SB 3187
RELATING TO THE USE OF HERBICIDES IN PUBLIC PARKS

Senate Committee on
Ecology and Environmental Protection

Public Hearing - February 9, 1996
1:15 P.M., Room 212, State Capitol

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SB 3187 would amend Chapter 46, HRS to prohibit the use of herbicides in public parks.

Our comments on this measure are compiled from voluntarily submitted opinions of the listed academic sources, and as such, do not constitute an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Use of chemical herbicides has provoked controversy for years, to the extent that the Sixteenth legislature enacted HCR 254, creating a Roadside Spraying Task Force to study the problem. The findings of that study were presented to the legislature in 1992, and included recommendations that incremental implementation of integrated vegetation management should be pursued.

Questions of human health impacts aside, the present proposal deserves favorable consideration to the degree that the reduction and eventual elimination of use of chemical herbicides has the potential to save the counties and the state money. While transitional costs may vary, emerging technologies and practices of integrated vegetation management have been shown to be more economical once established, especially given the rising costs of environmentally approved chemical herbicides.

We suggest that instead of an abrupt prohibition of herbicide use, a scheduled percentage reduction per year, say 20% by volume, would offer park managers the opportunity to phase in alternative vegetation and other management techniques.