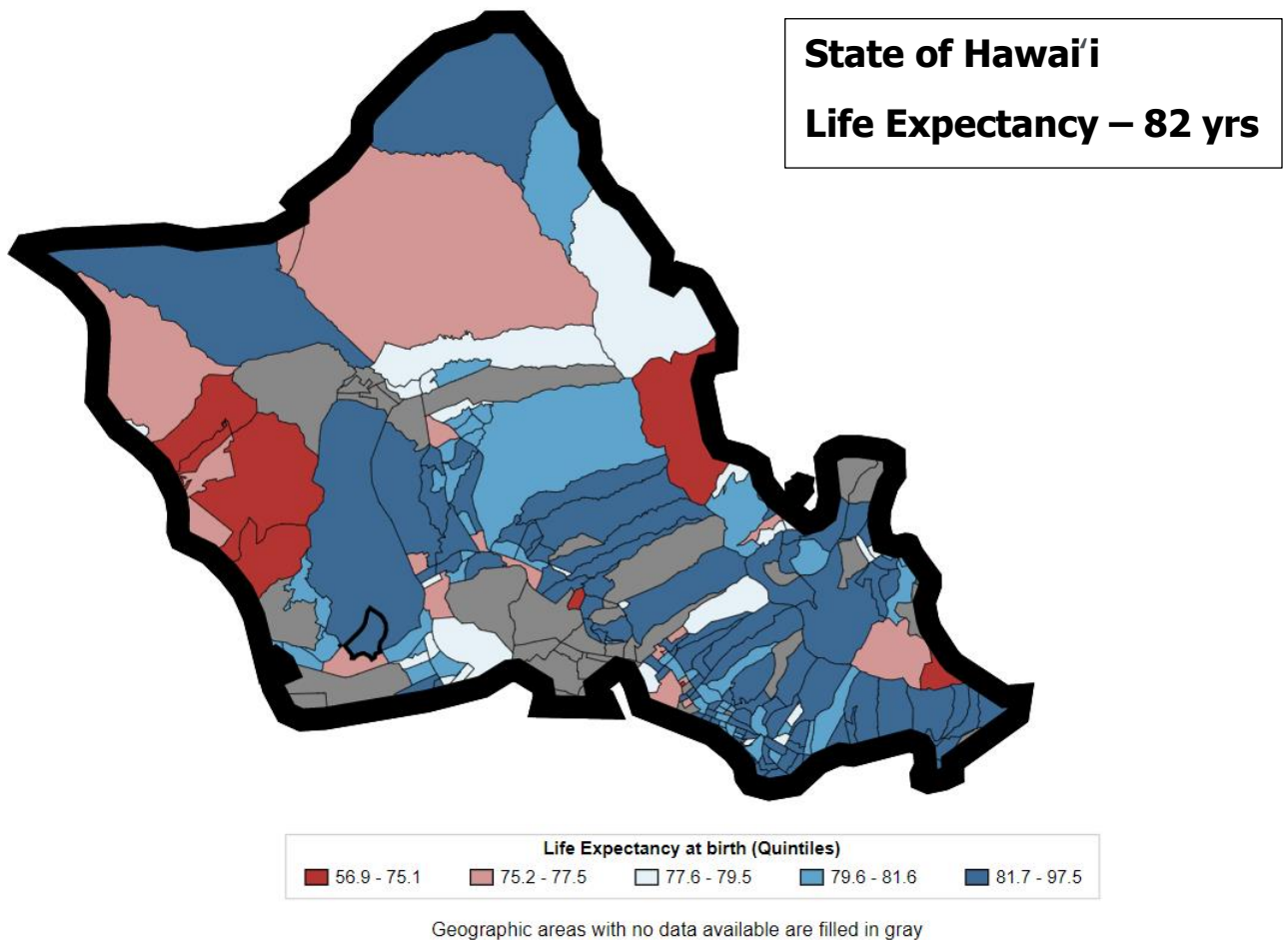
U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy
 Estimates Project - USALEEP

usaleep Neighborhood Life
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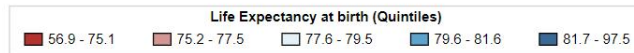
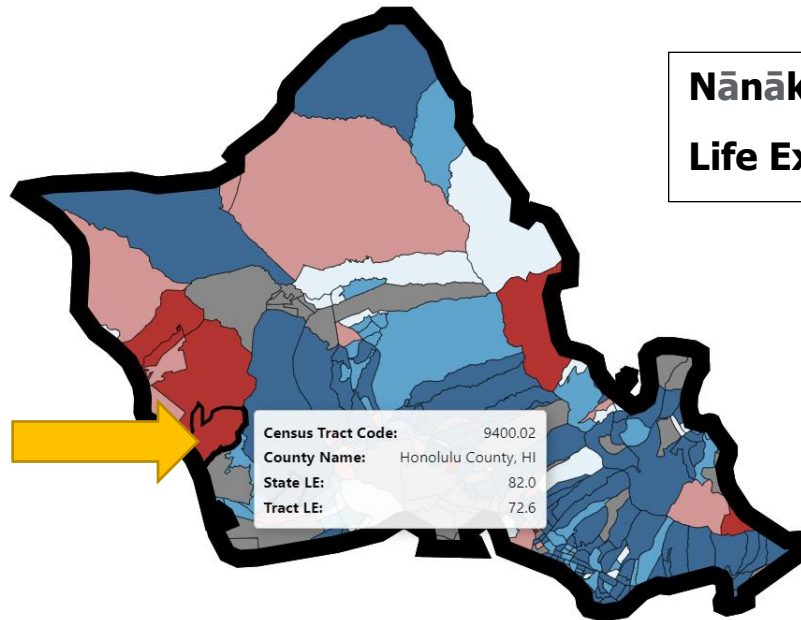
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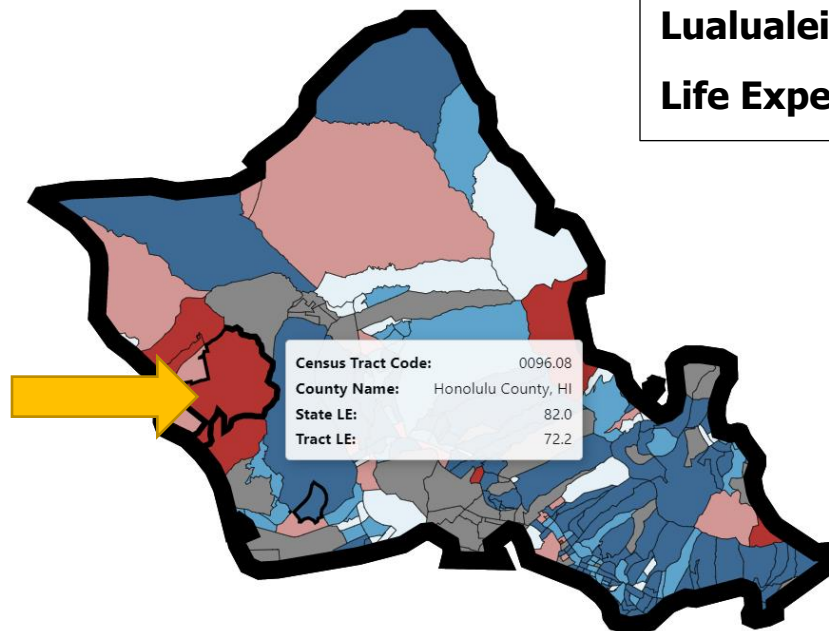
NCHS Data Visualization Gallery

...Visualizing the Nation's Health

Life Expectancy at Birth for U.S. States and Census Tracts, 2010-2015



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SR-51

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 10:31:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:01:00 PM

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

SR-51

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 10:44:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:01:00 PM

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 29, 2023

1:01 pm

Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair

Sen. Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

SCR57/SR51 - 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 Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, 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 SCR57/SR51. 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 SCR57/SR51.

Mahalo.

Ke aloha 'āina

Kamuela Werner, MPH

SR-51

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:52:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Carona	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wednesday, March 29, 2023; 1:01pm

Conference Room 224 and via Video Conference

Hawaii State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

State Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

To: State Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

State Senator Herbert Richards III, Vice Chair

Committee Members

From: David Carona

87-228 Halemaluhia Pl

Waianae, HI 96792

(808)232-7521

caronad001@hawaii.rr.com

Re: S.R. No. 51, Relating to urging the City and County of Honolulu to exempt property owners of the property tax requirements within one-half mile of a landfill

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a community member and longtime resident of the Leeward Coast of Oahu. I am submitting testimony **Opposing** Senate Resolution 51 in its current written form.

Data from the Hawaii Department of Health Landfill Database indicates that the Leeward Coast has had a landfill in its district since 1940 equating to 80 years of consecutive landfills over roughly 18 miles of this area. This resolution suggests that only those living within one-half mile of an active landfill may be more directly impacted and therefore suggest exception of city property taxes.

Reading the resolution, it has a specific tone that landfills:

““have negative health impacts for those who live, work, and play in close proximity””

““live ten years less than the state average of eighty-two years””

““have the second and third lowest life expectancies in the entire state””

Allowing this resolution to proceed, it essentially states the State of Hawaii Senate acknowledges there is severe health and safety impacts of landfills. That the State of Hawaii knowing allowed the health and safety of a community to deteriorate over decades. That state allowed the city to target a specific community for generations.

Furthermore, suggesting the exemption of property tax to, “address their individual safety and health,” seems more of a buy off than an actual solution. This would equate to a large reduction of revenue for the city. A proper solution would be for the state and city to look for other alternatives to landfills such as Plasma Arc Gasification (PAG). PAG was suggested to the City Council more that 10 years ago at Kapolei Hale for which Senator Gabbard attended as an active

council member. Another solution would be for the state and city to absorb the medical cost of those impacted by landfill operations.

Exempting an estimated \$2000 of property taxes for “health and safety” is missing the mark.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

//s//

David Carona

SR-51

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 4:39:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ed Werner	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha:

I support tax relief for those suffering from landfills. Help our our kupuna, keiki, and opio that live next to everyone's trash. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

Ed Werner

Nanakuli, Oahu