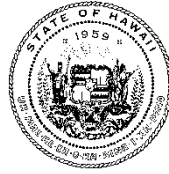


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DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES

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LATE

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
OF
DOUGLAS MURDOCK, COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
FINANCE
ON
APRIL 7, 2015

H.R. 44

REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES IS URGED TO OPERATE THE WATER PUMPING SYSTEM OF THE STATE CAPITOL PONDS FOR TWO HOURS PER DAY

Chair Luke and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on H.R. 44.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) appreciates the intent of H.R. 44. DAGS is already running the water pumping system for two hours per day on weekdays. However, running the water pumping system will not provide the anticipated benefits described in the resolution, hence we offer the following comments.

The fish that populated the State Capitol pools prior to the 1990's were introduced by private citizens, outside of any DAGS initiative. While the fish, predominantly tilapia, initially thrived, they quickly overpopulated within the confines of the pools. When the still-growing algae bloomed, it absorbed so much of the available oxygen in the water that the fish perished. The fish did not control the algae growth, and water quality testing has shown that the by-products from live fish actually reduce water quality more than algae alone. DAGS has not

taken any action to reintroduce or replenish aquatic life in the pools. Once again, fish are being introduced into the pools by well-meaning visitors.

The recirculation pumps have been removed, and even when water treatment and circulation systems operated at full performance levels, there were still stagnant areas of the pools that promoted algae growth. Currently, make up water from nearby wells compensate for evaporation, what's vacuumed out during cleaning, and leaks of the water in the pools. This water was once much less saline. The frequent drought conditions Oahu has experienced over the years have reduced the fresh water available in the wells, and we are now drawing increasingly more saline water. The water was not intended to support aquatic life.

In addition, because the overflow of water from the pools was originally designed to drain into the storm sewer, and discharge of water containing algal particles into the storm sewer is a violation of State law, the water level has been lowered. DAGS must ensure we do not exceed the lowered depth to minimize overflow into the storm sewer, and only as much well water is pumped into the pools as needed to maintain a consistent depth. This equates to running the feed pumps for roughly two hours daily on weekdays. If the pumps are run much longer, we risk excess discharge of pool water into the storm sewer system.

DAGS is currently in the process of reviewing additional water treatment methods for testing and implementation until full renovation of the pools may be accomplished.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on this matter.