

# **SB 878**

## **RELATING TO WASTEWATER**

Requires the counties to authorize the installation and use of composting toilets in areas that are inaccessible to municipal wastewater systems. Defines composting toilets.

PSM/HTH, WAM



**SB878**  
**RELATING TO WASTEWATER**

Senate Committee on Health  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

February 11, 2015

1:45 p.m.

Room 414

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment will recommend to the Board of Trustees a position of **COMMENT** for SB878, which seeks to facilitate the greater use of composting toilets to meet the wastewater needs of rural and other areas.

OHA appreciates and commends the intent of this measure, to reduce human waste impacts on coastlines, undeveloped areas of cultural significance, and rural regions where many of our beneficiaries reside. Particularly in rural areas and properties where septic and municipal sewer infrastructure may be costly or impractical to install, composting toilets may, in some cases, be an environmentally-friendly and cost-effective means to meet local wastewater needs.

However, OHA notes that in some cases, what could be defined as "composting toilets" may be inappropriate or ineffective for properly treating or dealing with human waste. For example, composting toilets in areas with high volumes of traffic and human activity may not be able to sufficiently process the volume of waste that they may receive, after installation. In addition, this measure's broad definition of "composting toilet," as any facility that uses "natural processes," may mandate that counties approve the installation of any type of human waste repository that uses anything other than synthetic chemicals to treat raw sewage.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to work with county health departments, engineers, and other experts to ensure appropriate safeguards in facilitating the increased use of composting toilets throughout our islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.