

## IEM Committee

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**From:** Keith Dane <kdane@humanesociety.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 13, 2017 11:51 AM  
**To:** IEM Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of ordinances related to oxybenzone sale and use, proposed under Item IEM-45  
**Attachments:** HSUS\_HSI Testimony 2017 SUPPORT Maui County UV Filter Prohibitions\_October\_2017 (003).pdf

Please see the attached testimony from The Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International in support of ordinances proposed under Item IEM-45, Relating to Oxybenzone and its Effects on the Environment. Thank you.

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**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES



**HUMANE SOCIETY**  
INTERNATIONAL

**TO:** Honorable Chair Cochran, Vice-Chair Guzman, and Infrastructure and Environmental Management Committee Members, 10-16-17, 1:30 p.m.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Keith Dane, Hawaii Policy Advisor, State Affairs, Humane Society of the United States, [kdane@humanesociety.org](mailto:kdane@humanesociety.org), Tel: 301-312-1489; and Teresa M. Telecky, Ph.D., Director, Wildlife Department, Humane Society International, [ttelecky@hsi.org](mailto:ttelecky@hsi.org), Tel: 301.258.1430

**RE: SUPPORT for Item IEM-45, Relating to Oxybenzone and its Effects on the Environment**

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The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and Humane Society International (HSI), support the two ordinances proposed under Item IEM-45: one which would, if enacted, prohibit the sale of personal care products containing oxybenzone or octinoxate in Maui County; another which would, if enacted, prohibit the sale and use of these products in Maui County; and, both of which contain exemptions for skin care products that are prescription drugs. We thank the Committee for addressing this important matter that affects Maui County's nearshore coral reefs and marine life.

Numerous studies have shown that ultraviolet (UV) radiation filters such as oxybenzone and octinoxate in the marine environment can be harmful to coral reefs and marine life (Kim et al. 2014; Kim & Choi 2014; Tsui et al. 2014; Downs et al. 2015; Ruskiewicz et al. 2017). These studies clearly indicate that UV filters pose a risk to fishes, through endocrine disruption and reproduction performance, for example, and to hard corals through bleaching.

These threats are heightened in marine recreational areas frequented by beach goers, swimmers, snorkelers and divers whose sunscreen washes off when they enter the water. Chemical UV filters also make their way to our oceans via wastewater treatment facilities. Because they cannot be removed by conventional treatment facilities, they accumulate and ultimately make their way to the ocean.

It has been estimated that 4,000 – 6,000 tons of sunscreen enters coral reef areas around the world annually (U.S. National Park Service). Surveys around Hawaii's coral reefs found oxybenzone levels at concentrations 12 times higher than the level at which it impacts juvenile coral (Downs et al. 2015).

The use of sunscreen is continuously increasing worldwide, resulting in persistent input and

accumulation in the environment and related wildlife exposure. UV filters have been found to be ubiquitous in many aquatic systems, including their flora and fauna. They have been found in fish, mussels, crustaceans, mammals and aquatic birds and may accumulate in the food-chain. The increased usage of sunscreens, combined with the lack of efficient removal means that the environmental contamination from these chemicals will probably increase in the future if no action is taken (Ruszkiewicz et al. 2017).

The unprecedented coral bleaching events of 2014 and 2015 had devastating effects on Hawaii's corals. Though UV filters may be just one of many stressors impacting Hawaii's coral reefs, the inevitability of future ocean warming events and subsequent coral bleaching makes it imperative to reduce the stressors to corals and increase their potential to recover and survive.

HSUS and HSI sincerely thank the Committee for taking up this important matter. ***We urge the Committee to pass the ordinances in Item IEM-45*** which will help reduce oxybenzone and octinoxate pollution and harm to Maui County's coral reefs and wildlife.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.