

**SB 178**

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
**S.B. 178, RELATING TO FOOD WASTE RECYCLING**

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

**March 2, 2009**  
**9:30 A.M.**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department supports food waste recycling, but respectfully opposes  
2 this measure because of funding and resource concerns.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** Unspecified amount from the general funds.

4 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill requires the Department of Education (DOE), in partnership with  
5 the Department of Health (DOH), to establish a three-year food waste recycling pilot project within one  
6 or more public schools, to be paid through general funds, public-private partnerships or any donations.

7 We understand that some schools are currently recycling their food waste by sending it to pig  
8 farms. However, there are not enough pigs to consume all of the waste. Therefore, we will have to  
9 either rely on the future development of a food waste recycling facility or establish our own recycling  
10 operations, such as on-site composting bins. While we have received a permit application for a food  
11 waste composting operation on Oahu, we do not anticipate that it will be operational until the latter part  
12 of 2009. We also do not have cost estimates on this recycling option. If on-site composting bins are  
13 utilized, we estimate that the cost of one vermi-composting (worm based composting) pilot project  
14 (capital cost and three years of operation) would be about \$100,000 assuming a waste generation rate of  
15 100 pounds of food waste per day and that the composting operation will be contracted out. If existing

1 DOE staff operates the on-site worm bins during the pilot project, the project cost would be about  
2 \$30,000. However, based on our discussions with DOE, they do not have staff to segregate waste and  
3 operate the bin.

4 The DOH appreciates the intent of this measure; however, given the current fiscal difficulties, it  
5 would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time. In addition, please note that the Governor has  
6 vetoed a similar bill (S.B. 871) last year on the basis of undue burden on resources. The Governor  
7 indicated that the Department of Education should otherwise determine the need for the program and  
8 whether it will result in a cost savings.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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