

**BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY
KA 'OIHANA WAI
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

630 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96843
Phone: (808) 748-5000 • www.boardofwatersupply.com

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

ERNEST Y. W. LAU, P.E.
MANAGER AND CHIEF ENGINEER
MANAKIA A ME KAHU WILIKI

ERWIN KAWATA
DEPUTY MANAGER
HOPE MANAKIA



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April 11, 2024

The Honorable Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
and Members
House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Lowen and Members:

Subject: SCR No. 132: Requesting the Office of the Governor to Convene a Working Group to Plan for the Remediation of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance (PFAS) in the State

The Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) No. 132, requesting the Office of the Governor to convene a working group to plan for the remediation of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) in the State.

On November 29, 2022, the U.S. Navy (Navy) notified the State Department of Health (DOH) of the release of 1,100 gallons of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) spill at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (RHBFSF). AFFF have been used to fight liquid fuel fires since the 1970s and are known to contain PFAS, which are linked to harmful effects on humans and animals.¹ PFAS have been known to cause harmful effects in humans and animals as PFAS “binds to proteins in human blood.”² PFAS known as the “forever chemicals” “never break down once released and they build up in our bodies.”³ In 1998, “The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was first alerted to the risks”⁴ of PFAS in which they did not immediately classify PFAS as a hazardous substance until August 26, 2022, when they issued a proposal to designate two of the most widely used PFAS as hazardous substances under CERCLA, or Superfund.⁵

¹ U.S. Fire Administration. “Firefighting Foams: PFAS vs. Fluorine-Free Foams.” May 25, 2023

² Gordon I. Norby and J. Murray Luck at Stanford University. “Perfluorooctanoic acid interactions with human serum albumin.” *Journal of Biological Chemistry*. August 1, 1955.

³ Christine Ayala. “EPA on ‘forever chemicals’ Let them drink polluted water” *The Hill*, October 1, 2019. See also: Timeline of events related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA Proposes Designating Certain PFAS Chemicals as Hazardous Substances Under Superfund to Protect People’s Health. *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)*. August 26, 2022.

The Honorable Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
and Members
April 11, 2024
Page 2

While PFAS were not widely known about from the public at large in Hawai'i since November 2022, the PFAS spill is garnering attention.

The DOH website indicates it has a number of projects in progress to better understand the presence of PFAS in Hawai'i and associated risks.⁶ A total of 21 monitoring wells were tested for PFAS at the RHBFSF and found positive findings. These detections were found in areas that were away from the November 2022 spill site. In a letter dated March 1, 2024, the EPA and DOH requested that the Navy expand its testing for PFAS every two months at all monitoring wells. In response, the BWS sent a follow-up letter to EPA and DOH recommending the regulators require the Navy to test all monitoring wells at a minimum of every month.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support on SCR No. 132.

Very truly yours,



ERNEST Y. W. LAU, P.E.
Manager and Chief Engineer

⁶ <https://health.hawaii.gov/heer/environmental-health/highlighted-projects/pfas/>

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/8/2024 6:19:16 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/11/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

April 11, 2024

To: House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Hon. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Hon. Elle Cochran, Vice Chair

Re: SCR 132 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.

Hearing: Thursday, April 11, 2024, 9:00 a.m., Room 325 & videoconference

Position: Strong support

Aloha, Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Cochran, and Members of the Committee:

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



Environmental Caucus of
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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 this important resolution.

Melodie Aduja legislativepriorities@gmail.com

Alan B. Burdick burdick808@gmail.com

Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 8:49:52 AM

Testimony for EEP on 4/11/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution to establish a PFAS Working Group. PFAS are very harmful to human health. We must take steps to prevent exposure to these forever chemicals.