



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Environmental Center
Crawford 317 • 2550 Campus Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Telephone (808) 948-7361

RL:0568

SB 2297 GROUNDWATER INJECTION CONTROL

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Health
Public Hearing - February 19, 1986

By
Doak C. Cox, Environmental Center
Gordon L. Dugan, Civil Engineering
Frank L. Peterson, Geology and Geophysics

SB 2297 would amend HRS 342 E-2, a section relating to the Department of Health's program for underground injection control. This statement on the bill does not reflect an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

HRS 342 E-2 now provides that no underground injection is permissible if it endangers a drinking water source, and requires the establishment of pertinent standards and prohibitions. SB 2297 would require, in addition, test boring, allowance of injection if the boring does not encounter groundwater, testing to determine the potability of any groundwater encountered, and the acquisition and/or change in land-use category or zoning of the land if the water is found potable. No definition of "potable water" is provided, but there are in addition more serious problems with the proposed amendment.

In the case of many sites, information available without test boring is adequate to determine whether underground injection would or would not result in the risk of contamination of potable water. Groundwater would be found by test boring at almost any site if the boring were sufficiently deep. A finding of no groundwater by a boring of moderate depth would not prove that fluids injected at the site could not flow to contaminate potable groundwater elsewhere. The mere finding of potable water by a boring at a site would not justify public acquisition of the site or its reclassification or rezoning.

It would, therefore, be very unwise to amend HRS 342 E-2 as proposed in SB 2297.