

**From:** [Georjean Adams](#)  
**To:** [DEM \(COH\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Mahinakai50](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony For EMC Meeting October 22, 2025  
**Date:** Monday, October 20, 2025 12:42:08 PM  
**Attachments:** [Gmail - Bill 83 Draft 1 Testimony.pdf](#)  
[Gmail - Proposed Bills 64 and 72 Testimony for Oct 8, 2025.pdf](#)

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Agenda Item V.1. Bill 83 Plastics Foodware Ban

I encourage the EMC to oppose Bill 83 as it will not change the volume of waste going to WHSL. Without moving forward on the EMC-recommended ordinance to prohibit landfilling of recyclable materials under a phased-in process that supports feasible reuse and recycling, preferably on this island, this bill is worthless and, worse, misleading. EMC needs to support building a network of life cycle solutions and not hoping for the silver bullet.

Agenda Item V.2. Bill 72

I encourage the EMC to oppose Bill 72 that unrealistically lowers the requirements for the Director of DEM. The DEM is so poorly staffed that its director MUST HAVE technical expertise to adequately address the long term impacts that solid waste and wastewater management decisions can have. Nevertheless, as Commissioner Otsuka has long argued for, the DEM Director must also have skills in human resource management to nurture what will likely always be an understaffed, overworked county department.

Attached below are comments I submitted to the County Council regarding Bills 72 and 83.

Georjean Adams  
Kamuela, HI



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## Proposed Bills 64 and 72 Testimony for Oct 8, 2025

1 message

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Georjean Adams <georjean@gmail.com>

Mon, Oct 6, 2025 at 2:18 PM

To: counciltestimony@hawaiicounty.gov

**Submitted below is testimony regarding Bills 64 and 72 to be heard at the October 8, 2025, County Council Meeting:**

### **Bill 72 re Director of Environmental Management Section 6- 10.3**

I **oppose** the proposed Bill 72 Amendment to Article VI Ch 10 Section 6-10.3 of the Hawaii County Charter to change the hiring criteria for the Director of the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) as below:

"The director of environmental management shall be appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the council, and may be removed by the mayor. The director shall have had a minimum of five years of experience in engineering, solid waste management, wastewater treatment, environmental policy and regulatory compliance, public administration, business administration, or a related field, at least two years of which shall have been in a responsible administrative capacity."

Given the small number of county DEM staff, we need to have a hands-on, technical expert who is both degreed and experienced in the environmental field (waste and/or wastewater preferred), as well as someone who has managerial experience in working with employees, contractors and policy-makers to implement environmental regulations. The Director position is not simply an administrative job, especially when it comes to recommending long term environmental priorities and solutions and managing multi-million dollar engineering contracts to comply with government regulations.

My ideal would be something like:

"The director of environmental management shall be appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the council, and may be removed by the mayor. The director shall have had a minimum of five years of managerial experience and an engineering degree **applicable to environmental sciences.**"

*(Not sure if 5 years is the magic number, but certainly require someone who has a record of successfully managing a large number of staff and significant budgets and contributing to an organization's strategic planning over a couple of years.)*

### **Bill 64 re Director of Public Works Section 6-2.2. Director and Deputy.**

I offer **comments** on Draft 2 of Bill 64:

I am not as familiar with the duties of the DPW Director and the operations of DPW. My bias is toward having senior county managers with technical backgrounds. I do not believe this is strictly an administrative position and that it does require relevant managerial experience. I do not agree that general business, public administration or any and all areas of law prepare someone to manage a specialized area such as public works infrastructure management.

Nevertheless, with a staff of ~3,000 personnel, I would hope there is a strong professional resource to rely on, unlike at DEM, so perhaps there isn't as high a reliance on the director to be technically expert. My understanding is that there is a need for Professional Engineer sign-off and would support the option for the deputy director PE requirement. The deputy would also be an advisor on recommendations from Division chiefs.

I know it's difficult to recruit directors to County positions. Nevertheless, do not short the County by "making do" with unqualified leaders for these technical positions.

Georjean Adams,  
(former chair, Hawaii County Environmental Management Commission)  
Kamuela, Hawaii