



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony COMMENTING on SCR222/SR198**  
**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CARRY OUT WIDESPREAD**  
**SOIL TESTING IN LAHAINA AND TO DEVELOP A SOIL REMEDIATION PLAN**  
SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN SERVICES

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: March 25, 2024

Room Number: 224

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure will impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
- 2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and
- 3 personnel priorities.
  
- 4 **Department Testimony:** SCR222 requests the Department to conduct soil sampling and
- 5 analysis at the various burn sites in Lahaina for toxins and contaminants. It also requests the
- 6 Department to develop a soil remediation plan for areas of Lahaina where soil contamination
- 7 may threaten human health, groundwater quality, ocean ecosystems or food production. SCR222
- 8 further requests a feasibility study to recommend use of available technologies to remediate the
- 9 soil.
  
- 10 The Department recognizes that further soil sampling and possible treatment options maybe
- 11 required in the impacted areas of Lahaina and that future land use is contingent on having clean
- 12 soil. During the response efforts in Lahaina, Department personnel took ash/soil samples for the
- 13 purposes of screening and identifying toxins to prepare for and to provide personal protective
- 14 information for entry of workers and residents. The Department recently executed the
- 15 Comprehensive Environmental Monitoring and Sampling Plan (CEMSP) Contract for a
- 16 consultant to review environmental data collected by other federal and state agencies, to conduct

1 data management and design a data portal. We are requesting reimbursement from FEMA for  
2 the contract.

3 The Department currently does not have available personnel and resources to develop a  
4 comprehensive soil remediation plan. Furthermore, a feasibility study to recommend use of  
5 available technologies to remediate the soil is outside the scope and expertise of the Department.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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March 24, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Hon. Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Hon. Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Hon. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Hon. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Re: SCR 222 SR 198 Widespread Soil Testing in Lahaina

Hearing: Monday, March 25, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Room 224 & videoconference

Position: Strong Support

Aloha, Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment and the Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i comprises of over 7,500 politically active members of Hawai'i's majority political party. We strongly support requesting the Department of Health to carry out widespread soil testing in Lahaina and to develop a remediation plan.

Widespread soil testing in Lahaina and the development of a soil remediation plan by the Department of Health is crucial for several reasons.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.** On August 8, 2023, Lahaina experienced a devastating wildfire which resulted in the contamination of soil and toxic substances from burned or melted building materials, furniture, plastics, and consumer electronics. This contamination can pose threats to human health, groundwater quality, ocean ecosystems, and food production.
2. **HUMAN HEALTH.** Soil contamination can lead to exposure to harmful chemicals such as lead, arsenic and other toxins. This is particularly concerning for young children who are more susceptible to the harmful effects of these toxins.
3. **AGRICULTURAL IMPACT.** Lahaina, like many areas in Hawaii, has a rich agricultural history. Soil testing can provide crucial information about the composition, fertility, and health of the soil. This helps farmers make informed



Environmental Caucus of  
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

- decisions regarding fertilization, crop selection, and soil management practices, ultimately optimizing crop yield and sustainability.
4. REMEDIATION PLANNING. A soil remediation plan can help address the contamination issue by outlining the steps needed to restore the soil to a healthy state. This could include the use of available technologies to separate clean soil from ash and toxins.
  5. COMMUNITY REBUILDING. The remediation plan can also play a crucial role in the rebuilding of the Lahaina community following the wildfire. Restoring the health of the soil is a critical step in the recovery process, allowing for the safe reconstruction of homes, and the resumption of agricultural activities.

It is crucial for the Department of Health to carry out widespread soil testing in Lahaina and to develop a comprehensive soil remediation plan to protect the health of the community and the environment.

On behalf of the Environmental Caucus, we thank you very much for your support of these resolutions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these important resolutions.

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Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus

**SCR-222**

Submitted on: 3/22/2024 10:59:01 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2024 1:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b>   | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jacqueline S. Ambrose | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to; REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CARRY  
OUT WIDESPREAD SOIL TESTING IN LAHAINA AND TO  
DEVELOP A SOIL REMEDIATION PLAN.