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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO WATER POLLUTION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that climate change has  
2       led to increased frequency and magnitude of extreme rainfall in  
3       the State. In addition to the immediate damage caused by  
4       extreme rain events, the resulting groundwater can become  
5       polluted and carry silt and other debris into coastal waters.  
6       Pollution washed into coastal waters is particularly damaging to  
7       marine reefs, such as those off the coast of Kaua'i. In 2002 and  
8       2018, runoff from extreme rains on Kaua'i devastated nearby  
9       reefs, which led to a twenty per cent reduction in the local  
10      fish population and a forty per cent reduction in the local sea  
11      urchin population. Similarly, Moloka'i's southern reef, which is  
12      the longest continuous fringing reef in the United States, has  
13      suffered extensive damage from runoff pollution in recent years.  
14      The legislature further finds that damage from water runoff  
15      has been especially prevalent in areas where owners of large  
16      tracts of land use those lands for activities that destabilize



1 the soil, causing a higher risk of runoff and resultant damage  
2 to surrounding resources.

3 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 4 (1) Reduce agricultural water pollution by establishing  
5 civil liability for landowners in possession of ten  
6 thousand or more acres in the State; and  
7 (2) Direct the department of health to prioritize  
8 enforcement of water pollution control regulations in  
9 rural areas where there have been reports of runoff  
10 and other forms of water pollution.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 342E, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
12 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
13 and to read as follows:

14 **"§342E- Agricultural water pollution; liability. (a)**

15 A landowner in possession of ten thousand or more acres in the  
16 State shall be liable for fines pursuant to section 342E-4 and  
17 damages arising from runoff originating on the land and entering  
18 into state waters.

19 (b) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter  
20 91 as necessary for the purposes of this section.

21 (c) For the purposes of this section:



1 "Landowner" has the same meaning as in section 152-1.

2 "Runoff" means any water, silt, water pollutant, or other  
3 debris originating in an agricultural facility or on lands used  
4 for the purposes of an agricultural enterprise."

5 SECTION 3. The department of health shall prioritize  
6 enforcement of water pollution control regulations in rural  
7 areas where there are existing reports of runoff and other forms  
8 of water pollution.

9 SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that  
10 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were  
11 begun before its effective date.

12 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

13 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



**Report Title:**

DOH; Landowners; Runoff; Agricultural Enterprises; Damages;  
Fines

**Description:**

Requires a landowner in possession of ten thousand or more acres in the State to be liable for damages and fines arising from runoff originating on the land and entering into state waters. Requires the Department of Health to prioritize enforcement of water pollution control regulations in rural areas where there are existing reports of runoff and other terms of water pollution. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

