



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of GM551
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE
BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATING PERSONNEL IN WASTEWATER
TREATMENT PLANTS, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, KEVIN NAKAMURA FOR
A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2023

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

Hearing Date: 3/19/2020

Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (Department) strongly supports the
3 Governor's nominee, Mr. Kevin Nakamura., to the Board of Certification of Operating Personnel
4 in Wastewater Treatments (Board). Mr. Nakamura's confirmation will allow the Board to
5 continue to operate and perform its duties required under Chapter 11-61, Hawaii Administrative
6 Rules, entitled, "Mandatory Certification of Wastewater Treatment Personnel in Wastewater
7 Treatment Plants."

8 Mr. Nakamura currently works as an Environmental Health Specialist with the Department's
9 Indoor and Radiological Health Branch. He has worked for the Department for over six years.
10 He currently holds a Grade 4 wastewater treatment plant operator certificate. Prior to working
11 for the Department, he worked as a Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Superintendent for
12 Aqua Engineers and a Wastewater Regional Superintendent for the City and County of
13 Honolulu. Mr. Nakamura has over twenty-one (21) years of wastewater experience. The
14 Department believes that he would be a great asset to the Board.

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

Wesley T. Yokoyama, P.E.
Chief
City and County of Honolulu
Department of Environmental Services
Wastewater Engineering & Construction
Division
650 South King Street 14th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 768-8790
May 6, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: Letter of Recommendation For Mr. Kevin Nakamura to fill the Department of Health/Wastewater Branch seat of the Board of Certification for Wastewater Operators in Wastewater Treatment

In my professional capacity as a licensed engineer and the Chief of the Division of Wastewater Engineering and Construction (WEC), Department of Environmental Services (ENV), City and County of Honolulu (C&C), I endorse Mr. Kevin Nakamura for a seat on the Board of Certification for Wastewater Operators in Wastewater Treatment.

ENV has a huge commitment to upgrade Honolulu's wastewater infrastructure via the Global Consent Decree (GCD) with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and administered by Federal Court. ENV's commitment to improvement of the wastewater system is witnessed by an average of \$534 Million of capital improvement projects over the last 5 years. 2020 effectively begins the wastewater treatment plant secondary treatment upgrade phase of the GCD, estimated at a cost of up to \$3 Billion. While the upgrades to the treatment plant facilities may be state-of-the art; without the proper operators to operate and maintain the treatment facilities, the plants will not achieve the treatment necessary to meet regulatory and health and safety requirements.

I have known and worked with Mr. Nakamura for over 25 years. He headed the operations at the Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), the largest wastewater treatment facility in the State. Mr. Nakamura had the skills necessary to meet stringent effluent limits, understood treatment process controls, and could and did adjust to changes in influent sewage in order to meet treatment standards. As a supervisor and Grade IV Licensed Operator, Mr. Nakamura trained and oversaw a large operations staff, and knows what it takes to be qualified to run treatment processes. He is a no-nonsense, committed individual with the utmost integrity. I believe that this experience would make him an excellent member of the Board of

Certification. He would be a very knowledgeable and fair judge of whether a candidate would deserve certification and licensing.

Those who know me have commented that I have very high standards. In my twenty-six years as a licensed professional engineer, I have consented to write only two letters of recommendation while having been requested by over a dozen individuals. One was for the Director of a City department, and the other is for Kevin. Kevin's dedication, integrity and experience cannot be captured by words only; so this letter of recommendation does not do him justice. I wholeheartedly recommend him for the Board, and would be more than happy to discuss his work performance, qualifications, and history with you. Please call me at the above number or email me at wyokoyama@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,



WESLEY T. YOKOYAMA, P.E.

CHIEF

DIVISION OF WASTEWATER ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

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GM551

Kevin Nakamura

Board of Certification of Operating Personnel in Wastewater Treatment Plants:

Please find my response to the questions form my consideration for the seat on the Board of Certification of Operating Personnel in wastewater Treatment Plants:

- 1) To help protect the health and safety of the people and environment of Hawaii.
- 2) Ensuring the best and most qualified people are certified to operate WWTP in Hawaii.
- 3) I have over 25 years of experience in Wastewater Treatment Operations; and hold a valid Hawaii Grade IV Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Operator's license. I have experienced the early growth of the Wastewater industry in Hawaii, from very little regulatory control to the current stringent (and expanding) regulations.
- 4) I would like to accomplish an Apprentice type program at Community Colleges to provide individuals with the opportunity enter the Wastewater Operator field.
- 5)
 - Knowledgeable
 - Good Listener
 - Works well individually and within a group
- 6) I rose 'through-the-ranks' in Wastewater, from Assistant Operator to Regional Superintendent (Kailua Region). I was the Operations Superintendent of the Schofield Barracks WWTP. And have work closely with the State Regulatory agencies and gained the trust and respect through my actions and abilities.
- 7) I do not foresee any conflicts of interest with my participation on the Board of Certification of Operating Personnel in Wastewater Treatment Plants.

I look forward to hearing from Sen. Baker should she accept my nomination.

Respectfully,

Kevin Nakamura