

BILL018(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 217

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Apr 16, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 6

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Johnnie-Mae Perry	waianaenb569@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 11, 2025 @ 12:31 PM
Testimony: I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry SUPPORT Selected Agenda Item: BILL018(25) RELATING TO PLASTIC. We should all invest in "flex" drinking containers with health and safety and environmental friendly benefits.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Soo Sun Choe	soosunc@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 14, 2025 @ 10:30 PM
Testimony: This bill should be a no-brainer and I strongly support an end to water bottles in vending machines in city facilities. The single use water bottles only introduce more micropastics into our ecosystems and are an unnecessary landfill addition. They are wasteful and do not contribute to a better future for Oahu.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
David Thorp	dthorp@americanbeverage.org	20036
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
American Beverage Association	Oppose	Apr 15, 2025 @ 05:15 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Travis Laronal	TL77skyblue@gmail.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 15, 2025 @ 08:03 AM
Testimony: what is the bill or actions taken on plastics . I would like to see a way to have a plastic recycling of the construction materials. Not only water bottles.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Donald Sakamoto	cylonone@aol.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 15, 2025 @ 02:58 PM

Testimony: Oral testimony to be submitted.		
Name: Nancie Caraway	Email: nancie.caraway@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 15, 2025 @ 09:13 PM
Testimony: We are an Island nation. Everything is fragile and finite. Single Use plastic bottles are clogging ours and the world's oceans and landfills. They poison the air when they're burned in H Power incinerators, they cause microplastic contamination of the environment and our bodies. Microplastics are in our bloodstreams, placenta - and NY Times reports this week that scientists have found bottle cap microplastics in human brains. Each year 20 billion to 30 billion pounds of plastic enters world's oceans, harming wildlife - we've seen the horrifying Monk Seal with plastic straws in its mouth. Single Use plastic bottles are a significant cause. Massive amounts of energy are needed to produce bottled water - and even more energy to recycle. The production of PET bottles are highly water-intensive. Thousands of chemicals are used in bottles - and these cannot be mixed even if recycled. According to the 2024 PlastChemProject, 16,000 chemical additives are in plastics - 4,200 of them harmful to human health/environment. We must demystify the logo "chasing arrows" - it's a lie. Manufacturers can print that logo on anything. Few plastics that that can must be clean and cannot be mixed. THE TRUTH IS THAT capitalism and fossil fuel/petrochemical companies EXPORT THE NEGATIVE TOXINS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ORDINARY CITIZENS TO CLEAN UP THE MESS. WE NEED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY MANDATES. Let me as you, if your bathtub were overflowing - would you run for a mop or turn off the faucet. Bill 18 is a fair and modest first step to ending this scourge that so pollutes our hearts and our 'aina. Mahalo for voting YES. w		
Name: Alison Ka`ōlinokaimana Yasuoka	Email: kaolinokaimana@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 16, 2025 @ 02:06 AM
Name: Kelly Nishimura	Email: ascetic-glassy-8d@icloud.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 16, 2025 @ 03:38 AM
Testimony: I strongly support BILL 018 (25) to ban the sale of single-use plastic bottles of 1 liter or less from vending machines at city facilities. This measure is sensible and necessary. Plastic pollution is a serious problem that must be addressed. Plastic pollution harms the health of humans and marine life. Mahalo to those who are taking steps to protect the health of people and the environment.		

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Angela Melody Young	Alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Support	Apr 16, 2025 @ 07:59 AM
Testimony: Refer to live testimony		



**Written Testimony of
David Thorp, American Beverage Association
Before the Honolulu City Council
Opposition of Bill 18, CD1: Relating to Plastic
April 16, 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, 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 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

April 16, 2025

The Honorable Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
The Honorable Councilmember Matt Weyer, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council
Regular Meeting of the City Council Chamber, 6th Session
530 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Position: **STRONGLY SUPPORTS Bill 18 (2025), Relating to Plastic**

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

I, Alison Ka'ōlinokaimana Yasuoka, appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT OF Bill 18 (2025), Relating to Plastic, that will place, "Restrictions on single-use plastic bottles." I am in strong support 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.**

There is no doubt in my mind that everyone on Hawai'i's City Council is aware of the huge plastic pollution problem we have not just here in Hawai'i, but globally. We can not deny that plastic single use bottles are part of the problem. Additionally, living in Hawai'i means that we all benefit from the mālama messaging, that is often tied to the `āina, the kai, and the wai.

Across Hawai'i, I am seeing a greater awareness of the need for us to use refillable water bottles. Schools, businesses, even airports are now including water refill stations to support this phenomenon that even records the number of single use water bottles have been "saved." These are all steps in the right direction.

So it makes complete sense that Hawai'i should be one of the state's leading the path in banning water bottles in City vending machines.

These are necessary steps in taking actions in support of Mālama Honua, Mālama `āina initiatives.

For the future of Hawai'i, and really the world, carbon emission, microplastics and nanoplastics, as well as plastic bottle manufacturing and the comparatively large amount of water required to manufacture the bottles, have global scale impacts. Thus, there is the **immediate need to phase out, and reach a point where plastic beverage bottles are completely banned here in Hawai'i.** (This is extremely plausible as there are existing models out there where this has been accomplished.)

It is imperative that we stop enabling the "convenience," "one/single" use mindset that is embedded in the use of vendor purchased plastic water-bottles. Ideally, there needs to be a strong message across Hawai'i inclusive of residents and visitors that Hawai'i does not support the use of single use plastic straws, plastic containers, and just as this bill proposes, send out a message that Hawai'i is against single-use water bottles (hopefully in

the future—against the sale of all plastic beverage bottles.)

We must also refute messaging that polyethylene terephthalate (PET) water bottles are not single use bottles, or narratives that minimize plastic water/beverage bottle impacts on not just us, but the environment. Instead, we must be willing to critically access and read the research and science out there that reveal the issues and negative impacts of single-use plastic water bottles. Towards this end, I will embed research and science in my testimony.

According to the Environmental Management System of the National Institute of Health (NEMS NIH):

*Single-use plastic water bottles are typically disposed after drinking, as they are **not intended for reuse due to health concerns**.”^x.*

It is this health concern that places plastic water bottles sold in vending machines, markets, handed out at little league games, etc that places them in the “single-use” category.

In an ever-growing plastic bottle market, those who place profits and financial gain over the health and well being of people and the environment—those who are manufacturing, selling, vending, retailing plastic beverage bottles would foreseeably not want their bottom line-profits, impacted. If we look at the plastic beverage bottle market—inclusive of the plastic water bottle market, the growth numbers are mind-boggling. Data from the Container Recycling Institute:

Plastic water bottle sales have skyrocketed over the last 25-plus years. The following data includes PET and HDPE plastic water bottles combined. PET bottles account for 98% of the total.

- Plastic water bottle **sales increased by 2,767% from 1997 (3 billion units) to 2021 (86 billion units) – a 25-fold increase.**
- Of the 86 billion plastic water bottles sold in 2021, 29% (25 billion) were recycled and **71% (61 billion) were wasted.**

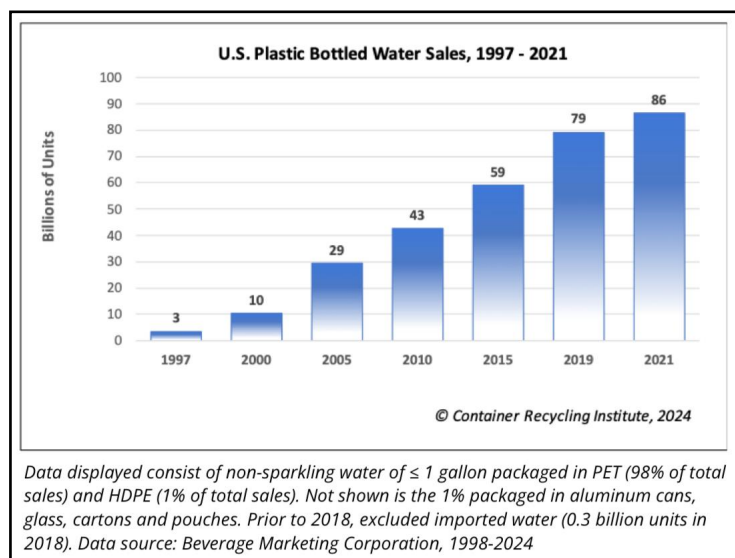


Image accessed from Beverage Container Institute

Note in the image above, the steady rise in water bottle sales by the billions.

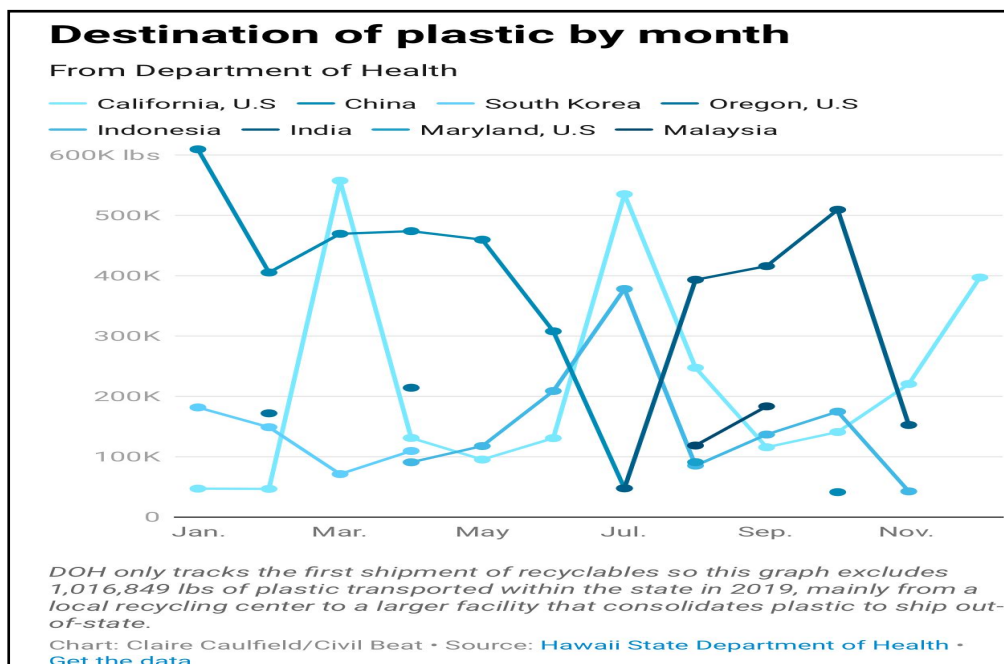
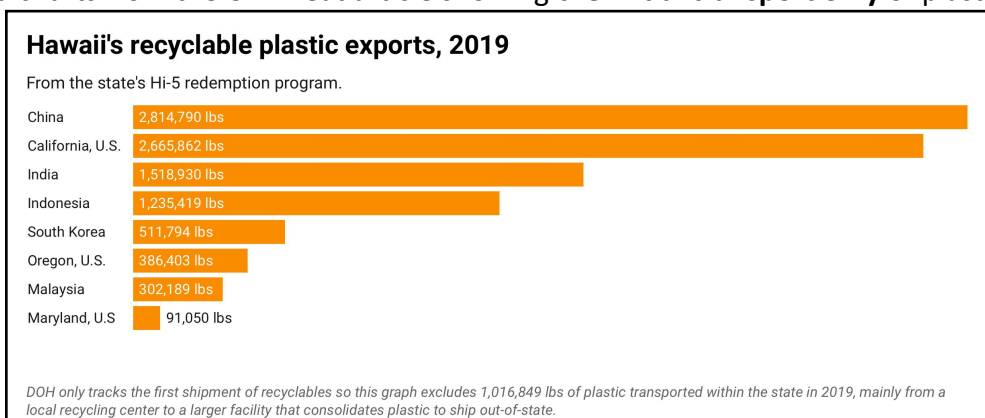
Unfortunately, there is a definite disconnect between manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and vendors saying that the plastic water bottles are recyclable, and the actual number of bottles that are “wasted”--71 %.

In a 2024 Civil Beat article, “Where in the World Do We Send Our Recycling,” even bottles that are recycled are leaving a huge carbon footprint post consumption because of the distance the plastic bottles travel.

*“What surprised me most about the data was the fact that almost everything collected is exported out of state,” said DOH’s Solid Waste Coordinator Michael Burke via email. “I always assumed that more was kept locally than the numbers bear out. **Hawaii doesn’t have a traditional recycling plant in the state, so the vast majority of the 56 million pounds of aluminum, bi-metal, glass and plastic collected by [the state’s Hi-5 program](#) last year had to be transported off-island.** (Civil Beat, Caulfield. 2024)*

Note—This off-island transport to the Continental U.S. or international sites, is not necessarily its final destination. The HiDOH does not keep records of the total distance the recycled bottles travel in order to reach their final destination.

Here are data charts from the Civil Beat article showing **the initial transport only** of plastic recyclables.



According to Beyond Plastics:

And the growth shows no signs of slowing, as single-use plastic water bottles are marketed and offered to consumers not just at grocery and convenience stores, but at sporting and entertainment venues, big-box stores, and ubiquitous vending machines as well. They're also frequently provided in private and public offices.

Additionally, according to the Beverage Marketing Corporation bottled water is:

- **the largest beverage category by volume.**

It is a lucrative industry that the Beverage Marketing Corporation creates reports for that:

- **considers every aspect of this resilient category, the forces propelling its continued growth and its competitive circumstances.**

Additionally the NEMS NIH also shared the statistical data about the percentage of PET bottles that are:

PET water bottles are typically disposed of in three ways: recycling, incineration, and landfilling.

Here I will focus on NEMS NIH data on what happens to the discarded bottles:

- **Most bottles are discarded, typically in landfills, for over 69% of plastic container and packaging waste in 2018x.**
- **These water bottles may also find themselves in waterways and pollute the environment. PET plastic bottles take up to 500 years to degrade**
- **Can be a source of plastic pollution and microplastics in drinking water and the environment xii.**

All of these are greatly concerning.

Hawai'i's landfill issues provide another reason to support Bill 18. Not only does it have to do with the limited landfill capacity, but why allow plastic water bottles to take up space in our landfills in the first place?

Another reason why I support Bill 18 is because data from a NIH article, "Plastic particles in bottled water," revealed the presence of nanoplastics in bottled water.

The following excerpts reveal additional reasons why I support Bill 18:

*Plastics are a part of our everyday lives, and **plastic pollution is a growing concern.** When plastics break down over time, they can form smaller particles called **microplastics**, which are 5 mm or less in length—smaller than a sesame seed. Microplastics, in turn, can break down into even smaller pieces called **nanoplastics**, which are less than 1 μm in size. **Unable to be seen with the naked eye, these are small enough to enter the body's cells and tissues.***

Alarming nanoplastic in waterbottles' statistics:

The researchers found that, on average, a liter of bottled water included about 240,000 tiny pieces of plastic. About 90% of these plastic fragments were nanoplastics. This total was 10 to 100 times more plastic particles than seen in earlier studies, which mostly focused on larger microplastics.

Seven different kinds of plastic were identified in the bottled water. Of note:

An abundance of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) was also detected. This might be expected, since PET is used to make bottles for water, soda, and many other drinks and foods. Other identified plastics included polyvinyl chloride, polymethyl methacrylate, and polystyrene, which is also used in water purification.

Why we should feel concerned about these nanoplastics in plastic bottled water?

UCLA Health explains the exposure risks:

- *Exposure to high quantities of nanoplastics **may affect cell's immune function and cause inflammation.***
- *There is even **some evidence that by altering cell function, nanoplastics may increase the risk of some types of cancer.** It's important to note, however, that very little research to date has looked specifically at humans.*

According to UCLA Health: **Limiting the amount of single-use plastic in your life is important for more than your health. Skipping plastic bottles and bags is better for the environment:**

- *Between 4 and 12 million metric tons of plastic end up in the oceans each year.*
- *Those bottles and bags collect in the ocean and on the beaches where they harm fish, birds and other wildlife.*

Can Bill 18 really work? Yes. Hawai'i is a bit behind a few other states who have already made the leap to ban all single-use plastic beverage bottles either on their University campus, their county, or state.

One model and example is the University of Southern California, USC. Although its scope targets its campus and medical enterprise operations, its vision is to be commended and the possibility for its capacity to ramp up and grow is definitely within the realm of possibility.

Here is University of Southern California (USC) on eliminating Single-Use Plastic Beverage Bottles to meet its zero waste goals:

The purpose of this university-wide policy is to eliminate Single-use Plastic Beverage Bottles from campus and medical enterprise operations. By shifting procurement practices, prioritizing reuse and increasing waste diversion and reduction measures,

over the next few years, USC intends to transition away from all Single-Use Plastic Beverage Bottles on campus and reach its zero waste goals.

Here are additional concerns and issues shared by the Massachusetts Sierra Club:

Bottled water impacts our environment, wallet, and health

- Plastic is a source of litter on land and in our waterways, and poses a risk to our wildlife and marine life. **It does not biodegrade and remains in our environment for 1000 years.**
- The **carbon footprint of bottled water is 11-31 times greater than that of tap water.**
- Most bottled water is in reality packaged tap water that goes through a proprietary, multi-stage, energy-intensive process. However, **bottled water costs as much as 2000 times more per gallon than tap water.**
- **Bottled water and other beverages mostly use water treated through a wasteful process known as reverse osmosis.[2].** These figures do not include the **even greater amount of water required to manufacture the packaging.[3]**
- While marketed as a safer and tastier option, **bottled water companies are not regulated under the same rigorous standards as public water.** In the United States tap water is held to higher purity standards than bottled water.
- **Plastic bottles can also expose us to unwanted health risks.** Synthetic chemicals like phthalates and antimony used in the manufacture of plastic have been known to leach into water the longer it sits in the plastic bottle.

According to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority:

*Single-use bottled water systems consume between 11 and 90 times more energy than tap water systems. Tap water is preferable to bottled water because energy generation and consumption is a driver of climate change. **Bottled water's overall carbon footprint is 300 to 1,000 times higher than that of local tap water.***

What are the possibilities for a plastic beverage bottle free Hawai'i?

How to Move Beyond Plastic:

Alternatives and Legislative Options from Beyond Plastics:

- *Individuals can carry reusable water bottles as they go about their daily lives, reducing the consumption of more than 250 plastic water bottles per person per year. Businesses and institutions can make water pitchers available at meetings; schools and office buildings can bring back water fountains; and other public venues can install modern water bottle refilling stations.*
- *For example, in August 2019, San Francisco International Airport (SFO) became the first major world airport to ban the sale of single-use plastic water bottles in all*

- of its concessions, and installed about 100 water refilling stations in busy public concourses.
- In September 2023, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey signed [an executive order](#) prohibiting state agencies from purchasing single-use plastic bottles. In June 2022, the [U.S. Interior Department](#) announced plans to phase out single-use plastics on public lands, including national parks.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share my testimony.
I humbly urge you to support Bill 18 (2025).

`O wau nō me ka ha`aha`a,
Alison Ka`ōlinokaimana Yasuoka

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