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KE KE'ENA O KA MEIA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 300 • HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-4141 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

MICHAEL D. FORMBY
MANAGING DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKELE

KRISHNA F. JAYARAM
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O HO'OKELE

November 20, 2024

The Honorable Matt Weyer, Chair
Committee on Housing, Sustainability and Health
and Members
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Weyer and Committee Members:

I am providing written testimony on Bill 59 (2024) Relating to Plastics on behalf of the City administration. I am scheduled to speak but am undertaking a tour and inspection of Honolulu Ocean Safety Department facilities around the island and I am uncertain if I will be back in time for the hearing. My sincere apologies.

The administration has reservations regarding Bill 59. While we understand the intent of the Bill, the current use of single-use plastic containers in the City is restricted principally for guests and distinguished visitors at meetings. We do not purchase single-use plastic containers for employees and, as a matter of practice, we do not distribute water in single-use plastic containers unless requested. After consumption, the single-use plastic containers are placed in recycling bins in our offices, where they are taken to recycling centers. On an exception basis, single-use plastic containers are also used for emergencies, events and other forums in which water is not available to individuals.

As a practical matter, coming out of COVID, there remains sensitivity to serving water to guests in non-single-use containers for health and sanitation reasons. When and if non-plastic single-use water containers are available at commensurate prices, the administration will make the shift on or before December 31, 2026. As an additional matter, the administration does not believe it an appropriate use of the Council's time to file resolutions for the use of single-use plastic containers on an as-needed basis. We would hope the language, in whatever form the Council finds acceptable, would permit the administration to make these decision on an as-needed basis following the policy outlined by Council.

We appreciate your consideration of the above.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Formby
Managing Director

MAYOR'S MESSAGE 207 HSH