



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

March 26, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Hon. Mike Gabbard, Chair
Hon. Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

Re: SCR 132 SR 114 PFAS Working Group

Hearing: Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Room 224 & videoconference

Position: Strong Support

Aloha, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i comprises of over 7,500 politically active members of Hawai'i's majority political party. We strongly support requesting the Office of the Governor to convene a working group to plan for the remediation of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the State.

It is important to request the Governor to convene a working group for the remediation of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the State for several reasons.

1. **HUMAN HEALTH.** PFAS is linked to several health problems, including immunotoxicity, thyroid and kidney disorders, and cancer. Some of the health risks and effects of PFAS exposure include: (1) increased cholesterol levels, (2) decreased vaccine response in children, (3) changes in liver enzymes and liver damage, (4) increased risk of high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, and thyroid disease, (5) small decreases in infant birth weights, (6) increased risk of kidney and testicular cancer, (7) impaired growth and development, (8) reduced fertility, and (9) weakened immune system.

It's important to note that research is ongoing to understand the mechanisms of PFAS toxicity. The epidemiological evidence suggests associations between increases in exposure to specific PFAS and certain health effects. Reducing the presence of PFAS can help protect the health of residents.

2. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.** PFAS are considered "forever chemicals" that do not naturally break down in the environment. PFAS are environmentally persistent and can accumulate in the soil and water. They can contaminate drinking water, bioaccumulate in fish and wildlife, and have multiple adverse health effects on



humans. This means that animals at the top of the food chain, including humans, can end up with higher concentrations of these chemicals in their bodies.

PFAS can cause water contamination. PFAS can move through soil and contaminate drinking water sources. This is a particular concern for communities near waste sites, landfills, disposal sites and hazardous waste sites.

PFAS can cause soil contamination. PFAS can also contaminate soil which can affect plant growth and potentially enter the food chain.

PFAS can also cause air pollution. PFAS can be released into the air during their production or use, contributing to air pollution.

People can be exposed to PFAS through several common sources: (1) **Occupational Exposure:** Working in occupations such as firefighting or chemicals manufacturing and processing (none in Hawaii); (2) **Drinking Water:** Consuming water contaminated with PFAS; (3) **Food Consumption:** Eating certain foods that may contain Pfas, including fish. Direct exposure can also come via food produced near places where PFAS were used or made; (4) **Soil and Dust:** Accidentally swallowing or breathing contaminated soil or dust; (5) **Air:** Breathing air containing PFAS; and (6) **Consumer Products:** Using products made with PFAS or that are packaged in materials containing PFAS. This includes clothing, furniture, adhesives, food packaging, heat-resistant non-stick cooking surfaces, and the insulation of electrical wire. The level of exposure can vary based on the concentration of PFAS in each source and the amount of contact an individual has with each source.

The environmental impacts of PFAS contamination is a growing concern, leading to increased efforts to understand and manage the risks of PFAS to public health and the environment.

3. **LACK OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:** Currently, Hawaii does not have a comprehensive plan to deal with PFAS. Increased testing for PFAS may reveal a problem Hawaii is not prepared to deal with.
4. **COMMUNITY IMPACT:** The Hawaii National Guard has identified toxic chemicals known as PFAS in the nearby groundwater and has tested local private wells. Where levels of the chemicals exceeded federal safety standards, the military has delivered bottled water to property owners whose private wells were impacted.

Reducing exposure to PFAS involves several steps: (1) **Water Filter:** Use a water filter that is certified to remove PFAS, especially if you live in an area where PFAS contamination is known or suspected; (2) **Avoid Certain Products:** Avoid cooking tools, carpets, upholstery, clothing, and other products that contain PFAS or are advertised as nonstick or stain- or water-resistant. Look for ingredients such as PTFE or other “fluoro” ingredients on the label; (3) **Check Local Fish and Game Advisories:** Before eating locally-sourced fish, seafood, or wild game, check your



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local fish and game advisories; (4) **Reduce Exposure During Daily Activities**; and
(5) **Learn more about PFAS**.

By requesting the Office of the Governor to convene a working group, it can help to develop a comprehensive plan for the remediation of PFAS in the state. This can include investigating and implementing policies to reduce the importation of products, packaging, or materials containing PFAS in the state, and developing short and long-term remedial actions to mitigate the hazards.

On behalf of the Environmental Caucus, we thank you very much for your support of these resolutions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these important resolutions.

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Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MARCH 27, 2024

SRI14/SCRI32 REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO PLAN FOR THE REMEDIATION OF PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS) IN THE STATE.

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and esteemed Members of the Committee,

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports SR114/SCR132 requesting the Office of the Governor to convene a working group to plan for the remediation of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (pfas) in the state.

Our Party Platform states under "Environment and Energy":

"We believe that all people have the right to live in a clean, healthy and safe environment. We believe that the preservation of our natural environment and its ecological well being is essential to ensuring a safe, healthy, bountiful life for future generations in Hawai'i. We support policies that create a more sustainable society. We support the restoration, preservation, and protection of native ecosystems."

PFOS, PFOA and other PFAS chemicals are "forever chemicals" because they remain in the environment for long periods of time. Chemical corporations that produce PFAS generate about \$4 billion in annual profits from producing these chemicals in the United States, but they impose monumental costs on taxpayers and the health of the planet's human and animal populations. The public pays about \$17 TRILLION dollars to monitor and clean up PFAS chemicals and for healthcare resulting from PFAS exposures.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

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SR-114

Submitted on: 3/22/2024 4:15:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/27/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.