

**BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY
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March 19, 2024

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair
and Members
House Committee on Water and Land
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 430
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Ichiyama and Members:

Subject: HCR 207 / HR 187: Requesting the Department of Health to Establish a Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Testing Grant Program in Collaboration with the University of Hawaii

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) supports House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 207, House Resolution (HR) 187, requesting the Department of Health (DOH) to establish a per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) testing grant program in collaboration with the University of Hawaii (UH).

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), PFAS are a category of manufactured chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s.¹ PFAS are used in water-repellent, stain resistant, non-stick and many other products. It has also been found in firefighting foams used to extinguish fuel fires, wastewater, and landfills. They are water soluble, persistent and do not easily degrade in the environment. They are also linked to several health effects and can leach and contaminate groundwater aquifers used for drinking water.

As regulator of the Safe Drinking Water Branch, the DOH in partnership with the UH is in a prime position to work with Hawaii's Congressional Delegation to seek funding for the PFAS Testing Grant Program from the United States Congress. Due to the Red Hill fuel contamination, the DOH is already gathering PFAS data from the U. S. Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. Pursuit of federal funding

¹ EPA Finalizes Rule to Require Reporting of PFAS Data to Better Protect Communities from Forever Chemicals. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, September 28, 2023.

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from the PFAS Testing Grant Program will help protect public health by reducing PFAS exposure to our environment, drinking water, and residents. Chronic exposure to PFAS can lead to health issues and environmental threat.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HCR 207 / HR 187.

Very truly yours,



ERNEST Y. W. LAU, P.E.
Manager and Chief Engineer





Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

March 19, 2024

To: House Committee on Water and Land
Hon. Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Hon. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Re: HCR 207, HR187 relating to a PFAS Testing Grant Program

Hearing: Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 9:30 a.m., Room 430 & videoconference

Position: Strong support

Aloha, Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i comprises some 7,500 politically active members of Hawai'i's majority political party. We strongly support this proposed resolution, which requests the Department of Health in collaboration with the University of Hawaii establish a PFAS Testing Grant Program to provide funding to assist local communities, businesses, and residents throughout the State in obtaining testing services and biological sampling for PFAS detection. The Department of Health and the University of Hawaii are to seek funding for the PFAS Testing Grant Program through the Hawaii Congressional Delegation and Congress.

A PFAS (Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) Testing Grant Program would be important in the State of Hawaii for several reasons:

1. **Health Risks.** PFAS can contaminate drinking water, bioaccumulate in fish and wildlife, and have multiple adverse health effects on humans. Exposure to PFAS is linked to an increased risk of dyslipidemia (abnormally high cholesterol), suboptimal antibody response, reduced infant and fetal growth, and higher rates of kidney cancer.
2. **Environmental Impact.** PFAS are synthetic chemical compounds that are increasingly understood to pose serious toxicity to humans and other organisms in the environment. They are often referred to as "forever chemicals because they do not naturally break down in the environment.
3. **Wide Usage.** PFAS can be found in a diverse range of products including clothing, disposable cutlery, tableware, and takeout containers, shaving creams, and mascara, and can enter the human body when consumed, applied directly to the skin, and or after eating food that is served in products containing PFAS.

4. **Detection and Prevention.** The PFAS Testing Grant Program is designed to provide funding to assist local communities, business, and residents throughout the State in obtaining testing services and biological sampling for PFAS detection. This can help identify and detect PFAS in water, soil, dust, crops, food, packaging, consumer products, and other substances and materials.

Having a PFAS Testing Grant Program in Hawaii would be crucial in mitigating the managing health risks, environmental impact, and preventing further contamination from these persistent chemicals.

The O`ahu County Committee adopted OCD 2023-02 at its 2023 annual convention. This Resolution urged the City and County of Honolulu and the Hawai`i State Legislature to severely restrict the use, manufacture and importing of all products that contain any variety or form of PFAS chemical compounds, and eventually ban those products as soon as it becomes practical, on O`ahu.

According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry 2019 PFAS - An Overview of the Science and Guidance for Clinicians on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), PFAS also known as "forever chemicals", are manmade toxic chemical substances which have been found in drinking water all over the USA, and can build up (bioaccumulate) in all forms of animal food sources such as fish, domestic farm animals and wildlife, entering a human body via consumption, skin contact, breathing, and exposure to waste products which contain them can cause various forms of cancer, immune system deficiencies, organ damage, and affect human growth, with investigations ongoing.

PFAS chemicals come in many forms (PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, HFPO-DA (GenX) PFBS), and are used as coatings to make products that are resistant to heat, oil, stains, grease and water, which include most food service/take out products, clothing, textiles in all forms, carpets, soaps and gels, makeups, sunscreens and their containers, non-stick cookware to name only a few, most of which are usually discarded, to be burned for power on O`ahu, or dumped on our beaches or into our ocean.

PFAS chemicals do not naturally break down in any form in the environment, remaining toxic for literally thousands of years, and are easily transmittable during the entire time, thereby continuing to be a health threat causing illnesses and toxin-related deaths in human beings and animal life long after being discarded and can cause various cancers which means that safe removal and storage of all PFAS containing waste products and chemical spills must be a priority.

There are regulations on the use of PFAS in Hawaii. These include:

1. **Food Packaging:** Hawaii has become the latest U.S. jurisdiction to regulate PFAS in certain consumer products. This prohibition of PFAS in specific categories of food packaging will become effective on December 31, 2024.
2. **Firefight Foam:** In 2022, the Legislature passed Act 152, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, which prohibits, by the end of 2024, PFAS in certain types of firefighting foam.

These regulations are part of Hawaii’s efforts to reduce the environmental and health impacts of PFAS. However, as PFAS has been detected in Hawaii’s soil, groundwater, and drinking water, the state is still in its PFAS discovery phase. The results of increased PFAS testing threaten to expose a problem Hawaii isn’t equipped to handle, and solutions are likely to cost millions of dollars but it has to be done for the protection of human health and the environment of this generation and generations to come.

On behalf of the Environmental Caucus, we thank you very much in advance for your support of this Resolution. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Melodie Adaja legislativepriorities@gmail.com

Alan B. Burdick burdick808@gmail.com

Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus

HCR-207

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 8:15:21 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HCR-207

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 5:53:58 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/19/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!