

October 16, 2017

Aloha Chair Elle Cochran, Vice Chair Don Guzman and members of the Infrastructure and Environmental Management Committee,

My name is Anne Rillero and I am the Communications, Community Outreach and Development Manager with the nonprofit Maui Nui Marine Resource Council.

Every Sunday, I swim with a group of friends along the South Maui coast from Maluaka Beach to Little Beach and back. I have been doing this for 7 years. During that time, my friends and I have sadly witnessed widespread coral bleaching, coral death and greatly reduced fish populations.

During the past year, we were shocked and horrified to learn that the sunscreen brands many of us were using contained two chemicals that have been demonstrated to harm and kill coral even in small concentrations. We learned that these chemicals can cause coral bleaching, damage to coral DNA and harm to coral larvae.

Those chemicals -- oxybenzone and octinoxate -- are found in most of the sunscreen brands that are found in Maui's big box stores, drug stores, convenience stores and supermarkets. The folks in my swim group and I found -- and switched to -- alternatives that are mineral based without nano particles. They work great, even after hours in the ocean. We also found that rash guards and swim tights provided a safe and colorful coverup from the sun.

Most visitors to Maui -- and I would venture, many Maui residents -- do not know about the destructive impacts of oxybenzone and octinoxate to our reefs. Even if there were signs posted at our beaches, by the time people get to the beach, they are not going to skip their sunscreen application or leave the beach to seek out a safer brand.

The only way to stop oxybenzone and octinoxate from contaminating our oceans and harming our reefs is to stop the sale of personal care products that include these ingredients.

There is sound, conclusive evidence that oxybenzone and octinoxate are harmful to corals. Therefore, I strongly support the proposed Maui County ban on personal care products containing oxybenzone and octinoxate. Maui Nui Marine Resource Council also strongly supports this proposed ban.

As members of the Infrastructure and Environmental Management Committee you have the power to act on behalf of our coral reefs. I urge you to move this proposed ban forward, and to support its passage through the greater Maui County Council.

Thank you.
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