



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans
Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

By

Alison Sherwood

Acting Dean and Associate Dean
College of Natural Sciences

And

Michael Bruno, PhD

Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 28/HR 18 – ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS ISSUES
RELATED TO WATER AND AIR CONTAMINATION AND REMEDIATION ARISING
FROM THE OPERATION OF THE PUULOLO RANGE TRAINING FACILITY

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the HCR 28/HR 18, which establishes a working group to address the issues related to water and air contamination and remediation arising from the operation of the Pu'uloa Range Training Facility.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa would welcome the opportunity to be a part of this working group. Addressing these important issues will require the collection and analysis of complex new data from sampling the soil as well as the marine life of the region. Interpreting the data will require subject-matter expertise found in the School of Life Sciences.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the resolution.



COMMENTS ON HCR 28 / HR 18

ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO WATER AND AIR CONTAMINATION AND REMEDIATION ARISING FROM THE OPERATION OF THE PUULOLO RANGE TRAINING FACILITY

House Committee on Corrections, Military, & Veterans
The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
The Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") **offers comments** on HCR 28 and HR 18.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

The Pu'uolo Range Training Facility (PRTF) has trained hundreds of thousands of Marines and other military branches in critical rifle and pistol skills that enable our service men and women to respond to our nation's call for many decades. One of the most basic skills is the ability to possess and maintain is marksmanship proficiency.

PRTF is also one of the primary training facilities in training and credentialing state and county law enforcement on marksmanship.



Operators of the PRTF have worked and continue to engage in close partnership with neighboring communities and the monthly neighborhood board to mitigate potential impacts to the surrounding community, specifically those residing in close proximity to the range. Mitigation of noise impacts has led to changes in operation, equipment direction, and scheduling based on community input.

The MAC will work with the Marines to implement new technologies to further reduce noise and related impacts.

We will be pleased to keep the Committee informed of our efforts and believe this resolution is not necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this matter.

46-025 Kuneki Pl
Kāneʻohe, HI 96744
March 19, 2024

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the proposed Working Group as stated in the Resolution HCR 28/HR 18: ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO WATER AND AIR CONTAMINATION AND REMEDIATION ARISING FROM THE OPERATION OF THE PUULOLO RANGE TRAINING FACILITY.

As a marine botanist in the School of Life Sciences, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, I have spent my 35 year career in research and teaching about our native limu and invasive algae. I have collected limu in the Ewa Limu Management Area before its designation as a Special Management Area by the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

From my perspective, the need for this Working Group is clear. The Ewa community who reside in the vicinity of the Puʻuloa Range Training Facility is justifiably concerned that the lead in the soil has leached into the ocean and creates a continued and serious risk to marine life and to those who gather food from the area.

Addressing these issues will require collecting and analysing complex new data from sampling the soil but also marine life of the region.

Interpreting these data will also require subject- experts who are identified as part of the structure for the Working Group. Community stakeholders are critical to this Working Group to ensure that complex data are shared transparently among all participants. Finally, establishing this Working Group can provide a platform that enables discussions to go forward with respect for all members and respect for the local community.

I strongly support this effort.

Mahalo nui,
Celia Smith, PhD

HCR-28

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:59:22 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liam Chinn	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I would like to express my opposition to House Concurrent Resolution No. 28 (HCR28), “Establishing a working group to address issues related to water and air contamination and remediation arising for the operation of the Pu‘uloa Range Training Facility” The reasons for my oppositions are as follows:

Three resolutions, including one in the House (HR104), one in the Senate (SR138), and one at the Neighborhood Board level (Ewa Neighborhood Board #23) were unanimously passed in 2023 calling for the relocation of the Pu‘uloa Range Training Facility (PRTF). These resolutions were based on multiple synergistic, non-mitigatable issues posed by PRTF given its extremely close proximity to the surrounding community, including lead contamination, severe noise pollution, and safety issues related to stray bullets and incoming and outgoing air traffic from HNL (e.g., surface danger zone). *Efforts by our elected leaders should be on working with the US Marine Corp (USMC) and officials to identify funding and a location for relocation of PRTF, not on gathering people quarterly to talk about whether millions of cubic feet of lead contaminated soil located adjacent to schools and communities can be managed or mitigated.* **HCR 28 describes the lead contamination as an “emergency”, yet proposed to meet quarterly to find solutions.**

To clarify, on numerous occasions, USMC has publicly acknowledged that the soils inside PRTF have high lead loads, and the proposed working group would only be focused on evaluating whether lead is migrating into the air or water (it specifically omits discussion on soil contamination). These concerns miss the more salient point—PRTF sits both directly on the shoreline and only 200 feet from residences, in a designated tsunami zone. PRTF is also highly vulnerable to storm surges. Any of these significant events could instantly displace enormous amounts of highly contaminated soils into the neighboring communities. It is not hyperbole to say that this is a disaster waiting to happen.

This the massive stockpile of lead contaminated soil sitting right next to the community is one of the key reasons why both the Hawai‘i state House and Senate concluded that the multiple hazards posed by PRTF to the health of the community cannot be mitigated and therefore PRTF should be relocated.

Given this context, HCR 28 is misguided and distracts from the primary goal of relocating the range that has previously been established. If a working group is to be established, the purpose should be to identify potential locations to relocate PRTF as soon as possible. Relocating PRTF

is not a trivial matter and will require extensive coordination with multiple stakeholders, thus establishing such working group as soon as possible is urgently needed.

Given the aforementioned reasons, I strongly oppose HCR28.

Mahalo,

Liam Chinn

Member

Ewa Neighborhood Board #23

HCR-28

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:30:15 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander Gaos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

19 March 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS Conference Room 430 State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street

Re: Testimony opposing HCR28 and recommending the creation of a working group to relocate the Pu‘uloa Range Training Facility

Honorable Members of the Committee on Corrections, Military, and Veterans:

I would like to express my opposition to House Concurrent Resolution No. 28 (HCR28), “Establishing a working group to address issues related to water and air contamination and remediation arising for the operation of the Puuloa Range Training Facility”. The reasons for my oppositions are as follows:

Three resolutions, including one in the House (HR104), one in the Senate (SR138), and one at the Neighborhood Board (Ewa Neighborhood Board #23 – ENB#23) level were unanimously passed in 2023 calling for the relocation of the Pu‘uloa Range Training Facility (PRTF). These resolutions were based on the multiple synergistic, non-mitigatable issues posed by PRTF, including lead contamination, noise pollution, and safety issues (e.g., surface danger zone). *Efforts by our elected leaders should be focused on working with the US Marine Corp (USMC) and other officials to identify funding and a suitable location that will allow for relocation of PRTF, not on gathering people to talk about whether millions of cubic feet of lead contaminated soil located adjacent to schools and communities can be managed or mitigated.*

To clarify, USMC has previously acknowledged that the soils within PRTF have high lead loads, and the proposed working group would only be focused on evaluating whether those high lead loads are migrating into the air or water (the resolution specifically omits discussion on soil contamination, but I will not go into that here). These concerns become moot if a natural disaster were to strike, which could instantly displace enormous amounts of highly contaminated soils into the neighboring communities. It is not hyperbole to say that this is a disaster waiting to happen.

Given this context, the resolution misguided and distracts from the primary goal that has previously been established. If a working group is to be established, our representatives should be looking to establish a working group on how to relocate PRTF as soon as possible. How lead may migrate from PRTF into the air and water represents only one aspect of one issue of the multiple issues that have led to the consensus need to relocate PRTF. Relocating PRTF is not a trivial matter and will require extensive coordination with multiple stakeholders, thus establishing such working group as soon as possible is urgently needed.

Furthermore, there is serious concern about the approach being used to establish the working group proposed in HCR28. Multiple members of the ENB#23 (including myself) have been engaged with PRTF and objectively critical about MCBH's approach to the myriad of issues expressed by the community. Nonetheless, HCR28 specifically requests that the working group consist of, "The Vice Chair of the ENB#23", who is not one of those individuals. *More importantly, the Vice Chair of the ENB#23 that has previously participated in the unofficial "working group" established by Representative Rose Martinez's office, abstained from the original vote on the ENB#23 resolution to relocate PRTF.* In other words, the resolution is requesting that the only member of ENB#23 that should be a part of the working group is the one who abstained from voting on the resolution. Furthermore, that individual is a retired member of the military whose non-profit organization receives grant funding from the military (such is my understanding). Both facts posit some serious conflicts of interest for the vice-chair, which should automatically bar this person from being part of such a working group, let alone be the only representative for ENB#23 that can speak on behalf of the Ewa Beach community. This sort of "cherry picking" of a member that introduces major bias, while omitting other members of ENB#23 that have been objectively critical of PRTF, reveals a concerted effort by to minimize the true voice of the Ewa Beach community in the working group.

It is important to point out that as a member of the ENB#23 I do not consider myself an activist or a radical, but rather an objective evaluator of things that potentially pose threats to my community. As a representative of my community, I pride myself on making a concerted effort to maintain a fair, equitable, and open-minded evaluation of all issues facing the residents of Ewa Beach. At the same time, I am not afraid to call out the military or government representatives when I perceive injustices, such is the case here.

Given the aforementioned reasons, I strongly oppose HCR28.

Alexander Gaos, PhD

Member

Ewa Neighborhood Board #23

HCR-28

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:36:48 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Radhika Jit	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

As an Ewa Beach resident, I want to strongly express my opposition to House Concurrent Resolution No. 28 (HCR28).

This resolution would be a step in the wrong direction as last year, three resolutions were passed unanimously in the House, Senate and Neighborhood Board level calling for the relocation of the Pu'uloa Range Training Facility (PRTF). The resolutions were passed because of the multiple non-mitigable issues given it is in the middle of a densely populated neighborhood. These issues include lead contamination, severe noise pollution, and safety issues related to stray bullets and air traffic from HNL airport. No where in HCR28 is the word relocate mentioned, nor does it reference the resolutions from last year.

Again, HCR28 is a big step backwards given that PRTF has already been deemed fundamentally incompatible with the surrounding community, the community I live in. The "band-aid" solutions for noise and lead contamination will not be enough to address the threat of this range to the community. There is no "fix" for severe noise pollution and toxic lead.

This range must be relocated and our elected leaders need to listen to the community they serve. Given the aforementioned reasons, I strongly oppose HCR28.

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Chung and members of the House Committee on Corrections, Military, and Veterans,

While I strongly support the concept of a working group to address the significant incompatibility of the Pu'uloa Range Training Facility (PRTF) with the 'Ewa Beach/Kapilina community in its current location, the working group proposed by, and the language of HCR28 misses the mark on several levels.

HCR28 is devoid of language recognizing the passage of HR104 (2023) and SR138 (2023) as well as a 2023 resolution by the 'Ewa Neighborhood Board, all unanimously passed and calling for the relocation of PRTF. Facilitation of this necessary relocation mission should be the primary focus of any Hawaii State Legislature sponsored working group.

The second paragraph of HCR28 as offered is a misrepresentation of the historic events culminating in the 'Ewa Beach community and State Legislature calls for PRTF relocation.

While it is true that a live fire range has existed in the present location of PRTF for over a century, the neighborhood of 'Ewa Beach and what is now known as Kapilina were established and surrounding PRTF about three quarters of a century ago, when PRTF and the volume of training were miniscule by comparison to the PRTF operations of today.

By the time most homes were established in 'Ewa Beach and Kapilina (formerly Iroquois Point), PRTF consisted of only two ranges, about 200 yards in length, or what is known today as the Alpha and Bravo ranges.

Subsequent to the establishment of the 'Ewa Beach and Kapilina communities many decades ago, PRTF expanded by building an additional 4 ranges (Charlie, Delta, Echo and Foxtrot), and lengthening the Alpha and Bravo ranges. The Alpha range was recently lengthened again and nearly doubled to 1000 yards.

PRTF further ramped up usage by increasing the number of agencies which use the range, relocating their sniper training from Kaneohe, and most recently, extremely increased their presence by relocating all annual rifle qualification for over 7000 marines from Kaneohe to PRTF. All these changes were executed without any documented evaluation of the impact on the community the changes would have. The cumulative negative impacts of these recent changes on the community have been significant.

In short, MCBH went too far by overloading the property with military training at volumes far exceeding that which the community had historically experienced, and the community reacted predictably to the shock of unimaginable noise increases, the realization that PRTF has no method of containing bullet fragmentation laterally into the community, safety

hazards to low/slow flying aircraft within the envelope of weapons of war in use, and known toxic waste literally in their backyards.

While the USMC treats the situation as an Encroachment Management Program issue, the encroachment has been by the USMC upon the community in recent decades, not the reverse, as suggested by the second paragraph of HCR28. An amendment to HCR28 reflecting the above facts along with recognition of previously passed resolutions is necessary to properly frame the situation.

Lead poisoning is but one of the numerous significant hazards to the public PRTF presents, and the legislature has already unanimously established the need for relocation.

I strongly support expanding the scope of the proposed working group to address all hazards, and ultimately the necessary range relocation.

Finally, the frequency of meetings should be increased to at least monthly, and no firm sunset date should be identified at this time.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Michael Plowman

'Ewa Beach

HCR-28

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:33:13 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel DeMartini	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Members of the House,

As a concerned citizen, a scientist, and a coral restoration practitioner. I write to lend my strong support for House Resolution HCR 28. The resolution's proposal to establish a working group dedicated to addressing potential environmental issues at the Pu'uloa Firing Range is not only prudent but also imperative for the well-being of our community and the sustainability of our island's marine environment. As a scientist, I understand the grave implications that heavy metal contaminants can have on ecosystems and human health, particularly when they intersect with sensitive ecosystems like those found in our coastal regions.

Establishing a dedicated working group, as outlined in HCR 28, is a commendable and proactive step towards addressing long-standing community concerns in the area. Bringing together stakeholders, scientists, the Marine Corp, and government representatives will facilitate the necessary collaboration to address this sensitive issue and work towards a satisfactory resolution.

In my professional capacity, I have seen firsthand the importance of evidence-based decision-making in matters of environmental health. The establishment of a working group would provide the necessary framework for conducting rigorous scientific investigations, ensuring that policy decisions are guided by sound scientific principles and data-driven analysis.

In closing, I urge all members of the House to support HCR 28 and demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding the health of our community and the integrity of our marine environment. Together, let us take decisive action to address the potential contamination at the Pu'uloa Firing Range, ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Daniel DeMartini, PhD

HCR-28

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:45:49 PM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Luke	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

How many more years are we going to hear about studies and the measures taken to ensure our health and safety? How many lies are we going to suffer through? How can we protect ourselves and future generations?

Oppose HCR28. The PRTF must be relocated. The ongoing health concerns are staring us in the face. Please don't wait until a life-fire incident makes the front page.

PRTF is incompatible within a residential community. I live on Ewa Beach Road and oppose HCR28.

Mahalo,

Karen in Ewa Beach

HCR-28

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 8:00:09 AM

Testimony for CMV on 3/20/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie K Chun	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully strongly oppose HCR28. Please do not waste funds on a study, work towards relocating the rifle range. I am a retired federal analyst and have completed many studies on a broad range of topics including facilities management. Please listen to your community. Mahalo Nui



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII
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LATE

1750
CO
20 MAR 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024
COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY & VETERANS
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY ON HR18 / HCR28

Honorable Members of the Committee on Corrections, Military and Veterans:

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on HR2024-1690 as the Commanding Officer of Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

For over a century, PRTF has been instrumental in preparing our Marines for the challenges they face in defense of our nation. Ensuring its longevity is not just a matter of national security but also a testament to the strength of our community partnerships. The Pu'uloa Range Working Group represents an opportunity to deepen these relationships and enhance our collaborative efforts.

The Pu'uloa Range Working Group aligns perfectly with MCBH's longstanding commitment to proactive community engagement, which we consider essential to the enduring success of the Pu'uloa Range Training Facility (PRTF).

MCBH is dedicated to providing support to the PRWG, fostering a spirit of cooperation that will benefit all stakeholders. Through partnership, we aim to safeguard our shared natural resources while maintaining the operational readiness of our forces.

Our commitment to the community and to our mission is unwavering. We believe that by working together, we can achieve a balance that allows us to continue providing the sustainable and secure training areas crucial to ensuring that our Marines are fully prepared to win our nation's battles.

We look forward to contributing to the Working Group and to the positive outcomes that our collective efforts will undoubtedly yield.

My Point of Contact for this matter is Major Jordan Fox at jordan.fox@usmc.mil or 808-496-7723.

Sincerely,

J. W. BEAVEN
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer