



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0918 HD2 SD1
RELATING TO LABELING**

SENATOR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALO, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Hearing Date, Time, and Room Number: April 2, 2025, 10:00 a.m., Room Number 211

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 annual funding of \$100,000 and two full-time equivalent
5 positions be established to implement this bill.

6 **Department Position:** The Department **supports** this measure and provides comments.

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 HD2 SD1 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 supports labeling requirements intended to reduce the disposal of wet
13 wipes into wastewater systems, and strongly supports the appropriation and establishment of
14 two full-time equivalent positions for implementation. The Department does not otherwise

1 have the resources and personnel to properly inspect and enforce the labeling requirements.
2 With the two additional positions the Department supports the measure. Without the
3 additional positions, the Department would be unable to implement this measure.

4 As provided in HB0918 HD2 SD1, the Department will use the two positions to conduct
5 outreach and enforcement activities necessary for program implementation. One position will
6 be responsible for conducting inspections and enforcement actions statewide, and one position
7 will conduct education and outreach activities to stakeholders. This measure impacts a varied
8 group of manufacturers, retailers, other state and county agencies, and the public, and it will be
9 necessary to collaborate with the respective parties to develop effective outreach strategies to
10 implement the measure and prevent impacts to municipal wastewater systems. An additional
11 operating budget of \$100,000 per year is also requested to support travel, supplies and printing
12 costs, and other related expenses.

13 **Offered Amendments:** None.

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

HB-918-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 4:33:19 PM

Testimony for CPN on 4/2/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** this bill to protect wastewater infrastructure and minimize sewage spills from clogged infrastructure!



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April 2, 2025

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 918, HD2, SD1, Relating to Labeling

HEARING: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Joint Committees:

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, HD2, SD1, which establishes labeling requirements for certain premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes. Requires certain manufacturers of covered products to submit for approval, their "DO NOT FLUSH" label notices and symbols to the United States Environmental Protection Agency by 1/1 2026. Appropriates funds. Effective 12/31/2050.

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
APRIL 2, 2025
HB 918 HD2 SD1 RELATING TO LABELING.**

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz and Chair Keohokalole and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means and the Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection. 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 HD2 SD1 establishes labeling requirements for certain premoistened nonwoven disposable wipes; requires certain manufacturers of covered products to submit for approval, their "DO NOT FLUSH" label notices and symbols to the United States Environmental Protection Agency by 1/1 2026; appropriates funds; and effective 12/31/2050. (SD1)

We respectfully oppose this bill. 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 postproduction 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-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 1:04:09 PM

Testimony for CPN on 4/2/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hope you support this bill

LATE

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB918 SD1

Relating to Labeling of Non-Flushable Products

Submitted by: Zach Lockwood

Hearing Date/Time: April 2, 2025, at 10:00 AM

To: Senate Committees on Commerce and Consumer Protection and Ways and Means

Aloha Chairs Keohokalole and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Fukunaga and Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Zach Lockwood, and I am a law student at the William S. Richardson School of Law and currently enrolled in the Environmental Law Clinic. I am testifying in my individual capacity in strong support of HB918 SD1.

Disposable wipes marketed as “flushable” continue to impose serious environmental and infrastructural costs across the country. Municipal wastewater agencies across the United States spend at least \$1 billion each year managing blockages caused largely by wipes that do not degrade like toilet paper.¹ These products resist breakdown and entangle with fats, oils, and greases to create massive obstructions—leading to raw sewage overflows, increased utility costs, and environmental harm.

In the absence of binding federal standards, manufacturers are free to use “flushable” labels with little accountability. Consumers reasonably assume such products are safe for their plumbing and sewer systems, despite overwhelming industry and municipal data to the contrary. The result is a form of greenwashing that places the burden—and cost—on the public.

The requirements established by HB918 SD1 align with legislation adopted in several states, including California, Washington, and Oregon, and follow the INDA/EDANA labeling guidelines supported by both wastewater utilities and industry actors.² Moreover, consistent and conspicuous labeling is not only effective consumer protection—it is also sound environmental policy.

As an island state with fragile marine ecosystems and aging infrastructure, Hawai‘i is particularly vulnerable to the consequences of improper disposal. Investing in clear labeling is a low-cost, high-impact strategy to reduce pollution, cut municipal costs, and protect public health.

I urge the committees to pass HB918 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Zach Lockwood

¹ Patrick Van Burklee, *Flushing Away Ambiguity: Establishing a Standard for the Flushability of Pre-Moistened Nonwoven Wipes*, 12 LSU J. ENERGY L. & RES. 687, 691 (2024).

² See *id.* at 710-11.