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In reply, please refer to:
File:

**Testimony COMMENTING on HCR0212
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO INVESTIGATE AND IMPLEMENT
POLICIES TO REDUCE THE IMPORTATION OF PRODUCTS, PACKAGING, OR
MATERIALS CONTAINING PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL
SUBSTANCES INTO THE STATE**

REPRESENTATIVE MARK M. NAKASHIMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Hearing Date: 4/2/2024 Room Number: 329

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 Investigating and implementing policies to reduce the importation of products,
5 packaging, or materials containing perfluoroalkyl and/or polyfluoroalkyl substances (collectively
6 and commonly known as PFAS) into the State will require resources to further the Department's
7 ongoing assessments of the impacts of PFAS in the State, in addition to equipment for testing
8 and validating the presence of violative substances and the personnel necessary to develop
9 testing methodologies, collect samples, operate testing equipment and analyze results, and
10 conduct investigations and enforcement actions.

11 **Department Testimony:** HCR0212 requests that the Department investigate and implement
12 policies to reduce the importation of products, packaging, or materials containing PFAS into the
13 State.

14 PFAS are considered "forever chemicals" that do not naturally break down in the
15 environment and can contaminate drinking water, bioaccumulate in fish and wildlife, and can
16 have multiple adverse health effects on humans. PFAS can be found in a diverse range of
17 products including clothing, disposable cutlery, tableware and takeout containers, food
18 packaging, electronics, mascara, paint, laboratory and medical equipment, and plumbing

1 supplies. PFAS can enter the human body when consumed, applied directly on the skin, and/or
2 after eating food that is served in packaging containing PFAS.

3 Because of the ubiquity of products containing PFAS, and the potential harmful effects
4 on the environment and on human health, federal resources are being expended to study the
5 impacts of PFAS. The Department and local partners are capitalizing on available funding and
6 investing significant time and resources to evaluate the impacts of PFAS in the State. This
7 includes conducting the following studies:

- 8 - PFAS in fish and seawater in the nearshore environment;
- 9 - PFAS in frequently eaten fish purchased from local markets;
- 10 - PFAS in wastewater, biosolids, and landfill leachate;
- 11 - PFAS in drinking water;
- 12 - PFAS in Red Hill groundwater monitoring wells; and
- 13 - PFAS in compost and food crops grown in compost.

14 Information about these studies, and other activities that the Department is implementing
15 regarding PFAS, can be found at the following website:

16 <https://health.hawaii.gov/heer/environmental-health/highlighted-projects/pfas/>.

17 The Department recognizes the importance of reducing the number of PFAS products
18 entering the State. However, the Department notes that it is currently investing resources and
19 time to understand the relationship between PFAS and our environment and its potential impacts
20 on human health, and these efforts are necessary to inform the Department prior to identifying
21 and investigating policies to reduce the importation of PFAS products. The Department also
22 notes potential difficulties with fulfilling the requests in HCR0212 due to the sheer number of
23 products containing PFAS. Many of these products are not under the Department's jurisdiction,
24 and the Department might not have the authority to restrict interstate commerce and the
25 importation of these products. Finally, the Department notes the challenge of implementing this
26 resolution due to a lack of resources.

27 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

28 **Offered Amendments:** None.