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SB 2377
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF
CREATING A HAZARDOUS WASTE LANDFILL IN HAWAII

SB 2378
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF
INCINERATION OF HAZARDOUS WASTES IN HAWAII

SB 2379
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF
ESTABLISHING A HAZARDOUS WASTE TREATMENT AND STORAGE FACILITY

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Planning and Environment
Public Hearing - February 10, 1988

By
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Hazardous waste management is an issue of ongoing concern as recognized in the establishment of the Hazardous Waste Branch of the Department of Health last year. SB 2377, SB 2378, and SB 2379 would each appropriate funds for studies related to the management of hazardous wastes in Hawaii. Our statement on these bills does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

We concur with the legislative intent to address hazardous waste issues in the State, however, we do have some questions as to the need for the particular studies that would be funded by SB 2377, and SB 2378 and some suggestions for your consideration with regard to SB 2379.

SB 2377 requests money for a feasibility study for creating a hazardous waste landfill. It is our understanding that land fills for hazardous liquid wastes are prohibited under federal regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency. Furthermore, location of a solid waste landfill for hazardous wastes would be limited by underground injection control and

no-pass-lines which would limit potential landfills to coastal sites in direct conflict with coastal population centers. Given the relatively small volumes of hazardous materials, both liquid and solid, the costs and liabilities involved in locating such a site are not likely to be commensurate with the benefits. It seems most unlikely that an environmentally, legally, and socially acceptable location for a hazardous waste landfill could be established in Hawaii.

SB 2378 requests funds for a feasibility study of incineration of hazardous wastes. It should be recognized that major regulatory bodies such as the Environmental Protection Agency are currently undertaking incineration studies of various types of hazardous wastes and the results of these studies will be available to all states.

SB 2379 requests funds to examine the feasibility of establishing a hazardous waste treatment and storage facility. Currently, the University of Hawaii has such a facility and the regulatory mechanism is in place for other producers to set up individual treatment and storage facilities if needed. At the present time Unitek, a privately owned, EPA permitted, toxic waste management facility, services local producers of hazardous wastes. We assume that the lack of competition to Unitek reflects the small quantities of waste produced in Hawaii. Given the costs and liabilities associated with the establishment of a hazardous waste treatment and storage facility it is unclear how a state owned facility will serve the hazardous waste needs of the state better than the present services offered by Unitek.

If the studies proposed by SB 2377, SB 2378, and SB 2379 are to be funded we suggest that consideration be given to combining their scope into a single study as there is certainly great overlap of the initial background data requirements. Such coordination may provide significant reduction to the costs of the studies.

We note that as presently drafted funds would be expended by the Office of Environmental Quality Control, not the Hazardous Waste Branch of the Department of Health. Regardless of which office is responsible for carrying out the study, coordination between OEQC and the Hazardous Waste Branch should certainly be encouraged.

We would suggest that efforts be made to reduce hazardous waste production in the state through effective education programs directed to the producers so that the need for the studies proposed by SB 2377, SB 2378, and SB 2379 will be reduced or eliminated.