BILL018(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 105

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Feb 26, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 2

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Natalie Graham-Wood	ngrahamwood@hotmail.com	96712-9719
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Feb 24, 2025 @ 03:49 PM

Testimony:

I support Bill 018. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Banner Fanene	banner.fanene@gmail.com	96786
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Feb 24, 2025 @ 03:49 PM

Testimony:

Aloha -

I support this measure and ask that you please pass.

Mahalo

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lauren Zirbel	LaurenZirbel@HawaiiFood.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Food Industry Association (HFIA)	Oppose	Feb 25, 2025 @ 02:40 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
David Thorp	dthorp@americanbeverage.org	20036
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
American Beverage Association	Oppose	Feb 25, 2025 @ 06:33 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Angela Melody Young	Alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	I wish to comment	Feb 26, 2025 @ 09:51 AM

Testimony:

Cares is commenting.

1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e:
info@hawaiifood.com

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Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Chair*
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Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *President and Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
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 18 Relating to Plastic
February 26, 2025

Chair Waters and members of the Honolulu City Council, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Bill 18 – 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 polyethylene terephthalate (PET)—a lightweight, durable plastic that is 100% recyclable and designed to be remade.

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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 18 is Counterproductive

Passing Bill 18, 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 would create uncertainty for future projects and discourage progress toward long-term solutions.

A Collaborative Path Forward

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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.

Written Testimony of
David Thorp, American Beverage Association
Before the Honolulu City Council
Opposition of Bill 18: Relating to Plastic

Good morning, Chair Waters, Vice Chair Weyer, and members of the city council. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition of Bill 18 – 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 later this year, 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