



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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 128, SR 110 PFAS Testing Grant Program

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 establish a per- and polyfluoroalkyl testing grant program in collaboration with the University of Hawaii.

Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that have been in use since the 1940s. Due to their resistance to heat, water, and oil, PFAS has been used in a wide range of products, including non-stick cookware, water repellent clothing, stain-resistant fabrics and carpets, some cosmetics, and products that resist grease, water and oil.

However, PFAS can accumulate over time in the environment and the human body, leading to potential adverse health effects. Most of the hundreds of PFAS currently in commerce have limited or no toxicity data, making it challenging for agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to understand and address the risks these substances may pose to human health and the environment.

Establishing a PFAS testing grant program is crucial for several reasons:

1. **DATA COLLECTION.** It would require PFAS manufacturers to provide the agency with toxicity data and information on categories on PFAS chemicals which can inform future regulatory efforts.



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2. **RISK ASSESSMENT.** The program would help identify and select PFAS for which the agency will require testing, deepening the understanding of the impacts of PFAS, including potential hazards to human health and the environment.

3. **COMMUNITY SUPPORT.** The PFAS testing grant program can assist local communities, businesses, and residents in obtaining test 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.

Collaborating with the University of Hawaii could be beneficial due to their research capabilities and their understanding of the local environment and community. The University of Hawaii has a history of successful collaborations with the Department of Health on various projects, making them a suitable partner for such an initiative. This collaboration could lead to more comprehensive and locally relevant data, which could inform better risk management strategies and public health intervention.

The PFAS testing grant program could play a vital role in understanding and managing the risks associated with PFAS, ultimately protecting human health and the environment.

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

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Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus