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WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Testimony COMMENTING on HB1569
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: 01/29/2026, 9:30 am, 325

Fiscal Implications: This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and personnel priorities.

Department Position: The Department offers comments.

Department Testimony: The Environmental Management Division, Clean Water Branch (EMD-CWB) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

While the intent to address microfiber pollution is commendable, advancing state specific requirements at this time would be premature given the significant federal activity already underway.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in coordination with partner federal agencies, is actively developing a national framework to address microfiber pollution. Please see: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-11/bathersfieldherring_tfw_oct2024-508.pdf. Congress is also considering legislation that would establish uniform national standards for microfiber filtration in washing machines. These federal efforts are designed to ensure consistency across all states, avoid conflicting regulatory schemes, and provide manufacturers with a single, science-based standard for compliance.

Moving forward with a Hawai‘i specific mandate before federal rules are finalized risks creating regulatory misalignment. Manufacturers could be required to redesign or relabel products solely for the Hawai‘i market, only to make additional changes once federal standards are issued. This would increase costs for Hawai‘i consumers and complicate compliance for retailers and appliance distributors operating across multiple jurisdictions.

A premature state mandate could also undermine the benefits of a coordinated national approach. Microfiber pollution is a nationwide issue, and the most effective solutions will come from uniform federal standards that apply to all washing machines sold in the United States. Aligning with federal timelines will allow Hawai‘i to adopt regulations that are consistent, enforceable, and grounded in the latest scientific and technical guidance.

In addition, the measure raises several significant implementation concerns that remain unaddressed:

Compliance milestones for newly manufactured washing machines - The bill requires that ≥10% of machines sold in 2032, ≥50% in 2037, and 100% in 2042 be filter-compliant. It is unclear whether penalties are intended if these milestones are not met. If penalties are contemplated, the responsible party is ambiguous. The structure of new §__-D appears to shield distributors and retailers, suggesting manufacturers would bear liability.

Manufacturer certification requirements - New §__-C requires manufacturers to certify compliance. The bill does not specify whether penalties apply if manufacturers fail to provide such certifications.

Enforcement feasibility - The measure does not explain how Hawai‘i would enforce requirements against out-of-state or out-of-country manufacturers.

Lack of in-state manufacturers - Hawai‘i has virtually no in-state washing machine manufacturers, raising questions about the practical enforceability of the mandate.

For these reasons, the Department respectfully urges the Committee to consider deferring action on this measure until federal standards are finalized. A coordinated approach will provide the most effective, efficient, and scientifically grounded path forward.

Offered Amendments: None.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

ASSOCIATION OF HOME APPLIANCE MANUFACTURERS

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January 29, 2026

The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair
House Energy & Environment Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 436
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Amy Perruso, Vice Chair
House Energy & Environment Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 444
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: 1569, Mandating Microfiber Filters in New Clothes Washers

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso and members of the Environment & Energy Committee:

The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) appreciates the opportunity to provide our views on HB 1569, relating to the issue of microfiber filtration in washing machines. We understand the interest and need to address microfiber pollution; however, a filter on a clothes washer is not the solution for many reasons and as such, AHAM is strongly opposed to HB 1569.

Appliance manufacturers share the goal to reduce microfibers in the environment and are actively trying to find a solution to help reduce the release of microfibers, but no viable solution has been found. HB 1569 would mandate, on or before July 1, 2032, that all washing machines sold as new in Hawai'i contain a microfiber filtration system. AHAM opposes this bill because this method of addressing the release of microfibers into the environment is technically impractical and will not address the problem.

France Unable to Implement and California Governor Vetoed Similar Measures

In 2023, California Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed legislation that would have required microfiber filtration in clothes washing machines. As that bill was being considered, the LA Times Editorial Board wrote on August 21, 2023 (Editorial: Your clothes are polluting the environment with microplastics. Can washing machines help?). They did not support the bill and wrote:

> *Filters for the wash get gummed up pretty quickly with hair, soap and fabric softener and would have to be emptied as often as every wash to avoid clogs that interrupt washing cycles. And they must be cleaned without using water, or that just moves the release of microfibers from one drain to the other, as well as increasing water usage.*
>
> *Ideally, these problems will get ironed out in the next few years as France implements its new washing machine law. Ultimately, textile manufacturers and fast fashion companies, which are a significant source of synthetic clothing worldwide, should switch to natural fibers that don't generate microplastic waste to begin with. Until that happens, we're left trying to catch and keep microfibers out of the environment.*

Meanwhile, on September 21, 2023, the European Commission announced that France has withdrawn its decree requiring microplastic filters on clothes washers. The office of the French Minister for Ecological Transition, Christophe Bechu, stated that the decree was notified by mistake and that the subject is **not yet mature**.

The European Commission Technical Regulation Information System (TRIS) shows this matter being "withdrawn." From a legal point of view, the French law will not be amended, but in the absence of a regulatory text, it is not applicable as it stands. Technical and engineering challenges have led to multiple implementation delays since the 2020 French law was enacted that would have required, by 2025, microfiber filters in clothes washers.

Similarly, HB 2212 requires a specific design solution instead of legislating a broad policy goal and allowing the experts -- appliance engineers - to innovate to find the best design solution for the appliance, the consumer, and the environment. Lastly, this pre-determined design solution would significantly increase the cost of a clothes washer and could create a public health problem. In Europe, they have been evaluating how to develop a standardized test procedure to fairly evaluate the effectiveness of a product for the consumer. This is the first step to help innovative solutions develop across the industry.

Public Health Issues Not Addressed from Filter of Wastewater Needing to be Cleaned

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states within its guidelines that contaminated textiles and fabrics often contain high numbers of microorganisms from body substances, including blood, skin, stool, urine, vomitus, and other body tissues and fluids. This bill would require everyone who washes clothes to clean a filter potentially with any of these substances. See photo below of a typical filter from a load of laundry with hair and other possible sewage.

High Cost of Filter ($159-$300) + Ongoing Filter Replacement Costs ($500/year)

Microfiber filters could almost double the cost of a new clothes washer products, significantly impacting low and moderate income households. Additional costs include ongoing costs of replacing filters over the life of the washing machine and higher monthly utility bills due to increased energy and water use caused by the filter. In addition to product purchase price and ongoing filter costs, each of these systems require adequate space, plumbing installation, consumer labor, regular maintenance to remove filtered residue, and access to electricity supply and additional energy consumption.

Examples of Filters on the Market:

- Filtrol retails for $159
- MicroPlastics LUV-R system retails for $190
- Gulp is expected to publicly retail in UK for £250 (or over $300)
- Some devices also require consumable replacement filters, which add ongoing costs for consumers up to $500/year ($10/filter each week)

Prevents Innovation with Prescribed Single Filter Solution
The bill should not design how washing machine engineers should solve a problem but what they should solve for. The bill limits engineers to only one solution -- a filter "with a mesh size of not greater than 100 micrometers." No innovative ideas beyond a physical filter are allowed.

Increase in Plastic on Planet
Based on NSF International testing of external, in-line filters, it could take 13 years to capture the same amount of plastic that is in the filter, which is longer than the average useful life of a clothes washer. It will take even longer to recover the additional plastic added to the planet from the many replacement plastic filters needed over the use of the product.

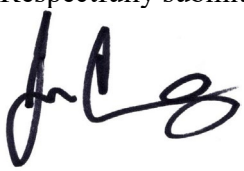
From a lifecycle standpoint, the least efficient way to address the environmental impact of synthetic textiles is through minimizing those impacts during the use of the clothes washer (catching them mid-stream). Addressing the problem through textile design or through wastewater management systems (at the beginning or end of the lifecycle stream) is more effective.

Increase Energy & Water Use and Cycle Time
The energy consumption of today's clothes washer has declined by 70%. Washers of average efficiency can save a household more than 5,000 gallons of water and more than $150 in utility costs compared to a 10-year-old washer. These efficiency gains could effectively be eviscerated by the requirements to add a filter. Energy and water use changes resulting from microfiber filtration are significant. Independent, third-party testing by NSF finds that microfiber filtration systems increase the quantity of water, time, and energy required to wash a load of clothes. In some cases, the increased water use and cycle time is as much as an additional cycle with the use of a filter. Any performance level that is required cannot increase energy or water use, which is preempted by federal law (Energy Policy and Conservation Act).

Not Every Laundry Area Has Space for a Filter or Accessible to All
Microfiber filter solutions that have been announced are not engineered for all types of products and home configurations and are not accessible to people of all abilities, including people who use wheelchairs. Laundry areas can be of many different designs and may not have space for a filter. Further, people who are in wheelchairs or a person with a disability may not be able to replace or reach a filter to clean it.

Conclusion
AHAM appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2212. Appliance manufacturers have been researching and trying to develop solutions in this area. The first step is a standardized test procedure to fairly evaluate the effectiveness of a product across the industry for the consumer.

Respectfully submitted,



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About AHAM:

AHAM represents more than 160 member companies that manufacture 90% of the major, portable and floor care appliances shipped for sale in the U.S. Home appliances are the heart of the home, and AHAM members provide safe, innovative, sustainable and efficient products that enhance consumers' lives.

The home appliance industry is a significant segment of the economy, measured by the contributions of home appliance manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers to the U.S. economy. In all, the industry drives nearly $200 billion in economic output throughout the U.S. and manufactures products with a factory shipment value of more than $50 billion.

In Hawai'i, the home appliance industry is a significant and critical segment of the economy. The total economic impact of the home appliance industry to Hawai'i is $295.2 million, more than 2,500 direct and indirect jobs, $68.8 million in state tax revenue, and more than $100.4 million in wages. The home appliance industry, through its products and innovation, is essential to consumer lifestyle, health, safety and convenience. Home appliances also are a success story in terms of energy efficiency and environmental protection.

HB-1569
Submitted on: 1/27/2026 6:50:20 PM
Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

The Hawai‘i Reef and Ocean Coalition supports this bill to require microfiber filters on future washing machines in Hawaii. This measure will help protect marine life and human eating seafood from unnecessary microfiber pollution.

Please pass this bill

Ocean Conservancy®

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Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

January 29, 2026

RE: Support for House Bill 1569 - Microfiber Filtration for Washing Machines

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, members of the Committee,

Microplastic fibers are one of the most abundant and ubiquitous types of microplastic found in the environment, with 5.6 million metric tons of synthetic fibers estimated to have entered the environment between 1950 and 2016 – that's equivalent to 28.2 billion T-shirts. Because of their small size and unique shape, microfibers are the most common type of microplastic pollution found in human tissues. Clothes washing is a major source of microplastic fibers entering the environment – a single load of laundry can release up to 18 million microfibers. These microfibers are often captured in biosolids from wastewater treatment plants. These biosolids are regularly used in land applications, where the microfibers can then be taken up by plants and lead to reduced food yields and growth rates.

Fortunately, there is a cost-effective and readily available solution: microfiber filters. Laboratory and field studies show that these filters are effective at capturing about 90% of microplastic fibers from laundry. You can think of these filters like the lint filters in dryers – and yes, much of the lint you remove from those filters are in fact microplastic fibers.

Washing machine filtration technology is a proven, effective, and affordable solution. Analysis by leading economists in California found that adding washing machine filters to residential machines will cost less than $2/year over the lifetime of a washing machine (assuming a conservative 10-year lifetime), which is expected to decrease overtime with economies of scale. This is also a popular solution, in fact, polling by Ocean Conservancy in 2021 found that 81% of US adults would support mandating microfiber filters in all new washing machines.

A healthy ocean and a thriving planet, forever and for everyone.

HB 1569 establishes a science-based standard for capturing microfibers from washing machines. By setting a standard, not a specific technology, and providing an extended phase-in for proportions of the market share over time, HB 1569 allows flexibility and time for washing machine manufacturers to integrate existing filtration technologies into new machines. This extended phase-in based on the proportion of units mirrors the approach taken in other regulations or requirements to update appliances – from minimum energy efficiency standards to fleet-wide average fuel economy standards. This approach allows manufacturers to self-identify the specific washing machine product lines they want to modify first based on market-demand for more environmentally friendly products or other considerations.

While we need action and interventions across the textile lifecycle to fully address this issue, microfiber filters are a near-term, effective solution that can significantly reduce one of the most common types of microplastic pollution.

With HB 1569, Hawai'i has the opportunity to be the national leader in the fight against microplastic pollution, and I urge your aye vote.

Sincerely,

Anja Brandon, PhD
Director, Plastics Policy

Appendix: Facts about Microfiber Filtration

1. **Filters with a 100 microns mesh do not regularly clog, and most technologies today already include an acceptable bypass mechanism.**

Laboratory and in-home studies indicate that 100-micron mesh filters do not clog. A 2021 study conducted in Canada tested the *Filtrol 160* (100-micron) mesh filter using both front-loader and top-loader washing machines and no incidents were reported. The *Filtrol 160* was selected for its bypass feature; if the filter is full, water in the machine will bypass it and prevent flooding. The feature only activates when the filter is completely full. There is nothing in HB 1569 that would prevent the inclusion of a bypass feature, in fact, as most of the technologies available today include a bypass feature, it's anticipated that built-in filtration would include a similar bypass feature.

2. **Consumers are willing to take on the maintenance of a filter.**

Consumers are already familiar with the concept of cleaning out a filter when doing laundry, as seen in dryers. Frequency of cleaning filters will vary by model, but in a study with a 100-micron mesh filter in homes, users cleaned their filters approximately every 1-3 weeks. This study also demonstrated that consumers were willing to collect lint and maintain filters over two years.

3. **Cleaning the washing machine filter is safe.**

Any potential hazards or bacteria on the filter were first found on the clothes, which we are already exposed to through wear and during the loading of the washing machine. Moreover, surfactants in detergents act similarly to the surfactants we use in hand soaps to kill bacteria. Moreover, a 2021 study conducted in 97 homes in Canada over 2 years reported no consumer concerns or health issues when cleaning the filters.

4. **The technology is available in other markets and in retrofit options for machines.**

While machines with built-in filtration are not readily available in the U.S., there are machines available with this technology already built-in in other markets. A non-exhaustive list of machines on the market included below:

- Hitachi (scroll down on this page to see the removal and cleaning of the filter)
- Panasonic machines (these available replacement filters show what they look like and the machine models their compatible with in Japan)
- Haier machines (a video here that shows how cleaning these filters is just like cleaning a dryer filter)

Other technologies are primed and ready to hit the market:

- Xeros (including an explanatory video on where the filter fits into the machine and how to clean it), Matter, CleanR (also includes a great explanatory video)

5. **France's withdrawal of its legislation was because of EU market harmonization, not because of technological feasible.**

There is no evidence that France's implementation of this law was hindered by lack of technology fit to meet the standard. The challenge they face with implementation has to do with national versus EU-wide regulations, not the limitation of technology. Specifically, as a member of the EU, France is obligated to abide by one standardized set of product compliance standards, so because France's new requirement was not EU wide, the legality was challenged.

Microfiber filtration technology in washing machines exists, is efficient at capturing microfibers, and is a cost-effective solution that has been supported by:

- California's statutorily mandated Statewide Microplastics Strategy
  - "Promote, or otherwise require, the sale and use of ENERGY STAR condenser dryers and washing machines with filtration rates of 100 microns or smaller"
- A Congressionally mandated report by NOAA on microfiber pollution
  - "Develop, identify, and promote filtration and microfiber capture options for residential, commercial, and industrial washing machines and dryers."

For additional information, please review Ocean Conservancy's *Fibers to Filters: A Toolkit for Microfiber Solutions.*

HB-1569
Submitted on: 1/26/2026 7:41:08 PM
Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

We must protect our reefs. All polyester and other petrochemical fabrics slough off their fibers. We know petrochemicals are contributing factors to the die-off of our reefs and marine life. This is a common sense rule and should be supported by all. Mahalo.