

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB0918 HD1
RELATING TO LABELING**

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID A. TARNAS, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Hearing Date, Time, and Room Number: 2/25/25, 2:00 p.m.; Room Number 325

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 The Department requests that funding and personnel resources be established to
5 implement this bill.

6 **Department Position:** The Department offers comments on this measure.

7 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Health Services Division ("EHSD"), Food and Drug
8 Branch ("FDB") provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department:

9 HB0918 HD1 establishes labeling requirements for certain premoistened nonwoven
10 disposable wipes to educate consumers that these wipes should not be flushed down the toilet
11 because they do not break down and may clog wastewater systems.

12 The Department respectfully requests that the penalties section be removed from
13 HB0918 HD1 since the Department has existing enforcement and penalty authority in Section
14 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), as well as rulemaking authority to implement this measure.

1 The Department intends to conduct education and outreach activities with the regulated
2 community to ensure compliance with this measure.

3 Additionally, because certain manufacturers of covered products must register with the
4 United States (U.S.) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and not the Department, and
5 receive label approval from the U.S. EPA, the Department requests that references to
6 registration and approval with the Department be removed. The Department does not have the
7 authority to give final approval for the symbol and/or label and lacks standards for partial
8 approval.

9 The Department notes that personnel and funding resources will be necessary to
10 implement this measure. The Department estimates that a minimum of two full-time
11 equivalent positions and accompanying funding should be established: one position to conduct
12 inspections and enforcement actions, and one position to conduct education and outreach
13 activities. This measure impacts a diverse group of manufacturers, retailers, other state and
14 county agencies, and the public, and it will be necessary to collaborate with the respective
15 parties to develop effective strategies to implement the measure and prevent impacts to
16 wastewater systems.

17 **Offered Amendments:** The Department respectfully requests the following revision to HB0918
18 HD1:

19 SECTION 1, Page 7, lines 1-77: “(f) Not later than January 1, 2026, the manufacturer of a
20 covered product required to be registered with the agency ~~or department~~ pursuant to the
21 Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, title 7 United States Code sections 136 to
22 136y, shall submit a copy of a symbol and label notice pursuant to this section, to the agency ~~or~~
23 ~~department~~. Upon approval of the symbol and label notice by the agency, the manufacturer of
24 the covered product shall submit a copy of the approved symbol and label notice to the
25 department and begin using the approved symbol and label notice or portion thereof. If the

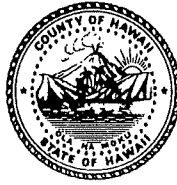
1 agency ~~or department~~ does not approve the symbol and label notice, the manufacturer of the
2 covered product shall use the symbol and label notice that the agency previously approved
3 until the agency approves a new symbol and label notice. A symbol and label notice approved
4 ~~or partially approved~~ under this subsection shall be in use within six months after the agency
5 approves the symbol and label notice.”

6 Additions appear as underlined, and deletions appear as strikeouts.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brilhante Jr.
Managing Director



Wesley R. Segawa
Director

Craig Kawaguchi
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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February 24, 2025

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY and HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill (HB) 918 HD1 Relating to Labeling, which establishes labeling requirements for certain premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes. Establishes civil penalties.

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Committee Members,

The County of Hawai'i Department of Environmental Management is pleased to submit testimony in **support of House Bill 918 HD1**, which will establish "do not flush" labeling requirements for premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes and establish civil penalties.

Disposable wipes are a significant and growing problem for wastewater treatment facilities. Unlike toilet paper, which readily breaks down, these wipes do not disintegrate. As a result, they:

- **Clog equipment:** Wipes accumulate in screening equipment, pumps, and conveyance lines, causing significant blockages. This leads to:
 - **Increased maintenance costs:** Frequent repairs and replacements of equipment are necessary, significantly increasing operational expenses.
 - **Reduced system efficiency:** Blockages disrupt the flow of wastewater, impacting the overall treatment process.
 - **Health and safety risks:** Plant operators are often required to manually remove wipes from equipment, posing potential health and safety hazards.

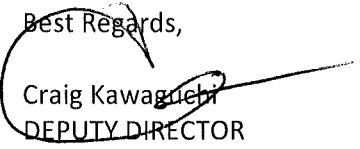
The labeling of disposable wipes will:

- **Raise public awareness:** Clearly inform consumers about the negative impacts of flushing wipes on the wastewater system.
- **Encourage responsible disposal:** Promote proper disposal methods, such as discarding wipes in the trash.
- **Reduce the burden on wastewater treatment facilities:** Minimize the frequency and severity of equipment blockages, leading to cost savings and improved operational efficiency.

We urge the legislature to pass **House Bill 918 HD1** to protect our wastewater infrastructure, safeguard public health, and ensure the long-term sustainability of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,


Craig Kawaguchi
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

cc: Mayor Kimo Alameda



February 25, 2025

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 918, HD1, Relating to Labeling

HEARING: Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawaii and its over 10,000 members. HAR **supports** House Bill 918, HD1, which establishes labeling requirements for certain premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes. Establishes civil penalties. Effective 7/1/3000.

Despite being labeled as "flushable" or "disposable", many wipe products do not break down as easily as toilet paper. These wipes can lead to clogs and significant damage to plumbing systems or sewer infrastructure. In multi-family buildings like condominiums, plumbing repairs can be very costly and impact multiple units. As such, HAR supports clear labeling to consumers to "Do Not Flush".

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 25, 2025
HB 918 HD1 RELATING TO LABELING.**

Aloha, Chair Tarnas and members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901 and is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to supporting the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, on-line sellers, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

HB 918 establishes labeling requirements for certain premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes; establishes civil penalties; and is effective 7/1/3000.

While consumer education and environmental protection are important, this requirement is not easy for Hawaii to fulfill this mandate.

Hawaii does NOT produce wipes, meaning all such products sold in the state are manufactured elsewhere and subject to federal and industry standards. Imposing a separate labeling requirement for Hawaii would place an undue burden on retailers and distributors, potentially limiting product availability or increasing costs for consumers. Having labels manually stuck onto each individual product post production is cost prohibitive for many retailers with having to have employees manually stick on labels and there is a human factor of error. We would also like to point out that the majority of retailers are already short-staffed.

Furthermore, major wipe manufacturers already comply with industry guidelines for labeling and disposal instructions. Having to mandate labeling only for Hawaii may also result in manufacturers and distributors deciding not to ship products like baby and other cleaning wipes to Hawaii.

Rather than creating a unique requirement for Hawaii, a more effective approach would be public education campaigns to inform consumers about the environmental impacts of improper disposal.

Given that Hawaii is a small market relative to national and global distribution, enforcing a state-specific labeling rule may prove impractical and unnecessary. I urge the committee to reconsider this measure and explore alternative solutions that do not create regulatory burdens on businesses and consumers.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



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HB-918-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:31:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/25/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Finarelli	The Household & Commercial Products Association	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

On behalf of the Household & Commercial Products Association (HCPA), I respectfully request HB 918 be amended to align with those of other states as it relates to products regulated by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). For instance, the bill sets a six-month deadline for products to apply the label after approval by the Department of Agriculture. No other state with "do not flush" rules enforces this deadline, as label approval is required in all 50 states, and by the US EPA, a process that can take several months.

Having a rigid deadline risks placing manufacturers in a position where they are waiting for registration approval elsewhere but are still required to comply in Hawaii. Imposing a six-month deadline could unnecessarily complicate the existing registration process and potentially create conflicts with other states' timelines. HCPA recommends looking to states like Oregon or California as a model for language related to FIFRA compliance.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and the opportunity to provide input on this important issue. We look forward to working together to ensure a consistent approach across state jurisdictions.

Sincerely,

Christopher Finarelli

Sr. Director, State Government Relations & Public Policy

Household & Commercial Products Association

HB-918-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:23:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/25/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT! Wipes can cause sewage spills and increase costs by clogging sewers and pumps. Labeling as required in this bill would help. The Committee should follow the Oregon model as suggested in the CPC report.

Please pass this bill!

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)