

BILL018(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 162

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Mar 19, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 8

Oppose: 3

I wish to comment: 2

Name: Johnnie-Mae Perry	Email: waianaenb569@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 14, 2025 @ 12:22 PM
Testimony: I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, SUPPORT BILL018(25) RELATING TO PLASTIC.		
Name: Tina Yamaki	Email: tyamaki@rmhawaii.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Retail Merchants of Hawaii	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Mar 17, 2025 @ 11:27 AM
Name: Lauren Zirbel	Email: LaurenZirbel@HawaiiFood.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Hawaii Food Industry Association (HFIA)	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Mar 17, 2025 @ 12:17 PM
Name: Natalie Graham-Wood	Email: ngramhamwood@hotmail.com	Zip: 96712-9719
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 17, 2025 @ 01:51 PM
Testimony: I support Bill 18 (2025). My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.		
Name: Gavan Abe	Email: gabe@dhs.hawaii.gov	Zip: 96817
Representing: Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Services for the Blind Branch	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Mar 18, 2025 @ 12:16 AM
Name: Jun Shin	Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com	Zip: 96803
Representing: Sierra Club O'ahu Group	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 18, 2025 @ 02:07 PM

Name: David Thorp	Email: dthorp@americanbeverage.org	Zip: 20036
Representing: American Beverage Association	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Mar 18, 2025 @ 02:53 PM

Name: Lei Fisher	Email: oleimomimo@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 18, 2025 @ 02:57 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support this measure as a lifelong resident of O'ahu, Native Hawaiian, and mother. I also suffer from endometriosis, which gives me great pain, stress, & infertility issues. The cause of endometriosis has been linked to exposure to chemicals found in plastics. This measure is a reasonable and impactful way to tackle plastic reliance and its numerous harms to our environment and bodies, and I hope it can lead to similar efforts going forward.

Please PASS this measure.

Mahalo nui loa,

Lei Fisher

Name: Karen Shishido	Email: kshishido02@yahoo.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Sierra Club, O'ahu Group	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 18, 2025 @ 09:58 PM

Name: Bradley Rentz	Email: brentz@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 18, 2025 @ 11:16 PM

Testimony:

In strong support of this measure. It is such a small and reasonable step considering the growing body of evidence and studies regarding the danger of plastics in our bodies. The visceral opposition from councilmembers and industry is both astonishing and incredibly disappointing. It does not bode well for future generations.

Name: Hanna Lilley	Email: hlilley@surfrider.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Surfrider Foundation O`ahu Chapter	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 19, 2025 @ 04:59 AM
Name: Lauren Kaiser	Email: lkaiser15@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 19, 2025 @ 08:25 AM
Testimony: I strongly support the proposed ordinance to ban the sale of single-use plastic bottles of 1 liter or less from vending machines at city facilities after December 31, 2025. This measure represents a small but crucial step forward for Hawai'i's environmental protection efforts and aligns perfectly with our islands' values and needs. Hawai'i's unique island ecosystem is particularly vulnerable to plastic pollution. Our beaches, reefs, and marine wildlife suffer disproportionately from single-use plastics that too often end up in our oceans. As a tourism-dependent economy with nearly 10 million visitors annually, reducing plastic waste at government facilities sends a powerful message about our commitment to environmental stewardship and sets an example for visitors and residents alike. By eliminating these small plastic bottles from city facilities, we can significantly decrease plastic waste while encouraging the use of reusable containers and water refill stations, which are more aligned with traditional Hawaiian values of resource conservation and mālama 'āina. The provision allowing existing contracts to be fulfilled demonstrates a balanced approach that respects business commitments while ensuring future compliance. This ordinance represents a practical, achievable step toward reducing our plastic footprint and preserving Hawai'i's natural beauty for future generations.		
Name: Angela Melody Young	Email: Alohadininedesign@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Mar 19, 2025 @ 09:38 AM
Testimony: Commenting.		



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
MARCH 19, 2025
Re: BILL 18 (2025) – RELATING TO PLASTICS**

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, established in 1901, is a statewide nonprofit trade organization committed to fostering the growth and development of Hawaii's retail sector. Our diverse membership encompasses small mom-and-pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retailers, department stores, shopping malls, online sellers, and local, national, and international chains.

We respectfully oppose Bill 18 (2025). This measure would prohibit the sale of single-use plastic bottles of 1 liter or less in vending machines at city facilities after December 31, 2025. While I support responsible environmental policies, this measure will create unintended negative consequences for consumers, businesses, and city operations.

We want to point out that vending machines at city facilities provide essential beverage options in locations where alternatives are unavailable or inconvenient. Eliminating single use bottled water and other drinks from vending machines will leave visitors, employees, and students with fewer choices, particularly in high-traffic areas like parks, transit hubs, and government buildings. This measure could severely limit the employees and the public's access to hydration

This ordinance could disrupt vending machine contracts, impacting small businesses and vendors that rely on beverage sales. Restricting single-use bottles may also increase costs for the city, as vendors adjust pricing structures or withdraw from contracts due to impractical restrictions.

The higher costs of the larger drinks will be passed down to those who are purchasing a drink from the vending machine. We must also note that the recent increase in tariffs will also raise the cost of these bottled drinks as the materials to make the containers often are exported from these foreign countries. Shipping costs have gone up and in January the minimum wage will also increase. These will all have an impact on these larger beverages with an increase in the cost. The cost would have an impact on people decision to pay for a pricy drink or go thirsty.

Encouraging individuals to bring reusable bottles assumes that clean water refill stations will be available, operational, and sanitary at all times. Without a reliable alternative, individuals may forgo hydration.

Instead of an outright ban, the city should prioritize improved recycling programs and waste management infrastructure to properly dispose of plastic bottles. Many plastic bottles are already recyclable, and the state's HI-5 redemption program encourages proper disposal and recycling efforts.

Rather than imposing a restrictive and impractical ban, I urge the city to consider alternative approaches that balance environmental responsibility with public health, economic feasibility, and consumer access. Solutions such as enhanced recycling initiatives, expanded hydration station infrastructure, and incentives for sustainable packaging would be far more effective than an outright prohibition.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote against this measure and seek more balanced, practical, and inclusive solutions for addressing plastic waste. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.





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Executive Officers

Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Chair*
Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Vice Chair*
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

March 19, 2025

Chair Waters and members of the 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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Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

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.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 19, 2025

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 018 (25) – RELATING TO PLASTIC
Council Meeting: March 19, 2025, 10:00am, City Council Chamber

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill, provides comments, and requests an exemption.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is that no single-use plastic bottle having a capacity of 1 liter or less may be sold or offered for sale at any vending machine located at a city facility after December 31, 2025. Any contracts in effect prior to the enactment of this ordinance may be fulfilled and any subsequent contract renewals must be executed in compliance with this ordinance.

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 and vending machines located in numerous 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 is regularly paid by the RSRA 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 an exemption to this proposed ordinance be allowed for the Licensed Blind Vendor program to continue to operate according to our existing permit terms in City facilities.

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



SIERRA CLUB

O'AHU GROUP

Testimony to
Honolulu City Council
On
Bill 18: Relating to Plastic.

March 19, 2025

10:00 PM

Council Chambers

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Weyer, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

The Sierra Club O'ahu Group SUPPORTS Bill 18 (2025), Relating to Plastic, that would help to reduce the City's plastic waste stream and its carbon footprint by prohibiting the sale of certain single-use plastic bottles in vending machines at city facilities.

We understand that Bill 18 is similar to Bill 59 (2024), but more restricted in its scope. Given that Bill 18 is limited to only vending machines at city facilities, we are perplexed as to the source of opposition to this bill. Is our addiction to plastic so severe that we cannot even tolerate a limiting its availability via vending machines?

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 18 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. Although it is only a small step, it demonstrates leadership by example on an issue that will only become more pressing as time goes on.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club O'ahu Group urges the Council to vote to PASS Bill 18. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



**Written Testimony of
David Thorp, American Beverage Association
Before the Honolulu City Council
Opposition of Bill 18: Relating to Plastic
March 19, 2025**

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



SIERRA CLUB

O'AHU GROUP

Testimony to
Honolulu City Council
On
Bill 18: Relating to Plastic.

March 19, 2025

10:00 PM

Council Chambers

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Weyer, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

The Sierra Club O'ahu Group SUPPORTS Bill 18 (2025), Relating to Plastic, that would help to reduce the City's plastic waste stream and its carbon footprint by prohibiting the sale of certain single-use plastic bottles in vending machines at city facilities.

We understand that Bill 18 is similar to Bill 59 (2024), but more restricted in its scope. Given that Bill 18 is limited to only vending machines at city facilities, we are perplexed as to the source of opposition to this bill. Is our addiction to plastic so severe that we cannot even tolerate a limiting its availability via vending machines?

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 18 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. Although it is only a small step, it demonstrates leadership by example on an issue that will only become more pressing as time goes on.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club O'ahu Group urges the Council to vote to PASS Bill 18. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



March 19, 2025

Honolulu City Council
City and County of Honolulu

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of Bill 018(25) Relating to Plastic
Hearing: Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 10:00 AM

To: The Honorable members of the Honolulu City Council,

The Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter offers the following testimony in support of Bill 018 (25), to phase out disposable plastic bottles (having a capacity of 1 liter or less) at City facility vending machines.

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 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.

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

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.² 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 18(25) takes proactive measures to 'turn off the plastic tap' by targeting a significant category of plastic pollution: single use plastic bottles. While the scale is relatively small, targeting vending machines, it sets an important standard and commitment to reducing plastic at the County level.
2. Policy banning single use plastic in County facilities is not unprecedented in Hawai'i. Whereas this is only targeting vending machines, 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.³ 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 beach clean-ups.⁴ 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.⁵ 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 economy.

² Honolulu Civil Beat, ['Where in the World Do We Send Our Recycling?'](#) (2020)

³ Office of the Mayor, [County of Kaua'i Policy to Prohibit the Purchase, Use, or Distribution of Disposable Plastics on County Property](#) (2021)

⁴ The Ocean Conservancy, Top Ten Items, (May 2017).

⁵ The Story of Stuff Project, The Story of Bottled Water with Annie Leonard (Mar. 2010).

Our islands stand as symbols of sustainability, conservation, and environmental education for millions of residents and visitors. In order to preserve the 'āina and these values for generations to come, we should phase out the sale of small single-use plastic water bottles altogether, and this is a common sense step in that direction.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hanna Lilley', written in a cursive style.

Hanna Lilley
Hawai'i Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation