

SB 1057

kim4 - Elizabeth

From: oshen@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2009 4:41 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Subject: Testimony for SB1057

I offer the following testimony in support of SB 1057:

I urge you to support SB 1057, which relates to retention, detention and catchment pond safety. Written in memory of a five-year-old girl who drowned in a Pearl City naval housing complex detention pond while trying to save the life of her childhood friend, the bill seeks to improve the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of this state.

Hawaii has the highest drowning rate in the nation and must take action immediately to improve safety for citizens as well as to improve the state's image as a safe as well as pleasurable visitor destination and place to live. Unregulated and poorly maintained rainwater detention and retention ponds pose a serious health and safety risk, particularly to Hawaii's children.

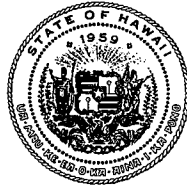
Passing legislation that establishes a task force to collect data and examine advisability and effectiveness of a detention pond safety program is necessary for the health and safety of Hawaii's citizens. An appropriation is not required for the passage of this bill.

The death of Sharkey Schaefer could have been prevented. Those responsible for the construction of the pond were well aware of the hazardous conditions that this particular rain catchment basin presented. If regulations had existed to ensure responsible parties had built and maintained a safe system, the Schaefer's family would not have lost their precious child.

Hawaii has many proactive laws that protect the environment, now it seems we need to advocate for laws that afford our citizens the same rights and privileges. I would appreciate your support for SB 1057 and I look forward to hearing a response from your office.

Sincerely,
Joleen Oshiro
382-4651

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

Committee on Ways and Means

SB 1057 SD1, Relating to Detention and Retention Ponds

Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D. Director of Health

March 2, 2009, 9:00 am

1 **Department's Position:** The Department shares the public's concern to minimize the number of
2 drownings but opposes SB1057, SD1 since it needs to prioritize its water safety prevention resources,
3 and focus on ocean and pool-related drownings that pose the greatest risk to Hawaii's population.
4 However, many of our current prevention efforts include the population addressed in this measure, as
5 well.

6 **Fiscal Implications:** There is no funding designated for the Department of Health to convene a
7 taskforce on detention and retention pond safety.

8 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill requests that the Department of Health convene a temporary water
9 safety taskforce to study the dangers of detention and retention ponds in the State and provide
10 recommendations to the legislature on appropriate safety measures.

11 Drowning is the fifth leading cause of injury-related deaths in Hawaii with 333 drownings
12 occurring in Hawaii's ocean (n=271), swimming pools (n=27), rivers and streams (n=17), bathtubs
13 (n=13), and other environments (n=3) in the five-year period between 2003 and 2007. Two of the total
14 drownings during this period (in 2003 and 2004) occurred in detention, retention, or catchment ponds.
15 All drownings that could have been prevented are tragic, especially when they involve young children.

1 However, individuals, including children, are at much greater risk of drowning in the ocean (n=81% of
2 all drownings) and swimming pools (8 % of all drownings), and are therefore the focus of our
3 prevention efforts and available resources. The Department, as stated, needs to focus the limited
4 resources available for the prevention of ocean and pool drowning and therefore, does not have the
5 funding to convene a statewide taskforce. However, the Department will work to help ensure that
6 drowning prevention includes the population addressed in this measure. Although this bill is well
7 intended, we respectfully recommend that it be held.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Hawaii has the highest drowning rate in the nation and must take action immediately to improve safety for citizens as well as to improve the state's image as a safe as well as pleasurable visitor destination and place to live. Unregulated and poorly maintained rainwater detention and retention ponds pose a serious health and safety risk, particularly to Hawaii's children.

Passing legislation that establishes a task force to collect data and examine advisability and effectiveness of a detention pond safety program is necessary for the health and safety of Hawaii's citizens. An appropriation is not required for the passage of this bill.

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Hawaii has many proactive laws that protect the environment, now it seems we need to advocate for laws that afford our citizens the same rights and privileges. I would appreciate your support for SB 1057 and I look forward to hearing a response from your office.

Sincerely,

Tammy Langfeld

6799 Tamarack Road

Virginia, MN 55702