BILL059(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 557

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Dec 11, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 8

Oppose: 10

I wish to comment: 4

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mina Khoii	minakhoii@gmail.com	96717
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 6, 2024 @ 05:39 PM

Testimony:

I am not a person who typically gets involved in legislative matters ("I'm too busy!" "My voice doesn't make a difference!"), but in this case, I am deeply moved to ask you to please support Bill 059(24) and to help reduce the use of plastic bottles. This is an issue I feel so strongly about because my family and I love spending time in the ocean and at the beach, and want them to be protected. In fact, in May of 2024, my child who was then in fifth grade wanted so much to do something to help the ocean and marine life that he designed and implemented a "Trash-a-thon". This was a community service project he performed over a three week period during which he picked up trash from the beaches of the ahupua'a of Hau'ula, and he got sponsors to pledge money based on the total amount collected for donation to the Coral Resilence Lab (https://www.uhfoundation.org/impact/research/oahu-fifth-grader-raises-hundreds-coral-reef-research). He ended up collecting over 80 pounds of rubbish, and with the exception of some fishing rope and a few metal objects, ALL of it was single use plastic! There were SO MANY plastic bottles that had washed up on the beaches: I wish he had counted all the bottles, because the number was shocking. He was so dismayed and discouraged by what he found. He could not understand why people continue to make the unhealthy and unwise decision to perpetuate the use of single use plastics. His commitment to helping the ocean, marine life, and our environment was very inspiring, to me and to many of the adults around him; and so now I'm reaching out to you.... Right now you have a chance to help make this problem better by reducing the use of plastic bottles. It would be a shame for us grownups to perpetuate the problem of plastic pollution that damages the natural beauty of our islands and the health of our marine environment instead of making the logical and wise decision to try to stop it -- especially when there are easily implemented alternatives like aluminum bottles and cardboard containers. I really, really hope that you will move to help protect our beautiful ocean and beaches from plastic pollution, and to help preserve them for the future of our keiki. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Victor Lim	victor.lim@partners.mcd.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Restaurant Association	Oppose	Dec 7, 2024 @ 02:50 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Donald Sakamoto	cylonone@aol.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Dec 9, 2024 @ 01:17 PM

Testimony:

Oral testimony via video conference only.		
Name: Tina Yamaki	Email: tyamaki@rmhawaii.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Retail Merchants of Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Dec 9, 2024 @ 05:38 PM
Name: Lauren Zirbel	Email: LaurenZirbel@HawaiiFood.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Hawaii Food Industry Association (HFIA)	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Dec 9, 2024 @ 05:48 PM
Name: Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Email: waianaenb569@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 9, 2024 @ 07:37 PM
Testimony: I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry support Bill 59 (24) Relating to Plastic. Hotels like The Outrigger Reef provided hotel guests with re-usable water containers and filtered water fountains instead of plastic bottles on their property. This BILL SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO CITY PARKS/RECREATIONS FACILITIES. Research has shown "pieces of plastic" have been found in a woman placenta. Beach clean-up groups also have collected "pieces of micro-plastic mixed-in the sand at the beach on the Hawaiian Islands.		
Name: John Mark Mageo	Email: jmageo@abcstores.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: ABC Stores	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 08:39 AM
Name: David Thorp	Email: dthorp@americanbeverage.org	Zip: 20036
Representing: American Beverage Association	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:43 AM
Name: JB Helekahi	Email: jorgeb@pacallied.com	Zip: 96792

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Pacific Allied Products	Oppose	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:48 AM
Testimony: Oral testimony to be given at hearing.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Christian Behic	christianb@pacallied.com	96707
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Pacific Allied Products	Oppose	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:49 AM
Testimony: Oral testimony to be given at hearing.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lily Ortiz	lilyo@pacallied.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Pacific Allied Products	Oppose	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:50 AM
Testimony: Oral testimony to be given at hearing.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Janel Bell	belljanel126@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Pacific Allied Products	Oppose	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:51 AM
Testimony: Oral testimony to be given at hearing.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gavan Abe	gabe@dhs.hawaii.gov	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Ho'opono Services for the Blind	I wish to comment	Dec 10, 2024 @ 04:48 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Marti Townsend	marti.townsend@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Sierra Club O'ahu Group	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 05:00 PM
Name: Hayley Yoshinaga	Email: hyoshinaga31@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Surfrider Club at University of Hawaii Manoa	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 08:07 PM
Name: Joseph Chai	Email: jchai96792@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Pacific Allied Products	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 08:52 PM
Testimony: Oral testimony to be given at the hearing.		
Name: Kimeona Kane	Email: kimeonakane@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:13 PM
Testimony: Aloha kākou, Mahalo for the opportunity to provide feedback. I am in support of this effort to hold a higher level of accountability to the City and County of Honolulu in regards to plastics and plastic pollution. Every step matters when we are looking at this global issue. Mahalo nui, Kimeona Kane		
Name: Colleen Hokutan	Email: chokutan@gmail.com	Zip: 96819
Representing: Holomua Elementary's FLL Robotics Team	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:47 PM
Testimony: Aloha my name is Colleen Hokutan and I speak on behalf of Holomua Elementary's First Lego League Robotics team. I am		

a retired DOE teacher who has been coaching Holomua's teams for about 17 years. I go back every season because I believe in the value that our students get out of participating in this competition.

This year they researched the problem of Ocean Acidification and through communicating with Councilman Weyer and Letani Peltier, learned about Bill 59. They are in strong support of this bill and was invited to do their presentation at the hearing at Honolulu Hale on November, 20, 2024.

As they listened to testimony both for and against Bill 59 they wanted everyone to understand that it's not just the empty bottles that create the problem but it is the production of these bottles. Here are their words from their research... "Ocean acidification is referred to as the 'osteoporosis of the sea.' It creates conditions that eat away at the minerals used by oysters, clams, lobsters, shrimp, coral reefs, and other marine life to build their skeletons and shells which is very important for their existence. The dying off of these creatures will affect our food chain. Burning of fossil fuels releases carbon emissions which is then absorbed into our oceans causing it to become acidic. Did you know that single-use plastic bottles are made from crude oil? 1.5 billion water bottles are produced each day. We have discovered that the manufacturing process for plastic water bottles is linked to 8.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year. By drinking from single use water bottles, we are contributing to the sickness of our oceans!"

They have also learned that within their lifetime, maybe not ours as adults, but within our children's lifetime, if nothing is done to deal with the production and use of single use plastics, we will be robbing them of an ocean to enjoy! We owe it to our children to stop this from occurring. Whatever reservations you may have against Bill 59 cannot be more important than leaving the legacy of clean oceans. Please on behalf of our keiki, allow Bill 59 to pass onto the third reading. You have the power to work together to make Bill 59 successful for all!

Thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to share freely.
Holomua's AquaVengers

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ryan Kanetani	ryan.kanetani@k12.hi.us	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 11, 2024 @ 07:26 AM

Testimony:
Aloha Chair and Members of the City Council,

My name is Ryan Kanetani, and I am a teacher, parent, and concerned citizen. I am writing in strong support of Bill 59, which seeks to eliminate single-use plastic bottles from city-owned venues. Last month, my robotics team, the Aquavengers, presented to this committee to advocate for the importance of this bill. Since then, my team has been actively spreading awareness on campus and throughout our community about why this legislation is crucial for Hawaii’s

future.

As a parent, I often find myself focused on the immediate challenges and consequences of today. However, working with my students over the past few months has shifted my perspective. Their passion and unwavering commitment to addressing plastic pollution have reminded me that the decisions we make today must prioritize not just the present but also the future of Hawaii and our keiki.

This bill exemplifies forward-thinking. By reducing reliance on single-use plastics, we are making an investment in a cleaner, healthier environment for future generations. The legacy we leave behind should not be one of environmental degradation and short-term convenience, but one of sustainability and responsibility. Shouldn't we prioritize the well-being of our future over temporary cost-saving measures? Is the message we want to pass on to our future leaders one of inaction or one of courage to make the right decisions today?

Passing Bill 59 is not just a policy choice—it is a moral imperative. Let's ensure that Hawaii's keiki inherit an island home they can be proud of, not one burdened by the consequences of inaction.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ryan Kanetani
Teacher, Parent, and Concerned Citizen

Name: Nick Doyle	Email: n.doyle@malamarecycling.org	Zip: 96720
Representing: Malama One	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Dec 11, 2024 @ 08:53 AM

Name: Angela Melody young	Email: alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Roar cares	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Dec 11, 2024 @ 09:35 AM

Testimony:
Refer to public record for comment relating to plastic pollution.

Name: Hanna Lilley	Email: hlilley@surfrider.org	Zip: 96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Surfrider Foundation O`ahu Chapter	Support	Dec 11, 2024 @ 10:26 AM

Ave Kwok, Chairman - Jade Dynasty

Andy Huang, Incoming Chair - L&L Hawaiian Barbeque **Tambara Garrick, Secretary** – Hawaii Farm Project

Kahili Soon, Treasurer – Hukilau Marketplace **Ryan Tanaka, Past Chairman** – Giovanni Pastrami

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To: CM Tommy Waters, Chair
CM Esther Kia'aina, Vice Chair
Members of the Honolulu City Council

From: Victor Lim, Legislative Lead
The Hawaii Restaurant Association

Subj: Bill 59 (2024) CD 1 Relating to Plastics

Date: December 7, 2024

The Hawaii Restaurant Association representing about 4,000 eating establishments here stand opposed to this Bill 59 (2024) CD 1 Relating to Plastics.

Plastics bottles used in the Food Industry are made of a special type of plastic - polyethylene terephthalate of PET, a lightweight plastic in the US that can be recycled and remade into other products like another bottle. These containers are currently collected under the State's HI-5 program. It is our understanding that such a facility is in the works in our state and will be live in 2025. This will be us coming full circle and closing the loop.

Alternate packaging currently available in our marketplace have greater carbon footprint as well as possible chemicals to retard moisture absorption or taste transfer.

Under this Bill on Restrictions on single-use plastic bottles on page 2, section (1) restricts the use at any city facility, city-authorized concession, city-sponsored of city-permitted even, or…., this will have direct restriction on community events in downtown, Chinatown, Kapiolani Park, or Ala Moana Beach Park where we currently have food concessions. The affected venues could be way more than the intent of the bill.

We do understand the desire to reduce the plastic footprint here in Hawaii but this bill creates more problems than solutions. Thank you.

Hawaii Restaurant Association
2909 Waialae Avenue, #22 Honolulu, Hawaii 96826 Office 808-944-9105

TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI
PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
DECEMBER 11, 2024
BILL 59 (2024) RELATING TO PLASTIC

Aloha Chair Waters and members of the Honolulu City Council. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901 and is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to supporting the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, on-line sellers, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii has concerns with Bill 59 (2024) CD1 regarding plastics. While we understand the City and County of Honolulu's want to ban single use plastic bottled drinks in their facilities, our concern is that it will soon expand to include all of Oahu.

Plastic bottles play a critical role in ensuring access to safe drinking water, particularly during emergencies. Hawaii's susceptibility to hurricanes, tsunamis, and other natural disasters necessitates the availability of portable, durable water containers. A ban on single-use plastic bottles would hinder the ability of residents and tourists to access clean water during such emergencies, posing significant public health risks. We must also remember that unlike the mainland, we cannot truck in water from a tri-state area. It needs to be shipped or flown at extreme costs and may take a few days or more to get to Hawaii especially if there is damage to the runways and the harbors.

Alternative packaging products like that of glass bottles and cans often create more waste in volume and energy as well as increase air and water pollution – in the manufacturing of and in the transportation to our island as well as our business.

This ban would increase costs for both businesses and consumers. Alternatives to plastic bottles, such as aluminum or glass, are more expensive to produce, transport, and recycle. Businesses would face higher operational costs to source and distribute alternative packaging. We would also like to point out that the larger the bottles of beverages, the higher the cost of the product leading to increased prices for consumers. For low-income families and small businesses already struggling with Hawaii's high cost of living, these additional expenses could have a disproportionate impact, exacerbating economic disparities across the state.

While the intent of the ban is to reduce plastic waste, the environmental benefits are not guaranteed. Producing alternatives like glass or aluminum bottles often requires significantly more energy and resources, resulting in a larger carbon footprint. Without adequate recycling infrastructure, these materials could contribute to waste rather than mitigate it.

Hawaii's limited recycling infrastructure cannot currently handle large volumes of alternative materials effectively. Glass, for instance, is often crushed and used as landfill cover rather than recycled into new products. Transitioning to alternatives without significant investment in recycling facilities would undermine the sustainability goals of this measure.

3610 Waialae Ave • Honolulu, HI 96816 (808) 592-4200 tyamaki@rmhawaii.org

Moreover, plastic bottles are already included in Hawaii's HI-5 redemption program, incentivizing recycling, and reducing litter. It is our understanding that most of the plastic bottles are made from polyethylene terephthalate or PET, a durable lightweight plastic that is the most recyclable and recycled plastic in the US. A ban could disrupt this program without ensuring comparable environmental gains.

We need to be looking into a comprehensive litter reduction program that not only considers educating the public, but also looking for alternative solutions like public trash cans that are designed so that it will keep its content from flying out.

Bans are not the simple answer. A ban on single-use plastic bottles would impose significant economic, public health, and environmental challenges while failing to address the root causes of plastic waste effectively. We need to maintain a fair balance regarding plastic bottles and containers and look at a coordinated litter reduction program.

Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.

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Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

Written Testimony of
Lauren Zirbel, President, Hawai‘i Food Industry Association (HFIA)

Before the Honolulu City Council
Opposition to Bill 59, CD1: Relating to Plastic
December 11, 2024

Good morning, Chair Waters and members of the Honolulu City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Bill 59, CD1 – relating to plastic bottles.

My name is Lauren Zirbel, and I am the President of the Hawai‘i Food Industry Association (HFIA), which represents more than 200 member companies, including grocery stores, food manufacturers, distributors, and others in the food supply chain here in Hawai‘i.

Advancing a Circular Economy for Plastics in Hawai‘i

Hawai‘i is on the verge of a significant milestone in sustainability with the anticipated opening of a PET reprocessing facility next year. This facility will play a pivotal role in creating a circular economy for plastics by reprocessing PET bottles into new bottles, reducing reliance on imported materials, and keeping plastic waste out of landfills.

This initiative demonstrates the state’s commitment to innovation and environmental stewardship. It will help ensure that Hawai‘i remains at the forefront of sustainable solutions for plastic recycling while fostering local jobs and reducing the carbon footprint associated with exporting recyclable materials.

Hawai‘i’s Beverage Industry: Local Jobs and Sustainability

The beverage industry is a critical part of Hawai‘i’s economy, employing more than 1,200 local workers and supporting thousands more in businesses such as grocery stores, restaurants, and theaters. Unlike many consumer goods, Hawai‘i’s beverage companies produce and distribute their products locally, using bottles made from

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Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

polyethylene terephthalate (PET)—a lightweight, durable plastic that is 100% recyclable and designed to be remade.

PET bottles are collected and recycled through the state's HI-5 program, which incentivizes consumers to return bottles for recycling. This ensures PET bottles are diverted from landfills and reintroduced into the circular economy, further reducing waste and environmental impact.

Addressing Misconceptions About PET Plastic Bottles

There is often misinformation surrounding PET bottles and their impact on the environment. It's important to set the record straight:

1. **Not Single-Use**: PET bottles are not single-use plastics. They are designed to be recycled and remade into new bottles or other products.
2. **Minimal Waste Contribution**: PET bottles make up only 1% of municipal solid waste in the United States, while other plastics account for significantly more.
3. **High Demand for Recycled PET**: Recycled PET is a valuable commodity used to produce new bottles and other products, reducing the need for virgin plastic.
4. **Consumer Education**: Beverage companies are leading efforts to educate consumers on recycling through programs such as labeling bottles with clear instructions like "Recycle bottle…with cap on."
5. **Collaborative Solutions**: The beverage industry is actively working with environmental groups and government agencies to develop effective policies for reducing plastic waste and increasing recycling rates.

Why Bill 59, CD1, is Counterproductive

Passing Bill 59, CD1, would undermine the significant investments already made to establish a circular economy for plastics in Hawai'i. This bill would send a message that Hawai'i is unwilling to support initiatives that align with sustainable practices, making it difficult to attract future funding for innovative recycling solutions in the state.

The upcoming PET reprocessing facility represents a significant step toward reducing Hawai'i's plastic footprint and ensuring that our state is a leader in sustainability. Banning products after such investments have been made to reuse these materials

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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

would create uncertainty for future projects and discourage progress toward long-term solutions.

A Collaborative Path Forward

HFIA supports sustainable solutions that balance environmental protection with economic sustainability. We urge the council to allow the PET reprocessing facility to demonstrate its impact and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to build on this progress. Together, we can create a more sustainable future for Hawai‘i.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Lauren Zirbel
President
Hawai‘i Food Industry Association

ABC Stores
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December 10, 2024

Honolulu City Councilmembers
530 S King St.
Honolulu Hale, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and members of the city council. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition of Bill 59 (2024) CD 1 – relating to plastic bottles.

I am with ABC Stores, which operates over 78 establishments across Hawaii, Guam, Saipan, and Las Vegas. Our company employs more than 1,000 local workers and we have concerns regarding the restrictions proposed in Bill 59.

Restricting single-use plastic bottles at any city-authorized concession, city-sponsored or city-permitted event will have a direct impact on community events downtown, Chinatown, Kapiolani Park, or Ala Moana Beach Park. For example, at the Waikiki Shell, given the current restriction on concerts, consumers will face increased hardship such as higher costs, if this bill passes.

As a company that is fortified within our community and with some stores located near the beaches, we understand the desire to reduce the plastic footprint here in Hawaii. In our ongoing efforts to take care of our environment, our stores are 80% polyethylene terephthalate (PET) – a durable and lightweight plastic specifically designed to be 100% recyclable. We believe that PET bottles are a sustainable choice. Unlike single-use plastics, PET is recyclable and can be remade into new bottles or other products. Through the state's HI-5 program, PET bottles are collected and recycled, ensuring they are diverted from landfills and returned to the circular economy.

We should focus on a comprehensive litter reduction program that not only educates the public but also explore alternative solutions like modernized public recycling bins.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Bill 59 (2024) CD1.

Mahalo,

John Mark Mageo
Employee Relations and Government Affairs Manager
(808) 597-3312
jmageo@abcstores.com

Written Testimony of
David Thorp, American Beverage Association
Before the Honolulu City Council
Opposition of Bill 59, CD1: Relating to Plastic
December 11, 2024

Good morning, Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kiaʻāina, and members of the city council. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition of Bill 59, CD1 – relating to plastic bottles.

I am David Thorp, Vice President, State Government Affairs West for the American Beverage Association (ABA). The American Beverage Association is the trade association representing the non-alcoholic beverage industry across the country and here in Hawaii.

Beverage industry's local impact on Hawaii's economy
The beverage industry is an important part of Hawaii's economy – and one of the few remaining industries still manufacturing on the Islands. Unlike most consumer products, many of our beverages, aluminum cans and plastic bottles are manufactured and distributed in Hawaii by local workers.

Non-alcoholic beverage companies in Hawaii provide 1,200 good-paying jobs across the state. The industry helps to support thousands more workers in businesses that rely in part on beverage sales for their livelihoods and, such as grocery stores, restaurants and theaters.

Hawaii beverage companies are taking bold actions to reduce their use of new plastic and make sure their bottles do not end up in nature or wasted in landfills. We are carefully designing our bottles to be 100% recyclable, even the caps.

What is PET?
Our bottles are made of a specific type of plastic - polyethylene terephthalate or PET, a durable lightweight plastic that is the most recyclable and recycled plastic in the country. Unlike other types of plastic, PET is NOT single use but is made to be remade. That's why America's beverage companies use it for beverage bottles.

Setting the record straight about plastic bottles in the environment
There's a lot of misinformation about the value of our fully recyclable plastic bottles. Here are things you may not know.

1. PET beverage containers are collected and recycled under the state's HI-5 program and Honolulu's curbside recycling program. The state and city recognize that these bottles are valuable and much different from other plastics that have no value because they are not recyclable. The state places a deposit on our bottles because it wants to encourage consumers to bring them back and be remade into new bottles as intended.

2. Our recycled bottles are valuable and in high demand. Recycled PET can be used to make new bottles and is also highly sought after by producers of other products to reduce their use of new plastic.

3. Our bottles comprise only 1% of municipal solid waste in the U.S., according to an analysis of U.S. EPA data. Other plastics make up more than 10 times that.

4. The recycling rate nationwide for ALL plastics is below 9%. However, valuable PET which is not single use is collected by the city and state resulting in a 49% recycling rate.

5. Our industry is leading to educate consumers on the value of our plastic bottles. That's why we are placing a uniform message on bottle caps, so consumers understand that our bottles are fully recyclable: "*Recycle bottle…with cap on.*"

6. Beverage companies are reducing their plastic footprint. We're now making plastic bottles from 100% recycled plastic and we're using more recycled plastic than ever before. The industry's plastic footprint declined 7.7%, the amount of recycled plastic in our bottles nearly tripled over four years, and nearly two out of three bottles included recycled plastic in 2022.

7. We are working with environmental groups, such as the World Wildlife Fund, to advocate for modern collection policies that have worked elsewhere to raise recycling rates and keep plastic out of nature.

8. It takes energy to make any bottle or can. PET produces significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions, thanks to its lightweight properties, and it requires lower energy for production than other containers.

9. Banning lightweight, locally produced PET water bottles will require providing the alternative of aluminum cans full of water that must be shipped thousands of miles. The results will be dramatic cost increases for consumers and increased greenhouse gas emissions from shipping.

10. Beginning in 2025, recycled PET beverage containers in Hawaii will stay in the state. A new facility will turn recycled plastic bottles into new bottles, creating a truly circular economy. Recycled aluminum cans will need to be shipped thousands of miles to then be shipped back thousands more miles.

Our commitments are meant to serve as a catalyst for other industries to do more to reduce our plastic footprint. We are eager to work with those who share the goal of using less new plastic. Government and industry should come together to develop new, innovative ideas that will help us use less new plastic and ensure our bottles and caps don't wind up in places they shouldn't.

Sincerely,

David Thorp
American Beverage Association, Vice President, State Government Affairs West
202-841-2646
dthorp@americanbeverage.org

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

RYAN I. YAMANE
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KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

December 11, 2024

TO: The Honorable Councilman Tommy Waters, Chair & Presiding Officer
Honolulu City Council

The Honorable Councilwoman Esther Kia'āina, Vice Chair
Honolulu City Council

The Honorable Councilman Matt Weyer, Chair
Honolulu City Council Committee on Housing, Sustainability and Health

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director
Gavan Abe, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: **BILL 59 (24) – RELATING TO PLASTIC**
Council Meeting: December 11, 2024, 10:00 am

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the amendment to exempt Licensed Blind Vendors per the Federal Randolph Sheppard Act. Respectfully, DHS requests that the Council consider including a reference to section 347-12.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, in the exemption to cover Licensed Blind Vendors who conduct business in county buildings.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to prevent the purchase or sale of single-use plastic bottles having a capacity of one (1) liter or less:

(1) For use at any city facility, city-authorized concession, city-sponsored or city-permitted event, or city program;

(2) By the city.

The Licensed Blind Vendor (LBV) program, also known as the Randolph-Sheppard Act program, is one of the most successful entrepreneurial programs for legally blind individuals in the State of Hawaii and nationally. The blind vending program offers blind people a chance at self-determination, self-sufficiency, pride, and financial independence. Ho`opono, the Services for the Blind Branch of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Human Services, is the State Licensing Agency that is responsible for the licensing and oversight of the LBV program in Hawaii. Attached to the program is the Randolph-Sheppard Revolving Account (RSRA), authorized by section 347-12.5, HRS. There are LBV facilities in many City and County of Honolulu buildings that operate under permits, which include the sale of beverages in plastic bottles.

The RSRA is used to benefit blind vendors in the manner of retirement, health insurance, new and replacement equipment, training, and other costs related to the blind vending program. One of the vital costs that the RSRA regularly pays is for the purchase of initial inventory to support the success of blind vendors in new and refurbished facilities. Beverages, bottled and canned, constitute approximately 50% of initial inventory. Beverages are the blind vendors' best sellers and constitute a majority of the blind vendors' sales and income. The profits from beverage sales pay for everyday personal expenses of the LBV, such as rent, food, and transportation, i.e., everything necessary to live an independent life, be taxpaying citizens, and become less reliant on public assistance.

We respectfully request that the exemption also include §HRS 102-14 which authorizes Licensed Blind Vendors to operate vending facilities and machines in any state or county public buildings.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

SIERRA CLUB
O'AHU GROUP

Testimony to
Honolulu City Council

December 11, 2024 10:00 AM Council Chamber

In SUPPORT of Bill 59 CD1 (2024)
RELATING TO PLASTIC

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

The Sierra Club O'ahu Group **SUPPORTS** Bill 59 CD1, Relating to Plastic, that would help to reduce the City's plastic waste stream and its carbon footprint, by prohibiting the sale or purchase of certain single-use plastic bottles by the City or at City facilities and events.

Single-use plastics pollute our lands and freshwater bodies, clog up drainage systems, and inevitably end up in our streets, beaches, and ocean waters—marring our coasts, settling on our reefs, and creating large plastic island gyres. Plastic pollution also inflicts well-documented harms to native wildlife, including endangered as well as culturally significant and subsistence resource species. For example, plastic debris is often ingested by native seabirds, honu, and even koholā, with highly harmful or even fatal results. Microplastics created by the degradation of single use plastics, which can also absorb toxic chemicals, may also impact both human health through involuntary ingestion, and foreclose cultural practices due to their proliferation in the environment.

Notably, the petrochemical industry is also a major contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, with the production, distribution, and use of single-use plastics all requiring the consumption of significant amounts of fossil fuels.

Therefore, reducing the amount of disposable single-use plastics sold and used in Hawai'i may help to mitigate the impact of plastics on our ecosystems, native species, public health, cultural practices, environment-based economy, and planet.

Bill 59 CD1 will help to ensure the City reduces its contributions to our islands' single use plastic problems, and the harms that these products inflict on our people and environment.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club O'ahu Group urges the City Council to PASS this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

PO Box 2577, Honolulu, HI, 96803 | 808-538-6616 ext. 7 | contact@sierracluboahu.org | sierracluboahu.org

December 10th, 2024

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I MANOA CLUB

Testimony in Support of Bill 59 (24)
Honolulu City Council
City and County of Honolulu
Hearing on Dec 11, 2024, at 10:00 AM

Dear Members of the Honolulu City Council,

On behalf of the Surfrider Foundation University of Hawaii Manoa Chapter, I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Bill 59 (24), which aims to phase out the use of disposable plastic bottles (1 liter or less) at City facilities and events. This initiative represents a critical step toward reducing plastic pollution and safeguarding our environment.

The Surfrider Foundation is a national nonprofit organization committed to the protection and enjoyment of our oceans, waves, and beaches. For over a decade, the Foundation has actively advocated for the reduction of plastic pollution through its Rise Above Plastics campaign and Plastic Pollution Initiative. The University of Hawaii Manoa Club works alongside the Surfrider Foundation to empower students in promoting environmental health and sustainability, with a focus on reducing the use of single-use plastics by encouraging the adoption of reusable alternatives.

Single-use plastics contribute significantly to the growing pollution problem, adversely affecting wildlife, contaminating beaches, and harming our ecosystems. During our beach cleanups, we consistently find that a large portion of the waste collected consists of plastic items. As a student-led environmental advocacy group, we strongly believe that eliminating unnecessary plastic use is a vital step toward a more sustainable future.

We commend the City Council for considering this important measure and encourage its adoption to help reduce plastic pollution and protect our precious natural resources.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Hayley Yoshinaga
Co-Chair, University of Hawaii Manoa Club
Surfrider Foundation

Atzin Martinez
Co-Chair, University of Hawaii Manoa Club
Surfrider Foundation

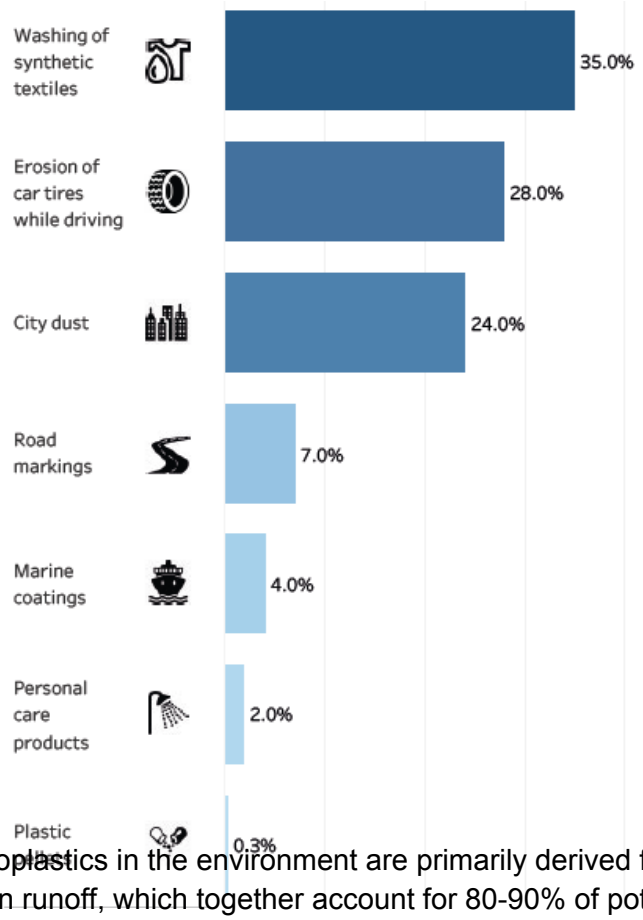
Correcting Misinformation and Calculating Environmental Impacts from Proposed Ban on PET Beverages

While the City of Honolulu's proposed measure to ban PET beverages cites concerns regarding health, environmental impact, and marine life, evidence suggests that banning PET bottles may not effectively address the issues intended and alternatively could result in unintended negative consequences.

1. Correcting Misinformation

While the measure claims PET bottles significantly contribute to pollution, data suggests otherwise:

- **Marine Debris Composition:** Studies show that **discarded fishing gear and other non-PET plastics** make up more than half of ocean plastic pollution[1]. PET bottles are a minor contributor considered at **0.06%** of total possible microplastic pollution sources.
- PET Beverages Barely Register as Potential Microplastics Contributor



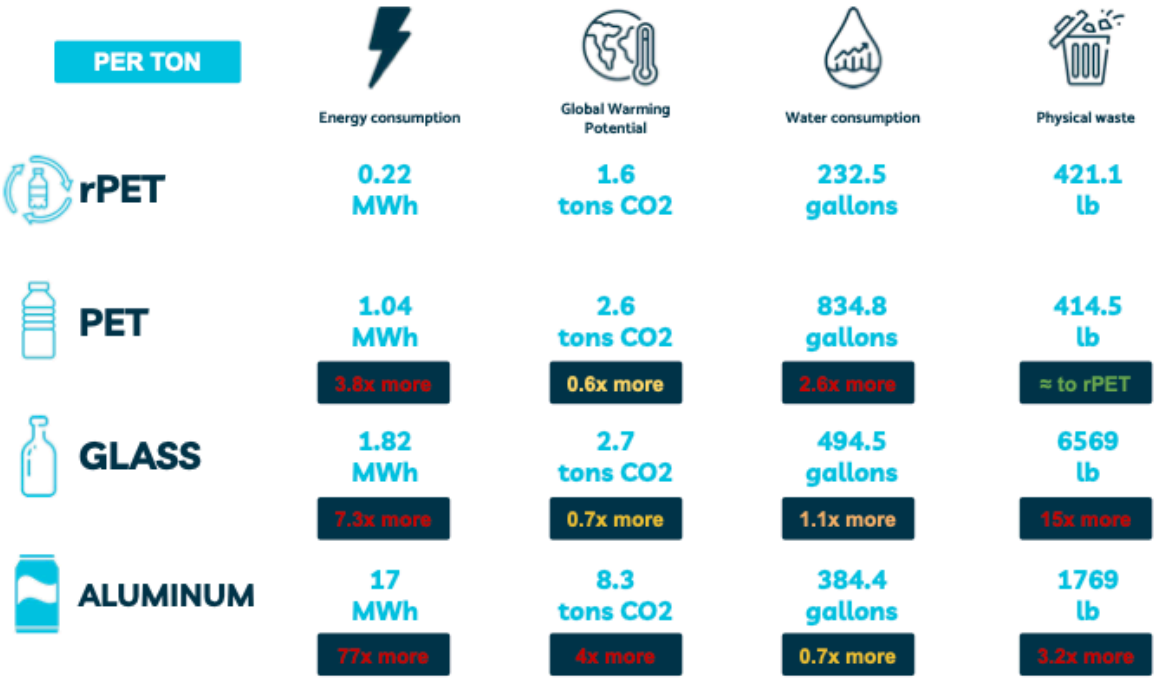
Microplastics in the environment are primarily derived from synthetic textiles, car tires, and urban runoff, which together account for 80-90% of potential primary microplastic pollution, while PET beverages represent less than 20% of the 0.3% plastic pellets category below

totalling 0.06%. This also doesn't assume there is local collection like the Hi-5 program. Why are we so focused on focused 0.06% of the problem instead of addressing the primary culprits and making a sizable dent?

2. Environmental Impacts

- **Life Cycle Impact**

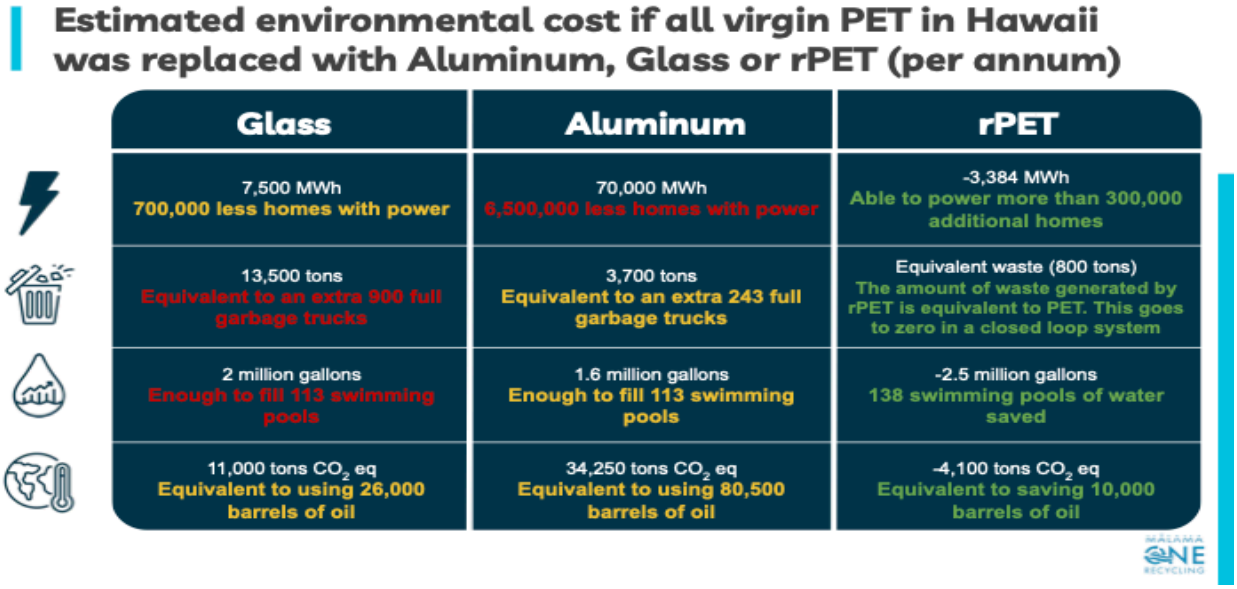
PET bottles have a significantly lower overall environmental footprint compared to alternatives like glass or aluminum when considering production energy, transportation emissions, and recyclability. Aluminum production, for instance, relies heavily on energy-intensive mining and refining processes, while glass bottles are significantly heavier, increasing transportation emissions. If we are going to consider single use bans, we shouldn't be singling out the choices with the lowest environmental impact.



Sources:
Life-Cycle Environmental Impact Assessment of Primary Beverage Containers: Glass versus Plastic Bottles
LCA of Glass Versus PET Mineral Water Bottles
Plastic (PET) vs bioplastic (PLA) or refillable aluminum bottles
Role of plastics in decoupling municipal solid waste and economic growth in the U.S
Honolulu County Waste Comp 2017.pdf

Significant Environmental Switching Costs

Replacing PET bottles with alternative packaging materials risks. Glass and aluminum packaging have much worse environmental footprints according to countless peer reviewed Life Cycle Assessments. The figure below identifies the negative environmental impacts that would result transitioning all of Hawaii's HI-5 PET collected per year to 1) Glass, 2) Aluminum and lastly 3) alternatively, 100% locally collected, 100% post-consumer recycled PET (rPET).



3. Waste Management vs. Bans

Banning PET contests the root cause of pollution: **improper disposal and a lack of infrastructure and solid waste reduction policies**.
Instead:

- Deposit Return Schemes (DRS), such as Hawaii's HI-5 Bottle Bill, are proven across the world to be the most successful legislative mechanisms to maximize the collection of PET and other beverage and non-beverage containers for recycling. Strengthening public awareness and expanding HI-5 plastic redemption incentive eligibility and accessibility will have a greater affect on curbing plastic pollution than banning PET beverage containers – which account for roughly 3.5% of all of Honolulu's annual plastic waste and 0.4% of the total waste produced by Honolulu each year.
- Investments in improved recycling collection infrastructure coupled with efforts to advance policies that require stakeholders to engage in waste diversion rather than waste disposal activities would have a more significant and longer-term impact on reducing plastic and other litter pollution. Such impact policies could include a
    - Recyclables Disposal Ban – An ordinance banning the landfilling or incineration of recyclable s.
    - Extended Producer Responsibility – A regulatory system that holds brands and other commercial enterprises accountable for minimizing the waste produced through the consumption of their respective products.

5. This Ban Leads to Continued Reliance on Imports vs Independent Resilience

Hawai'i is on track to achieve **90% circularity and landfill diversion** for all PET beverage bottles in the next 12 months, setting a national benchmark for material independence and resilience due to the emergence of Malama One Recycling. In contrast, **100% of glass containers consumed in the state are imported**, and while **75-80% of redeemable glass beverage bottles** are collected through the HI-5 program, glass faces significant recycling challenges. Due to **high local energy costs and furnace requirements**, glass cannot be remanufactured in Hawai'i. Most non-deposit glass ends up in landfills, is downcycled for uses like sand traps, or exported to California, incurring substantial environmental and economic costs.

100% of the aluminum raw materials to make beverage containers in Hawai'i are imported and 100% of the cans collected through HI-5 are exported. Replacing PET with aluminum will create greater environmental and health problems, undermining the intended benefits of such a ban because similar to glass, aluminum manufacturing retains significant economic and environmental cost.

Conclusion

While addressing environmental concerns is vital, banning PET bottles will not yield the desired results and will have adverse effects. Instead, Honolulu should focus on expanding recycling initiatives, public education campaigns, and waste diversion alternative. These approaches address the problem at its source and align with sustainable practices.

Condensed Summary

The proposed ban on PET beverages in Honolulu raises valid environmental concerns but overlooks critical scientific and practical considerations.

- **Environmental Impact:** PET and rPET have significantly lower carbon, waste, and water footprints compared to alternatives like glass and aluminum, contrary to perception. 100% post-consumer recycled PET offers the single lowest environmental footprint of all packaging types, which is why local recycling and repurposing those resources is so important.

- **Microplastic Source:** Microplastics release into waterways from PET and rPET bottles (0.3%) are minimal compared to major contributors like textiles (35%) and tire wear (28%). This does also not take into consideration if there is local collection and recycling, which is pending 2025 through Malama One Recycling. PET and rPET do not readily degrade into harmful particles under normal conditions like other plastics. Marine debris primarily consists of fishing gear and smaller plastic items made from HDPE, PP and nylon. All plastics are not created equal.

- **Waste Management:** The problem lies in improper disposal and inadequate collection, not the material itself. Strengthening recycling programs, like Honolulu's HI-5, is a more effective solution than a ban.
- **This Ban Leads to Continued Reliance on Imports vs Independent Resilience** While aluminum cans and glass all need to be imported, we have the ability to divert, collect, and remanufacture all PET in the state in a closed loop system with the new Malama One Recycling facility, facilitating material sovereignty.
- **Alternative Risks:** Aluminum cans, though perceived as eco-friendly, have higher production emissions and can release neurotoxic ions when degraded, posing potentially greater health risks.

A PET beverage container ban would inadvertently lead to greater environmental and health consequences. Investing in improved recycling, public education and regulatory policies offer a more balanced, sustainable approach to curbing plastic litter and preserving local community and environmental health.

December 10th, 2024

Testimony in Support of Bill 59 (24)
Honolulu City Council
City and County of Honolulu
Hearing on Dec 11, 2024, at 10:00 AM

Dear members of the Honolulu City Council,

The Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter offers the following testimony in support of Bill 59 (24), to phase out disposable plastic bottles (having a capacity of 1 liter or less) at City facilities and events, reducing plastic pollution and protecting our environment.

The Surfrider Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves, and beaches. The Surfrider Foundation has advocated for plastic pollution reduction laws for over a decade through our Rise Above Plastics campaign and Plastic Pollution Initiative. The O'ahu chapter advocates at the local, state and federal level for plastic restrictions and better product alternatives that encourage everyday citizens to switch to reusables.

Plastic pollution on our beaches and parks overwhelmingly comes from products that are used for a few minutes, are discarded into the environment, and then persist in our streets, waterways and ocean for a lifetime. Plastic is problematic from the point of raw material extraction to its eventual disposal and dispersion eventually as microplastics. As more studies emerge pointing to the serious damage microplastics cause to our environment and human health, there is an urgent need for legislation at all levels to 'turn off the plastic tap'. A staggering 171 trillion fragments of plastic are estimated to pollute just the upper regions of the world's oceans. [1]

There is a common misconception nationwide that recycling is a viable solution to the plastic crisis. Recycling is not only reactive, but is largely a myth spread by large fossil fuel companies like Exxon to allow continued production of plastic products. Even with recycling programs in place, less than 5% of our plastic is recycled into another product despite recyclable labeling in the U.S. On account of the massive cover up Exxon has done to mislead the public to believe in

[1] Forbes Magazine, How Microplastics Are Permeating Our Oceans And Marine Environment (2024)

plastic recycling, Surfrider Foundation has filed a lawsuit with ExxonMobil. [2] The reality is, plastic products can not be safely discarded and the recycling industry will not solve the environmental crisis or keep plastic out of landfills.

Here in Hawai`i, the Hi-5 redemption program sends recyclables almost exclusively to California. In 2019 Hawai`i shipped an overwhelming 35,898,457 lbs to California.[3] Hawai`i Department of Health only keeps track of the first leg of recyclable transport meaning that once it reaches it's destination we have no assurance that any of our plastic is being recycled. This information, and the backdrop of the recent lawsuit exposing big oil corporations hiding the truth of plastic recycling nationwide paints a dismal situation to the amount of plastic pollution Hawai`i is contributing to a broken system. Now is the time to immediately take measures to disengage from the recycling system and find alternative solutions.

The Surfrider Foundation O`ahu Chapter supports this bill for the following reasons:

1. Bill 59(24) takes proactive measures to 'turn off the plastic tap' by targeting a significant category of plastic pollution: single use plastic bottles.

2. Policy banning single use plastic in County facilities is not unprecedented in Hawai`i. Kaua'i County has implemented a comprehensive Disposable Plastic Policy as of January 2021 that prohibits the purchase, use and sale of disposable plastics with County funds at County permitted events, by County employees, or County facility users.[4] Along with banning disposable plastic, plastic bags, straws, cutlery, containers, Kaua`i County also provided resources for Compostable Food Service Containers.

3. Single-use plastic beverage bottles and caps are consistently one of the top 10 items collected at litter clean-ups.[5] Plastic bottle caps are made of polypropylene and when littered in aquatic environments they often float on the water's surface due to their relatively light density. Bottle caps floating on the ocean's surface look like food to many animals, including marine mammals, sea turtles, fish and seabirds.

4. The sale of plastic bottles generates avoidable greenhouse gas emissions throughout the process.[6] From extraction of oil to manufacturing, from transportation to disposal, each of these steps generates emissions. In the bottled water sector, one of the biggest costs is transportation, bottles are often trucked 1,000 miles. Even when a bottle is recycled there are emissions from manufacturing and transport.

5. All of these environmental harms are not worth the historical and continued damage they have caused for the sake of convenience and fitting into an outdated, plastic dependent

[2] Surfrider v. ExxonMobil Corporation (2024)
[3] Honolulu Civil Beat, 'Where in the World Do We Send Our Recycling?' (2020)
[4] Office of the Mayor, County of Kaua`i Policy to Prohibit the Purchase, Use, or Distribution of Disposable Plastics on County Property (2021)
[5] The Ocean Conservancy, Top Ten Items, (May 2017).
[6] The Story of Stuff Project, The Story of Bottled Water with Annie Leonard (Mar. 2010).

economy. The transition to refillable bottles or compostable cups, supplemented by filtered water stations is not only a feasible step, but a necessary one.

Our islands stand as symbols of sustainability, conservation, and environmental education for millions of residents and visitors. In order to preserve the ʻāina and these values for generations to come, we should phase out the sale of small single-use plastic water bottles altogether.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Hanna Lilley
Hawai`i Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation