

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB2101
RELATING TO ORGANIC WASTE**

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hearing Date, Time, and Room Number: 02/09/2026, 03:00 pm, 224

- 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 proposes to require certain waste generators to divert organic waste to
- 8 any certified facility within 20 miles by a specific timeline and would prohibit all organic waste
- 9 from landfills and co-generation plants by 2038. It includes new statewide goals to reduce
- 10 organic waste disposal and provides updated statewide goals to reduce the solid waste stream.
- 11 The new statute would require the counties to incorporate these goals into their next revised
- 12 integrated solid waste management plan.
- 13 The Department supports measures that reduce waste contributed to Hawai'i's landfills.
- 14 However, we have concerns about implementing the benchmarks in Section 2 of this measure.

1 First, the Department would be unable to determine which benchmarks apply to most
2 generators. For example, we do not have information on the waste generation rates of
3 commercial and residential complexes. It is unlikely that multifamily complexes have sorted
4 through their waste and know if they generate one-third ton per week or 18 tons per year or
5 more of organic waste.

6 Second, the financial burden of providing facilities to allow for a complete landfill ban
7 could be significant to the counties. Plans to ban the disposal of organic waste by incineration,
8 waste to energy, and landfilling should also allow for exceptions to protect human health and
9 the environment, such as for contaminated organic waste and closures of waste diversion
10 facilities. For example, we understand that the use of air curtain incinerators is being
11 considered to burn green waste to help eradicate coconut rhinoceros beetles. In addition, if
12 contaminants at concentrations of concern are found in food packaging or biosolids, they
13 should be allowed to be incinerated or landfilled if those waste management options are more
14 protective of human health and the environment than composting and land application. Green
15 waste, certain food packaging and biosolids would fall within the proposed definition of
16 “organic waste” in Section 3 of this measure. Thus, the Department recommends changing the
17 benchmarks from a prohibition on individual generators to goals for the counties’ evaluation in
18 their integrated solid waste management plans by moving this language to Hawai’i Revised
19 Statutes (HRS) §342G-26.

20 If the benchmarks in Section 2 remain as a prohibition, the Department also
21 recommends incorporating protectiveness of human health and the environment into the
22 definition of “organic waste.” The proposed definition of “organic waste” is broad and could
23 include biosolids and food packaging that may contain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances
24 (PFAS) or other additives, which require further study. As information on other emerging
25 contaminants develop, or events concerning infectious waste emerge, alternative options may
26 be necessary to manage compostable or biodegradable waste.

1 The Department also has concerns about the timelines in this measure. Section 6
2 requires the counties to incorporate the goals in Section 4 into their next integrated solid waste
3 management plan revisions. However, this requirement is inconsistent with the dates for
4 completing the goals in Section 4, as well as the timeline for reimbursement in Section 7. In
5 accordance with HRS 342G-24, the counties shall submit revised integrated solid waste
6 management plans to the Department every ten years. For example, the County of Kauaʻi
7 completed a revised plan in 2021 and will not submit another one until 2031. Therefore, it will
8 not be feasible for all counties to incorporate the waste reduction goals in this measure, as
9 some start as early as 2028. Similarly, if funding in Section 7 will only be allocated during
10 FY2027, funds will not be available to counties that do not update their plan immediately. The
11 Department recommends extending the dates in this measure to provide the counties
12 adequate time to update their integrated solid waste management plans and receive
13 reimbursement. We defer to the counties on how much time would be needed.

14 The Department also recommends that a specified maximum dollar amount be
15 described in this measure for distribution to the counties, as there is no assurance that the
16 amount requested by the counties for reimbursement will be within the appropriated amount.
17 We defer to the counties how much funding would be needed to implement this measure.

18 **Offered Amendments:** Delete Sections 2 and 3, and move its contents to a revised
19 Section 5 as follows. Then renumber the sections accordingly. Statutory material to be repealed
20 is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

21 SECTION 5. Section 342G-26, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending
22 subsection (c) to read as follows:

23 “(c) The recycling and bioconversion component shall identify and assess:

24 (1) The level of waste reduction the county is achieving through existing recycling
25 and bioconversion efforts;

- 1 (2) The type and amount of solid waste that it is technically and economically
2 feasible to recycle or alter through bioconversion; [~~and~~]
- 3 (3) Methods to increase and improve the recycling and bioconversion efforts,
4 including opportunities for backyard composting[-]; and
- 5 (4) Benchmark goals to divert organic waste produced within the county by facilities
6 generating more than a minimum amount:
- 7 (A) January 1, 2028: (Tier 1) All wholesale food vendors, food service
8 providers, food distributors, grocery stores greater than ten thousand
9 square feet, supermarkets, hotels, and any entity generating one ton per
10 week or one hundred four tons per year or more.
- 11 (B) January 1, 2033: (Tier 2) All restaurants, local education agencies, large
12 venues and event spaces, state agencies, health facilities, and any entity
13 generating one half ton per week or twenty-six tons per year or more.
- 14 (C) January 1, 2037: Any multifamily Complexes and any entity generating
15 one third ton per week or eighteen tons per year or more.
- 16 (D) January 1, 2038: Organic waste ban from landfills and co-generation
17 plants, including that produced by single family residences.
- 18 (E) For the purpose of this section: “Organic waste” means any material that
19 is compostable or biodegradable, does not contain contaminants that are
20 detrimental to human health and the environment, and is derived from
21 either a plant or an animal, and may include green waste, food waste,
22 food-soiled paper that is acceptable for food storage, and untreated and
23 unpainted wood waste; and “Biodegradable” means capable of being

1 broken down or decomposed into carbon dioxide, methane, or simpler
2 organic compounds by bacteria or other living organisms.

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

SB-2101

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 11:19:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Rivera	Testifying for DEM	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The County of Hawai‘i Department of Environmental Management (DEM) appreciates the Legislature’s continued focus on organics diversion and statewide waste reduction goals. While we strongly support the intent of expanding composting, reducing landfill dependence, and improving environmental outcomes, DEM must respectfully offer non-support for SB2101 in its current form.

1. Operational and Infrastructure Constraints

SB2101 establishes diversion requirements and compliance timelines that exceed the County’s current operational capacity. Hawai‘i Island lacks the scale of permitted organics processing infrastructure necessary to meet the bill’s mandates within the proposed schedule.

- Existing facilities are limited in throughput and geographic coverage.
- New in-vessel or regional composting systems require multi-year permitting, procurement, and construction timelines.
- Without phased implementation, the County risks noncompliance despite best efforts.

2. Significant Unfunded Mandates

- As drafted, SB2101 places substantial financial obligations on counties without identifying dedicated funding mechanisms. Preliminary estimates indicate:
- \$10–\$20 million in capital investment for new organics processing capacity;
- \$2–\$4 million annually in operating costs for collection, hauling, and facility management;
- Additional staffing, enforcement, and public education costs.

Without state capital support or a cost-sharing framework, counties would be required to absorb expenses that exceed current budget capacity.

3. Impacts on Small Businesses and Rural Communities

Hawai‘i Island’s dispersed geography and high transportation costs create unique challenges. SB2101’s requirements may unintentionally burden:

- Small food establishments with limited space for separation and storage;

- Rural communities far from processing sites;
- Local farmers and compost users who rely on affordable, locally produced soil amendments.

A phased approach with technical assistance and small business impact review would better support equitable implementation.

4. Need for County-State Coordination and Flexibility

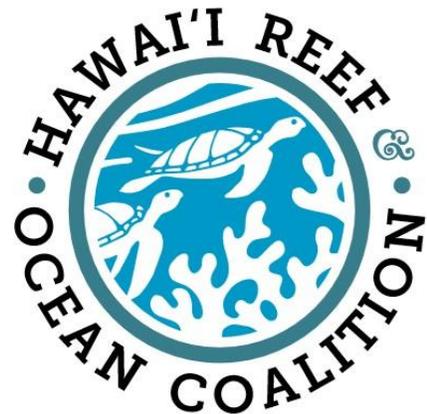
DEM supports statewide organics diversion goals but requests amendments to:

- Allow counties to develop implementation plans aligned with local infrastructure realities;
- Provide flexibility in compliance timelines;
- Establish a collaborative framework for funding, permitting, and public education;
- Ensure that counties are not penalized for delays outside their control (e.g., procurement, environmental review, supply chain constraints).

Conclusion

For these reasons, DEM cannot support SB2101 as currently drafted. We welcome continued collaboration with the Legislature, state agencies, private operators, and community partners to develop a practical, phased, and adequately funded pathway toward organics diversion that reflects the unique needs of Hawai'i Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



To: The Honorable Chairs Mike Gabbard and Glenn Wakai, the Honorable Vice Chairs Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, and Stanley Chang, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs.

From: Climate Protectors Hawai'i and Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: **Hearing SB2101 RELATING TO ORGANIC WASTE.**

Hearing: Monday, February 9, 2026 3:00 p.m. CR224

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice Chairs Richards and Chang, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i seeks to educate and engage the local community in climate change action.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i and the Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **SUPPORT SB2101!**

"Organic waste" means any material that is compostable or biodegradable and is derived from either a plant or an animal, and includes green waste, food waste, food-soiled paper

that is acceptable for food storage, and untreated and unpainted wood waste. Organic waste is particularly a climate issue because, as it decays in a landfill, it releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas approximately 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide over the next twenty years.

This bill would help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by establishing statewide goals for solid waste reduction and organic waste diversion, 40% by 2028, 70% by 2033, and 100% by 2038. Setting goals does not necessarily mean that they will be met. But the goals do signal to the counties and the public the direction the State wishes to move.

This bill requires plans as well as goals. Each county is required 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.

Organic waste shouldn't be dumped in a landfill or incinerated, which also releases greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. There are alternatives. For example, the City and County of Honolulu has announced that starting April 1, 2026, it will start accepting food waste in its green bins in selected areas.

Every county has limited landfill capacity and difficulty siting future landfills. Reducing organic waste going to the landfill will conserve landfill capacity.

Please pass this bill to help reduce waste going to landfills, conserve landfill capacity, and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions in Hawai'i !

Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawai'i and Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)



February 9th, 2026

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, and Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Subject: **SB2101, Relating to Organic Waste**

Aloha,

Hawai'i Food + Policy supports SB2101, which seeks to establish critical benchmarks for organic waste diversion in the State of Hawai'i. This legislation is a necessary step to align our state's waste management practices with the Aloha+ Challenge and United Nations Sustainable Development goals.

SB 2101 embeds specific, trackable benchmarks into statute, including a state goal to reduce the solid waste stream by seventy percent by 2030. By establishing a clear timeline for diversion, we ensure that the state remains accountable to its sustainability commitments.

We support the tiered approach outlined in the bill, which targets waste generators based on the volume they produce and the nature of their operations. This provides a strategic, phased implementation.

Additionally, the bill's focus on bioconversion is particularly vital for Hawaii's food system. By defining organic waste to include food waste, green waste, and food-soiled paper, the bill treats these materials as valuable resources rather than trash. Requiring counties to assess the feasibility of processing materials like animal manure, food wastes, and green waste into beneficial products ensures we are supporting the soil health necessary for local food production.

Finally, we support the requirement for each county to incorporate these benchmarks into its integrated solid waste management plans. The appropriation of funds to the Department of Health to reimburse counties for these planning costs is essential for a successful transition.

Hawaii Food+ Policy urges the committee to pass SB 2101 to secure a more sustainable and resilient future for our islands.

Mahalo,
Carlin McFadden & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

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Aloha Chairs Gabbard & Wakai, Vice Chairs Richards & Change, and Committee Members,

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 establishes mandatory organic waste diversion to scale up local compost production, providing the essential soil fertility required to meet Hawaii's local food goals. By looking to Vermont's successful Universal Recycling Law as a blueprint, Hawaii can bridge the gap between waste management and agricultural productivity. Currently, Hawaii imports many farm inputs, leaving farmers vulnerable to global supply chain shocks; SB 2101 promises to recapture tons of organic waste annually to create a stable, island-based nutrient cycle.

By mandating diversion within 20 miles of the source, a strategy proven effective in Vermont's phased implementation. SB2101 reduces transportation costs and will foster a decentralized network of composting operations that provide high-quality, affordable soil amendments to small-scale producers, without the biosecurity risks of moving organic wastes across and between islands. This localized infrastructure ensures that "waste" is treated as a premium resource rather than a liability. Healthy soil is the foundation of a thriving food system, and we urge this committee to the bill to turn our waste stream into a farm inputs 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



Date: February 6, 2026

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Solid Waste Reduction Task Force of Hawaii Environmental Change Agents (HECA)

Re: SB2101 – Relating to Organic Waste

Hearing: Monday, February 9, 2026 at 3:00pm

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Solid Waste Reduction Task Force of Hawaii Environmental Change Agents submits the following testimony **in support of SB2101** – Relating to Organic Waste, and its focus on reducing solid waste and increasing organic waste diversion statewide.

All of Hawaii's counties face limited landfill capacity, making waste reduction an urgent priority. SB2101 takes an important step by establishing statewide solid waste reduction goals and requiring counties to incorporate organic waste diversion strategies into their integrated solid waste management plans in alignment with state benchmarks.

It is time to invest in practical solutions that reduce waste, divert organic waste from disposal, and conserve landfill space across Hawaii. We urge you to **pass SB2101**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

~Solid Waste Reduction Task Force of HECA

Lindsey Sabec-Kozuma

SB-2101

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:28:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
uma nagendra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing as a resident of Kaua'i to support SB2101. Waste reduction is especially important for island living. It is necessary for our community to agreeing on achievable goals and allocate funds to make the plans happen. Our landfill on Kaua'i will be full in less than 5 years (2030), and we do not yet have a plan on how to deal with our waste after that. This is an urgent avoidable societal matter.

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 11, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 2101
Measure Title: RELATING TO ORGANIC WASTE.
Report Title: Department of Health; Counties; Solid Waste Reduction; Organic
Waste Diversion; Benchmarks; Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2101. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore