

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony COMMENTING on SB2101 SD1
RELATING TO ORGANIC WASTE

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date, Time, and Room Number: 02/25/2026, 10:55 am, 211

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

4 **Department Position:** The Department offers comments.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Management Division, Solid and Hazardous Waste
6 Branch (EMD-SHWB) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

7 This measure would update the statewide goals to reduce the solid waste stream and
8 create new goals to reduce organic waste disposal and eventually divert all organic waste from
9 landfills and incineration by 2038. The new statute would also provide benchmark dates as
10 goals for certain categories of waste generators to divert organic waste and require the
11 counties to incorporate these benchmarks into their next revised integrated solid waste
12 management plans.

13 The Department supports measures that reduce waste contributed to Hawai'i's landfills.
14 However, we have concerns about the timelines in this measure. Under Hawai'i Revised
15 Statutes section 342G-24, the counties shall submit revised integrated solid waste management
16 plans to the Department every ten years. For example, the County of Kaua'i completed a

1 revised plan in 2021 and will not submit another one until 2031. Therefore, it will not be
2 feasible for all counties to incorporate the waste reduction goals in this measure, as some start
3 as early as 2028. The Department recommends extending the dates of the goals and
4 benchmarks in this measure to provide the counties adequate time to update their integrated
5 solid waste management plans and address the goals. We defer to the counties on how much
6 time would be needed.

7 In Section 5 of this measure, the Department also recommends specifying a dollar
8 amount for distribution to the counties, as there is no assurance that the amount requested by
9 the counties for reimbursement will be within the appropriated amount. We defer to the
10 counties on how much funding would be needed to implement this measure. Lastly, the
11 Department is uncertain as to how the funds will be allocated and available for us to reimburse
12 the counties to update their integrated solid waste management plans, given that the plans will
13 be completed after FY2027 (for example, the County of Kauai is expected to complete an
14 updated plan in 2031).

15 **Offered Amendments:** Amendments offered below only reference sections or portions of the
16 measure where we are making recommendations for revision and do not include language for
17 the establishment of funding. We have highlighted and bracketed text that we recommend
18 adding to this measure. All other amendments are unchanged.

19 Section 3. Page 4, Line 16 through Line 20: “Organic waste” means any material that is
20 compostable or biodegradable, does not contain contaminants detrimental to human health
21 and the environment, and is derived from either a plant or an animal, and includes green
22 waste, food waste, food-soiled paper that is acceptable for food storage, and untreated and
23 unpainted wood waste.”

24 The Department recommends incorporating protectiveness of human health and the
25 environment into the definition of “organic waste.” The proposed definition of “organic waste”

1 is broad and could include biosolids and food packaging that may contain per- and
2 polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or other additives, which require further study.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU strongly supports SB2101.**

SB2101 is a critical step toward securing Hawaii's agricultural future by transforming organic waste into essential soil fertility. By establishing mandatory diversion goals, this bill provides the consistent feedstock needed to scale up local compost production. Currently, Hawaii's farmers are heavily dependent on imported fertilizers and soil amendments, leaving our food system vulnerable to global supply chain shocks and rising costs. SB2101 promises to recapture thousands of tons of organic material annually, closing the loop to create a stable, island-based nutrient cycle that treats waste as a valuable agricultural asset.

To ensure these diversion mandates are practical for local businesses, we recommend that the counties be required to define a specific proximity radius for diversion within their integrated solid waste management plans. This approach is successfully pioneered by Vermont's Universal Recycling Law, which mandates diversion only when a processing facility is located within a specific distance from the waste generator. By adopting this localized strategy, Hawaii can foster a decentralized network of composting and bioconversion facilities. This prevents unreasonable transportation costs for businesses, minimizes the biosecurity risks of moving organic matter between regions, and ensures that organic waste is treated as a resource for the benefit of all Hawaii's farmers and the 'āina.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

SB-2101-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:54:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB2101 SD1

Dana Keawe

SB-2101-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:32:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:55:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

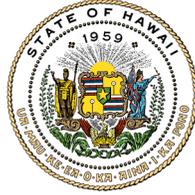
Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2101 SB RELATING TO ORGANIC WASTE.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
LEAH LARAMEE
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission
Co-Chair Ryan K. P. Kanaka'ole**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2026
10:55 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2101, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO ORGANIC WASTE**

Senate Bill 2101, Senate Draft 1 proposes to establish statewide goals for solid waste reduction and organic waste diversion and requires each county to incorporate into its next integrated solid waste management plan revision a plan to reduce all organic waste produced within the county by facilities generating more than a specified amount of organic waste per year in alignment with established state benchmarks and appropriates funds. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 departments, committees, and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Hawai'i produced 2.5 million tons of solid waste in 2022, with 76% entering landfills. In 2024, 26.4% of the total waste stream was diverted, showing improvement but indicating significant efforts are needed to advance waste diversion. When improperly managed, waste significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, worsening climate change and hindering the State's ability to meet its goal of net-negative carbon emissions by 2045. The State's 2025 *Climate Action Pathways* report indicated that Hawai'i may need to transition toward a more publicly supported or regulated recycling system that is less susceptible to global market forces. It also identified solid waste diversion targets of 70% by 2030 and 90% by 2045. This could involve direct government investment in local processing facilities, guaranteed minimum prices for recycled materials, or stronger Extended Producer Responsibility laws that internalize the costs of

recycling within product pricing, thereby stabilizing the local recycling economy. Funding that significantly increases diversion infrastructure directly addresses both the immediate waste crisis and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets. Policies that incentivize diversion are no longer merely environmental preferences but have become economic and logistical necessities for the State.

Implementing this will require infrastructure investments in regional material recovery hubs, including advanced sorting facilities, remanufacturing centers, and repair and reuse marketplaces. Other supportive measures include limiting single-use plastic products, clarifying recyclable item manufacturer labeling requirements, and delivering additional recycling awareness campaigns.

Waste reduction and diversion goals would support a circular economy that could significantly reduce Hawai'i's reliance on imported goods while minimizing waste and maximizing resource reuse.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.