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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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 Kauai. In 2002 and  
8 2018, runoff from extreme rains on Kauai 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, Molokai'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 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a  
4 water pollution working group to establish liability standards  
5 for water pollution runoff.

6 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a water pollution  
7 working group to research and explore the idea of establishing  
8 liability standards for water pollution runoff.

9 (b) The working group shall consist of the following  
10 members:

11 (1) The chairperson of the board of the land and natural  
12 resources, or the chairperson's designee, who shall  
13 serve as chairperson of the working group;

14 (2) One member of the senate appointed by the president of  
15 the senate;

16 (3) One member of the house of representatives appointed  
17 by the speaker of the house of representatives;

18 (4) One member from the department of agriculture and  
19 biosecurity;

20 (5) One member from the agribusiness development  
21 corporation;



1 (6) One member from the Hawaii Farm Bureau, to be invited  
2 by the chairperson; and

3 (7) One member from the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.,  
4 to be invited by the chairperson.

5 (c) The working group shall report its findings and  
6 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
7 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
8 the regular session of 2027.

9 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on January 30, 2050.

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S.B. NO. 2127  
S.D. 1

**Report Title:**

Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of  
Agriculture and Biosecurity; Agribusiness Development  
Corporation; Water Pollution; Runoff; Working Group; Report

**Description:**

Establishes a water pollution working group to establish  
liability standards for water pollution runoffs. Requires a  
report to the Legislature. Effective 1/30/2050. (SD1)

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

