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SB 2674 SD 2 HD 1 HSCR 901-90
RELATING TO THE INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT

Statement for
House Committee on Finance
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SB 2674 SD 2 HD 1 addresses three related but separate issues. The first would establish a countywide integrated waste management program in cooperation with the Department of Health. The second, establishes household hazardous waste recycling provisions and the third amends HRS 342 H-35 by adding a provision to enable the Department of Health to develop and implement a public information program directed at household hazardous waste.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Previous testimony has clearly reflected the need for a comprehensive solid waste management program for the state. The critical nature of diminishing landfill space in a very finite island environment, the potential for groundwater pollution from leachates, and certainly the direct costs attributable to the throw away attitude and lack of recycling have been well documented.

We concur with the intent and need for the proposed integrated waste management plan but as presently drafted it appears unlikely that it could be implemented unless the Department of Health is given funds with which to carry out the powers and duties designated on page 7, paragraph 13 of the bill. Without funds and additional staff it would appear impossible for the DOH to develop the required rules and plans necessary to responsibly award and administer funds to the counties to carry out the purpose of the act. Furthermore, some aspects of the management program, particularly with regard to source reduction, require statewide coordination by the DOH to develop market plans. Such coordination cannot be provided without additional staff.

We urge that the bill be amended to provide sufficient funds to the Department of Health to permit them to carry out their responsibilities.

The second part of this bill involves recycling of household hazardous substances. As presently drafted, distributors of household hazardous products would be responsible for accepting any unused or unwanted portion of a household hazardous product. While commendable in terms of protecting the environment and preventing the improper disposal of hazardous household waste products, this will have the end result of creating literally hundreds of mini-hazardous waste storage facilities, at every Longs, Safeway, Foodland, or hardware store in the state. Furthermore, DOH has no staff to monitor or advise on these facilities.

A better option to accomplish the intent of this household hazardous waste recycling would appear to be passage HR 285 that directs the DOH to undertake a feasibility study for developing an ongoing statewide Household and Agricultural Hazardous Waste Collection Program.

We concur with the need to establish a public information program directed at household hazardous waste.