



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Legislative Testimony

HB 1116, RELATING TO WATER POLLUTION

House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

February 5, 2009

9:00 a.m.

Room: 312

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB1116, which seeks to establish two exempt positions, both of which are entitled Total Maximum Daily Load Coordinator.

OHA understands that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) via the State of Hawai'i Department of Health Clean Water Branch conducts monitoring, assessment, and watershed planning activities to track water quality, identify polluted waters and develop pollution control plans with the total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) program.

We see that the solo, current contracted position has been struggling to identify these water quality trends, prioritize polluted waters, and target waters for TMDL development. OHA notes that the streams in this state are suffering as a result of our lack of compliance with federal requirements in this area. The EPA has the ability to retract funding directed to Hawai'i's Department of Health through this TMDL program, because of our current lack of compliance. Therefore, this bill would be a step toward meeting our Clean Water Act obligations, as well as fulfilling our Constitutional obligations of protecting and better managing our precious water resources.

OHA notes that the funding for these two positions is proposed to come from federal monies derived from the Clean Water Act. We suggest that the longevity of the TMDL program and associated funding should be verified before these positions are created.

Therefore, OHA urges the Committee to PASS HB 1116. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hanalei Watershed Hui

February 4, 2009

Testimony in Support
HB 1116
EEP Committee, Rm. #325 9:00 am

Aloha Committee members,

The Hanalei Watershed Hui supports this legislation to provide for two TMDL Coordinators.

Hanalei is a site of a completed TMDL study and our organization is expecting to lead the planning and implementation of the program to reduce the pollutants entering our auwai, streams, rivers and Bay.

These positions will greatly aide the efficiency and appropriateness of our program as well as others throughout the State.

Compliance with the Clean Water Act is a vital component of restoring our marine ecosystems and growing more fish for our people to eat. Development of TMDL data and implementation of community plans to address the impacts is key to engaging our communities in a positive approach and response to pollutants in our waters.

This is an important step in community based management.

Please pass this bill and support the partnership between government and community.

Me ka pono,

Makaala Kaaumoana
Executive Director



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