

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN  
COMPTROLLER  
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ  
  
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DEPUTY COMPTROLLER  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWÉ LAULĀ**  
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
OF  
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER  
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE

**COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

MARCH 20, 2025, 10:00 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

H.C.R. 190/H.R. 184

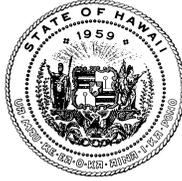
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A DEMOLITION  
WASTE REDUCTION WORKING GROUP.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee, thank you for  
the opportunity to submit testimony on H.C.R. 190 and H.R. 184.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) **supports** these  
measures and offers the following comment.

The department recognizes that the various state CIP agencies may have  
purposively different approaches to the management of demolition waste, and the  
working group may benefit from discussion of those differing approaches. Therefore, the  
department respectfully suggests that the working group be expanded to include  
representation from the largest state CIP agencies: the Department of Education, the  
Department of Transportation, and the University of Hawaii system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on HCR0190  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A DEMOLITION  
WASTE REDUCTION WORKING GROUP.**

REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

March 20, 2025, 10:00 A.M. and Room Number: 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This resolution 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 Position:** The Department offers the following comments.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Management Division, Solid and Hazardous Waste  
6 Branch (EMD-SHWB) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

7 The Department supports the idea of ensuring alternative waste management options,  
8 especially given the pending closure of Oahu's construction and demolition waste landfill, and  
9 strongly support source reduction and circular economies as preferable approaches.

10 However, we are currently committed to conduct four (4) studies that include a  
11 statewide waste characterization study and two deposit beverage container rate studies in the  
12 next two (2) years. Furthermore, based on remaining active measures, we may be required to  
13 concurrently conduct or participate in three (3) additional working groups.

14 In addition, we lack the planning staff available to conduct another working group. We  
15 generally have one (1) position identified for solid waste planning and that position is currently

1 vacant. We recognize that solid waste planning is important, and have initiated a branch  
2 reorganization so that a planning section with a staff of three (3) can be created to provide  
3 greater emphasis on this priority. Until the reorganization is completed, additional positions  
4 cannot be created.

5           Given our resource constraints, we will not be able to fulfill this resolution without  
6 funding for contract services. If funding and resources are provided, we prefer to first focus on  
7 the pending closure of the construction demolition landfill, through evaluation of existing  
8 alternative management options which prioritize source reduction and recycling approaches to  
9 address immediate needs.

10 **Offered Amendments:** None

11           Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this concurrent resolution.



March 19, 2024

Committee on Energy and Environment  
Chair, Rep. Nicole Lowen  
Vice Chair, Amy Perusso

Organization Testimony in **Support of HR184**  
Committee on Energy and Environment

Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Chair, Rep. Nicole Lowen  
Vice Chair, Amy Perusso

Honorable Members of the Committee,

Re-use Hawai'i is a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing Hawai'i's waste management challenges by keeping building materials out of landfills and fostering a circular economy.

Re-use Hawaii strongly supports HR184 to establish a Construction and Demolition Waste Reduction Working Group. Hawaii urgently needs innovative and sustainable solutions to address growing construction and demolition waste challenges. By bringing together stakeholders and experts, this initiative can help develop practical strategies that protect our environment and improve the well-being of our communities. With landfill capacity rapidly diminishing, we must proactively reduce waste and promote responsible material reuse.

At our Deconstruction Forum this year, we heard firsthand from Nānākuli residents who have suffered severe health impacts due to prolonged exposure to landfill-related pollution. Their experiences underscore the urgent need for inclusive and equitable decision-making processes prioritizing public health. As landfill policies continue to shift in response to community concerns, a collective and informed voice will empower decision-makers to implement sustainable waste management solutions that serve the environment and Hawai'i's people.

We strongly support HR184 and are eager to continue serving our community to help build a stronger, more sustainable future for Hawai'i's workforce and industries.

Mahalo nui loa,

Quinn Vittum  
Executive Director  
Re-use Hawai'i



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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March 19, 2025

**To:** Chair Nicole E. Lowen, Vice Chair Amy A. Perruso, and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

**Date:** Thursday, March 20, 2025 **Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Place:** Via Videoconference and Conference Room 325

**Subject:** Testimony in Strong Support of HR184/HCR190 - Demolition Waste Reduction Working Group

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports HR184/HCR190, which requests the Department of Health to convene a Demolition Waste Reduction Working Group.

## **Key Points in Support:**

### **1. Addressing Construction and Demolition Waste:**

- Construction and demolition (C&D) waste account for a significant portion of the state's solid waste stream. This measure acknowledges the importance of reducing demolition waste and encourages sustainable practices to minimize environmental impact.

### **2. Encouraging Recycling and Reuse:**

- Convening a working group will help identify practical strategies for recycling and reusing demolition materials, such as concrete, wood, and metals, which can be repurposed for future construction projects and other uses.

### **3. Protecting Landfills and Natural Resources:**

- By reducing the volume of C&D waste entering landfills, Hawaii can extend landfill lifespans and conserve valuable natural resources. This is particularly relevant for facilities such as the PVT Construction and Demolition Landfill on Oahu, which is approaching closure due to high volumes of waste despite efforts to recycle 80% of the debris it receives. Addressing these challenges proactively will help mitigate future waste management concerns.

**4. Promoting Collaboration:**

- Bringing together stakeholders from the construction industry, environmental groups, government agencies, and the community will foster innovative solutions and ensure the working group addresses diverse perspectives and challenges.

**5. Advancing Hawaii's Sustainability Goals:**

- Establishing the working group aligns with Hawaii's commitment to sustainability and waste reduction. This measure reflects the state's leadership in adopting environmentally responsible policies and practices.

We commend the Legislature for taking proactive steps to reduce demolition waste and support the passage of HR184/HCR190. This resolution represents a meaningful opportunity to advance sustainability and protect Hawaii's environment for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

Co-Chairs Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

**HR-184**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 8:41:29 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/20/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ted Bohlen	Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i **STRONGLY SUPPORT** these resolutions!

A working group on demolition waste reduction would help creat a more circular economy for this sector, reducing the need for landfilling and helping mitigate climate emissions.

Please pass this!

**Comments before  
March 20, 2025  
House Committee on  
Energy and Environmental Protection**

**IN SUPPORT OF  
House Concurrent Resolution 190 and  
House Resolution 184**

Relating to Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste

**Mike Ewall, Esq.  
Founder & Director  
Energy Justice Network**  
215-436-9511  
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**www.EnergyJustice.net**

Aloha Honorable Committee members. Energy Justice Network is a national organization supporting grassroots groups working to transition their communities from polluting and harmful energy and waste management practices to clean energy and zero waste solutions. In Hawai'i, we've been working with residents who first sought our support in 2015. Since mid-2022, we have supported residents in forming the Hawai'i Clean Power Task Force and Kōkua nā 'Āina to address numerous energy and waste issues in the state.

**We support these resolutions and would like to see them strengthened as follows:**

- 1) Rename the working group from "Demolition Waste Reduction Working Group" to "Construction and Demolition Waste Reduction Working Group."
- 2) Add to their working group's mandate to study how to build the market for reused and recycled building materials in new building and renovation.
- 3) Specify that reducing construction and demolition waste must be through source reduction, reuse, and recycling (the top parts of the Zero Waste Hierarchy), and not through destructive high-temperature processes such as pyrolysis, gasification, or conventional incineration, which are forbidden in internationally peer-reviewed [definition of Zero Waste](#) and the [Zero Waste Hierarchy](#) that are used for [certification](#) around the world.
- 4) Add a member from [Zero Waste USA](#) and/or [Build Reuse](#).

Please find additional resources on the topic here and in the following overview:  
[www.energyjusticenetwork.org/waste/cd](http://www.energyjusticenetwork.org/waste/cd)

### **Benefits of Deconstruction**

- Workforce development
- Economic driver with small business start ups
- Increase materials salvaged for use in the circular economy in reuse stores
- Minimizes health impacts to toxins in the air, water, and soil

### **Economics**

Reclaiming materials affects the economy by creating jobs, job training, and markets for materials. It cuts down on the need for harvesting new materials like timber, and removes the need for landfill space. Reclaiming materials reduces carbon dioxide and other emissions. The benefits are

often called a **triple bottom line** economy by creating jobs, markets, and sustainable environmental practices.

**The triple bottom line** – environmental, economic, community – benefits of deconstruction is well documented. According to the Delta Institute, deconstruction can offer several environmental, economic and community benefits for communities with high vacancy rates and unemployment. Those benefits include:

#### Environmental benefits

- Reduced toxic dust from job sites
- Reduced heavy metal leaching into soil
- Reduced waste to landfills
- Reduced consumption of virgin material

#### Economic benefits

- Jobs from removing structures via deconstruction versus demolition
- Jobs for the hard-to-employ
- Resale of building materials
- Sale of value-added products

#### Social benefits

- Removal of blight
- Potential workforce development partnerships
- Potential for workforce training and contractor training
- Potential for local reclaimed materials to be used in restoration and preservation of older and historic structures.

#### **Deconstruction is an employment multiplier:**

The workforce potential of deconstruction does not end at the direct jobs on the job site. The deconstruction field offers a higher employment multiplier than demolition. There are more indirect jobs that emerge related to deconstruction as salvaged materials are transported offsite. These include warehouse jobs, retail and sales jobs, and value-added manufacturing jobs as a result of “upcycling” of the salvaged materials. Additionally, these indirect industries provide additional workforce development and training opportunities. The combined direct and indirect offer more induced jobs that are a result of the direct/indirect wages spent in the local economy.

#### **HEALTH IMPACTS**

Lead, as well as other chemical pollutants from construction sites, such as asbestos, crystalline silica, mercury, and arsenic, can also soak into the surrounding soil. This has the potential to contaminate groundwater supply and drinking water which can cause serious health issues, including cancer, if ingested. Deconstruction offers a way of mitigating these hazards. Removal of building parts piece by piece means hazardous materials remain largely intact. Processes like planning to remove lead paint and denailing are done at a warehouse in a controlled environment,

avoiding contamination at the building site. Contact with hazardous materials occurs in building removal no matter what, but studies show less risk for airborne and ground seeping hazards when homes are deconstructed rather than demolished.

Buildings contain a lot of materials that when pulverized and put into the environment, whether air, water or soil, can make people sick. On a massive scale, the destruction of the World Trade Towers led to injury, [chronic illness](#) and death in many people exposed to the toxic dust that the manmade disaster caused.

Demolition of buildings can generate unhealthy exposures for residents and workers. A European study estimated that demolitions composed about [1/6 of the total waste stream](#). A major air pollutant from demolition of concern is [particulate matter](#), an important cause of increased mortality, lung and cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. Increases in [silica](#) exposure occur with demolition and silica is associated with lung diseases like silicosis, chronic obstructive lung disease as well as lung cancer. As [one study](#) concluded “workers and bystanders are exposed to high short-term peak exposures for which occupational standards do not exist. Asbestos is a cancer causing fiber found in buildings from roof, insulation piping and flooring and has been documented to still be present [even after abatement](#) of asbestos was completed. This is alarming because it is established that asbestos causes mesothelioma which is a cancer of the chest and abdominal linings of the body and cancer of the lung. It is a probable cause of cancer of the larynx, and ovary. Arsenic and chromium, also found in [demolition dust](#), are both associated with increased risk of [lung cancer](#) with occupational exposure.

Lead is perhaps the most worrisome heavy metal found in demolition dust. One [Chicago study](#) found a 31-fold increase in lead dust at demolition sites. Wetting the site before and during demolition reduces the lead dust fall in the surrounding neighborhood significantly but raises the question of what happens to the lead after it is wetted? Lead is especially toxic to children’s brains and there is no safe level. In addition to lead, chemical exposures like brominated flame retardants (PBDE) are “forever” chemicals, and [health concerns include](#) endocrine disruption, neurotoxicity and increasing risk of cancer. Both are [examples of neurotoxins](#) that potentially by reducing IQ can lead to significant lifetime losses of income after in utero (PBDE) and childhood (lead) exposure. Although better regulations have led to a drop in blood lead levels over time, demolition of older homes with legacy chemicals built before regulations restricted their use, may still be a source of this contaminated and dangerous dust.

In summary, there are health hazards to workers and residents in the dust generated by demolishing old buildings. In addition to contaminated dust, there are other concerns from demolition site waste (run off waste wetted down, waste taken to landfills, waste burned in incinerators). Abatement is only a partial solution. Deconstruction avoids many of these health hazards.