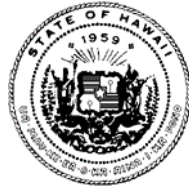


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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

January 23, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 184 – RELATING TO THE DEPOSIT BEVERAGE CONTAINER PROGRAM.**

Hearing: Friday, January 24, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the measure's intent and offers comments on potential impacts on Hawaii's blind vendors.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to increase the deposit and refund value for beverage containers from 5 cents to 10 cents under the deposit beverage container program.

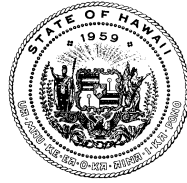
The Licensed Blind Vendor (LBV) program, also known as the Randolph-Sheppard Act program, is one of the most successful entrepreneurial programs for legally blind individuals in the State of Hawaii and nationally. The blind vending program offers the blind a chance at self-determination, self-sufficiency, pride, and financial independence. Ho'opono, the Services for the Blind Branch of the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 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, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

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 most of the blind vendors' sales and income. The profits from beverage sales pay for everyday personal expenses of the LBV, such as rent, food, transportation, and other essentials necessary to live an independent life.

An increase in the cost of beverages may result in hardship for the blind vendors. That cost would be subsequently passed on to their customers, who may be hesitant to purchase beverages at an increased cost, thereby reducing sales for the blind vendors.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'ŌIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB 184
RELATING TO THE DEPOSIT BEVERAGE CONTAINER PROGRAM.**

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Hearing Date: January 24, 2025

Room Number: 224

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Based on the collection of \$58 million in FY24 Distributor payments,
2 doubling the deposit will result in an approximate \$48 million increase in deposit and fee
3 collections.

4 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) offers the following comments on
5 the proposed bill which increases the refund value of a deposit beverage container (DBC) from
6 5-cents to 10-cents, effective January 1, 2026.

7 The proposed increase in the deposit refund value from 5-cents to 10-cents for DBCs may
8 likely have several consequences. This "price" increase for consumers could potentially decrease
9 beverage purchases, impacting manufacturers' revenue. Conversely, the doubled refund value is
10 expected to significantly increase the number of containers returned for redemption.

11 In order to implement SB184, businesses involved in the beverage container system,
12 including distributors, dealers, and certified redemption centers (CRCs), will require a sufficient
13 transition period to adapt to the new requirements. The current effective date of January 1, 2026,
14 effectively six months, may not allow enough time for all businesses, especially those with
15 operations across local, national, and international levels, to comply.

16 Distributors will need to redesign and deploy new DBCs with the 10-cent refund value,
17 while dealers will need to update their point-of-sale systems to reflect the new refund amount. It
18 is likely that during the transition phase, products with both 5-cent and 10-cent refund values

1 could be sold, potentially adding complication to their point-of-sale systems. Also during the
2 transition, customers and CRCs will need to segregate containers by their refund value (5-cents
3 vs. 10-cents) to ensure accurate payments to consumers.

4 Due to the complexity of the system and the involvement of various stakeholders, a
5 specific switchover date in the statute may be necessary to minimize confusion and potential
6 financial losses. This is crucial as it will be challenging to synchronize all systems
7 simultaneously, which could result in an unknown number of instances where consumers receive
8 a 10-cent refund on a 5-cent container or vice versa.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

10 **Offered Amendments:** None

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

TROY TANIGAWA, COUNTY ENGINEER

BOYD GAYAGAS, DEPUTY COUNTY ENGINEER



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Allison Fraley

Solid Waste Division Chief

County of Kaua'i

Department of Public Works

Before the

Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Friday, January 24, 2025

Via Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

In consideration of

Senate Bill 184

Relating to the Deposit Beverage Container Program

Honorable Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kaua'i Department of Public Works **offers testimony in support of Senate Bill 184**, which proposes to increase the deposit and refund value for beverage containers from 5 cents to 10 cents under the deposit beverage container (DBC) program.

The DBC Program is one of the most effective waste diversion programs in Hawai'i because it provides a financial incentive to recycle. While the program had high recycling rates of nearly 79% in 2009, the rate has declined continually over the years, and recent rates have been less than 60%. This decrease in DBC recycling may be attributed to the declining value of a nickel. We believe that increasing the refund rate to 10 cents per container will significantly increase participation in this program.

In 2017, Oregon increased its redemption fee/refund from 5 cents to 10 cents and raised its rates from 64% to a current high of 90.5%. Oregon utilizes streamlined options and technology to increase the convenience of redemption, however, there is no doubt that an increased value on container redemption will drive up the redemption rate DBC in Hawai'i.

Increased recycling of DBC containers will reduce the amount of recyclable material that is currently landfilled. We estimate that Kaua'i could increase recycling by hundreds of tons and millions of containers each year. An increase in the redemption rate of this decades-old program will refresh and revitalize recycling throughout the State.

Kaua'i County's 2021 Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan Update recommended that the County support legislation increasing container deposit fees. The County of Kaua'i Department of Public Works would like to thank the Committee for considering our testimony in **support** of Senate Bill 184 and the opportunity to submit this testimony.



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Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: January 24, 2025

TIME: 1pm

RE: SB184 RELATING TO THE DEPOSIT BEVERAGE CONTAINER PROGRAM

Position: Oppose

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 184

Relating to the Deposit Beverage Container Program

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 184, which proposes increasing the deposit and refund value under Hawai'i's Deposit Beverage Container Program from 5 cents to 10 cents. While the intent to improve recycling rates is commendable, this proposal would entrench the limitations of the current redemption system and impose additional financial burdens on residents. A more effective solution would be to reallocate the program's surplus to expand curbside recycling statewide and establish a sustainable long-term funding model through property taxes and utility fees.

Key Concerns with SB 184

1. Inequities and Accessibility Challenges in the Current System

- **Double Payment Burden:** Many Hawai'i residents already fund curbside recycling through property taxes or utility fees. Under the current system, they



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also subsidize the redemption program through unredeemed deposits. Increasing the deposit fee to 10 cents would exacerbate this inequity, disproportionately affecting those who cannot regularly access redemption centers, including families with multiple jobs, rural residents, and those without reliable transportation.

- **Limited Redemption Accessibility:** Redemption centers often require travel and operate on restricted schedules, making them inconvenient for many residents, especially working-class residents who don't have time to use redemption centers. This inequitable system penalizes those who rely on curbside recycling, which is already paid for through other means.

2. Inefficient Use of Program Funds

- **High Costs of Redemption Fees:** In 2022, **94% of program expenditures**—\$26.15 million—were spent on handling and redemption fees, covering payments to centers and shipping recyclables out of state (Hawai'i State Auditor, 2023). These costs dominate the program budget while failing to address accessibility issues.
- **Untapped Surplus:** The program currently holds a **\$57.08 million surplus**, primarily from unredeemed deposits and excess fees (Hawai'i State Auditor, 2023). This surplus represents a significant opportunity to modernize Hawai'i's recycling infrastructure and transition to a more efficient system.

3. Impact on Curbside Recycling Programs

- **Proven Success of Honolulu's Program:** Honolulu's curbside recycling program collects **71,000 tons annually**, generating \$1.5 million in net revenue and demonstrating the feasibility of a convenient and effective recycling model (City & County of Honolulu, 2011). Expanding this program statewide would improve access and increase participation rates.
- **Revenue Loss to MRFs:** Deposit systems divert valuable materials like aluminum and PET plastics from curbside recycling, reducing revenue for materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and increasing costs for municipalities. Approximately **30% of MRF revenue** comes from these materials (National Waste & Recycling Association, 2023).

4. Challenges for Neighbor Islands



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- **Hawai'i County (Big Island):** The county has made strides toward innovative waste reduction strategies, including a **\$1.52 million EPA grant** awarded in 2023 to implement a reusable foodware and refillable bottle system in Hilo (U.S. EPA, 2023). However, the lack of comprehensive curbside recycling infrastructure limits overall recycling potential.
- **Kaua'i County:** Currently, there is no curbside recycling on Kaua'i, and residents rely on drop-off sites. A 2015 feasibility study estimated that constructing a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) would cost \$12.2 million. Expanding curbside services would require a combination of federal grants and local funding (Spectrum News, 2015).
- **Maui County:** Maui provides limited curbside recycling in certain areas and relies heavily on drop-off centers. Expanding curbside coverage could significantly improve recycling participation and reduce the strain on existing infrastructure.

5. Burden of Recent Reporting Requirements

- Recent changes to the HI-5 program's reporting requirements for manufacturers have created significant administrative burdens and costs. Streamlining these processes through an online automated reporting system with AI-driven auditing tools would improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Proposal for Reallocating Resources

Phase 1: Utilize the Surplus to Expand Curbside Recycling

- **Expand Statewide Coverage:** Begin by expanding Honolulu's 3-cart curbside recycling system (blue for recyclables, gray for trash) to underserved neighborhoods on O'ahu and to neighbor islands. Expanding coverage could divert an additional **8,000 tons of recyclables annually**, generating **\$500,000 in new revenue** (City & County of Honolulu, 2011).
- **Close Service Gaps:** Address streets on O'ahu and communities on neighbor islands that currently lack curbside recycling, ensuring equitable access for all residents.

Phase 2: Transition to Sustainable Funding



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- **Property Taxes and Utility Fees:** Replace the deposit fee system with sustainable funding through property taxes and utility fees, ensuring all residents contribute equitably to recycling programs.
- **Phase Out Redemption Fees:** As curbside recycling becomes the primary method of recycling, reduce and eventually eliminate handling and redemption fees, lowering overall program costs.

Phase 3: Modernize Program Operations

- **Streamlined Reporting:** Implement a centralized online reporting platform with AI auditing tools for manufacturers and redemption centers. This would reduce administrative costs, improve data accuracy, and free resources for program improvements.

Benefits of a Statewide Curbside Recycling Model

1. **Increased Recycling Participation:** Curbside recycling is more convenient and accessible than redemption centers, leading to higher recycling rates and greater landfill diversion.
2. **Cost Efficiency:** By transitioning away from redemption fees, the program could reduce its reliance on costly handling payments.
3. **Equitable Funding:** Funding through property taxes and utility fees ensures that all residents contribute proportionally to the recycling system.

Conclusion

Hawai'i has the opportunity to modernize its recycling system by reallocating the \$57 million program surplus and transitioning to a statewide curbside model funded through property taxes and utility fees. This approach would eliminate the inefficiencies and inequities of the current redemption system, improve access for all residents, and reduce long-term costs. I respectfully urge the legislature to oppose SB 184 and prioritize these transformative strategies.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



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References

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- Hawai'i State Auditor. (2023). *Financial and Program Audit of the Deposit Beverage Container Program*. Office of the Auditor, State of Hawai'i.
- National Waste & Recycling Association. (2023). *Bottle Bills' Impact on Curbside Recycling Programs*.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2023). *EPA Announces \$1.52 Million Grant for Reuse Systems in Hilo*.
- Spectrum News. (2015). *Kaua'i Materials Recovery Facility Feasibility Study*.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Increase Beverage Container Deposit

BILL NUMBER: SB 184

INTRODUCED BY: AQUINO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Increases the deposit and refund value for beverage containers from 5 cents to 10 cents under the deposit beverage container program.

SYNOPSIS: Amends section 342G-105, HRS, to increase the deposit beverage container fee and refund value from 5 cents to 10 cents.

Makes conforming changes to sections 342G-110, -111, and -112, HRS.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 31, 2026.

STAFF COMMENTS: The bill proposes to double the current 5 cents advance deposit fee for beverage containers. We question the need for an increase in light of the fraud risk that is being addressed by the agency currently per Auditor's Report No. 23-07, and in light of the buildup of the fund balance, as stated in the following article that the Foundation recently prepared:

Those Nickels Add Up!

By Tom Yamachika, President

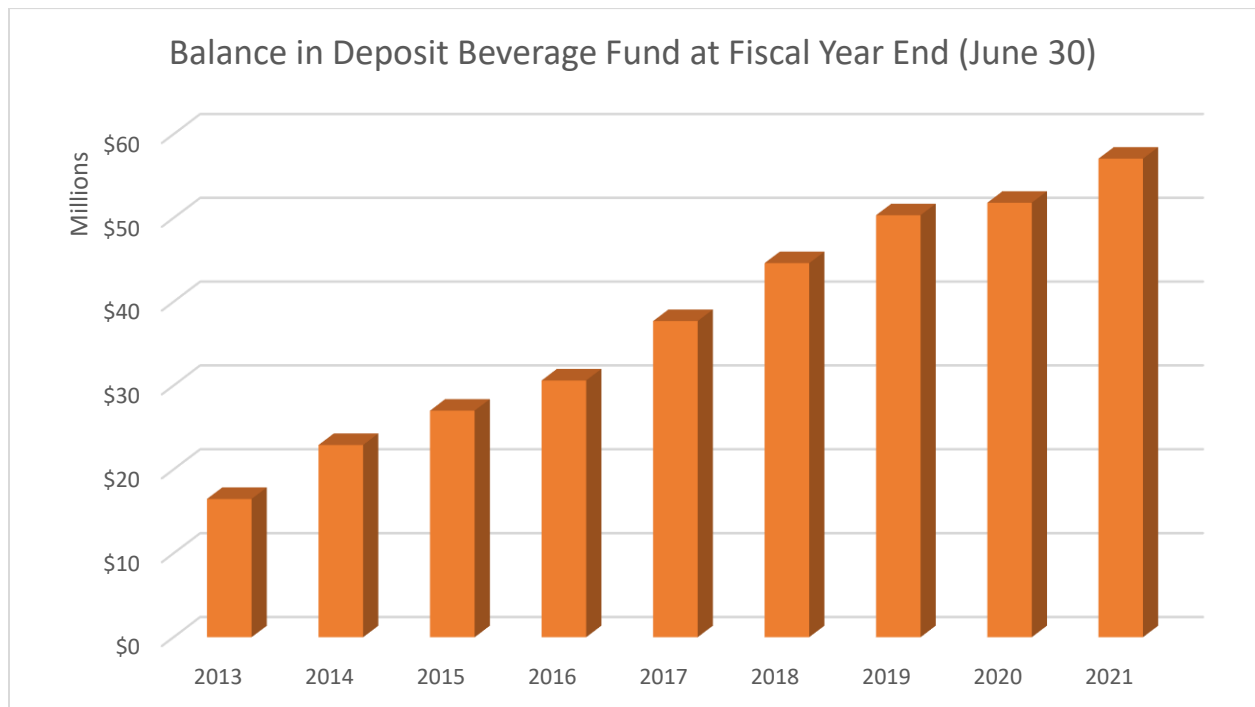
By now, most of us who go to the grocery store are used to seeing a bunch of little charges whenever we buy bottled or canned beverages. We get nicked for a nickel per container as a "deposit," which theoretically is refundable if you bring the container back to the store or to a recycling center; and for a penny per container as a "fee," which seems to disappear into a black hole.

The nickels and the pennies get collected by the Department of Health. The Department's Solid Waste Branch runs the deposit beverage container program. The program collects a certain amount per container, like similar programs in other states, to promote container recycling. So, the pennies and the nickels go into a special fund, called the Deposit Beverage Container Deposit Special Fund (am I the only one who is bugged by the word "Deposit" appearing twice in that fund name?), established by HRS section 342G-104. The special fund is there to provide the money to run the program, making it self-sufficient, but there is a wrinkle. Section 342G-104(c) says, "Any funds that accumulate in the deposit beverage container deposit special fund shall be retained in the fund unless determined by the legislature to be in excess." Meaning that the legislature expected that there would be extra money at some point, at which time the fund would be ripe for raiding.

But that assumes that the State doesn't get raided first. We have written about this program and this fund before. The State Auditor's Report No. 19-08 told the story of a staff worker for the accounting firm hired to do the fund's financial audit. He dropped off a few bottles at the redemption center and received a whole 61 cents for his trouble. But the redemption center altered the log and claimed against the fund for reimbursement of 69 DOLLARS. And that wasn't the only instance of fraud found.

The Department of Health also complained that fraud was a serious and real risk for the program, but we heard no stories of folks going to the hoosegow over this.

In the meantime, even with the fraud risk, the nickels in the fund started to pile up. Here is what the fund contained at the end of each fiscal year from 2013 to 2021:



Source: Office of the Auditor, Reports No. 15-02, 17-02, 19-08, 21-13, 23-07.

As of the end of 2021, there was more than fifty million bucks in the fund apparently sitting around doing nothing.

Now that our legislative session has started, therefore, we have an important message to lawmakers: "Hey! Those of you numbskulls who want to raise taxes! Shut up, take this \$50 million, and leave us taxpayers alone! And, by the way, try not to spend it all in one place!"

Digested: 1-22-2025



**Written Testimony of
David Thorp, American Beverage Association
Before the Senate Committee Agriculture and Environment
In Opposition to S.B. 184: Relating to the Deposit Beverage Container Program
January 24, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition to S.B. 184 – relating to the deposit beverage container program.

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

Valuable Aluminum and PET Plastic Beverage Containers:

Aluminum and PET plastic beverage containers are valuable and in high demand. Aluminum cans can be infinitely recycled into new cans. Recycled PET plastic bottles can be remade into new bottles – reducing the use of new plastic - and are highly sought after by producers of many products including outerwear makers and carpet manufacturers.

First Step: Implement Auditor's Recommendations to Improve Efficiency / Reduce Fraud

The Deposit Beverage Container Program was established in 2002 to encourage recycling by charging consumers a 5-cent deposit that is refunded when the plastic bottles or aluminum cans are returned to a redemption center.

Section 342G-107, Hawaii Revised Statutes, requires the Office of the Auditor to conduct a management and financial audit of the Department of Health's Deposit Beverage Container Program in fiscal years ending in even-numbered years.

The state auditor's office is legally required to review the state's beverage container recycling program every two years as a result of the program's persistent problems. The office has issued nine reports on the program since 2005, and it has been a recurring finding that the program "is not being run efficiently or effectively." The bi-annual audits also reveal that the program is susceptible to fraud since the beginning.

One example of potential fraud from a state audit showed the HI-5 redemption program paid out \$6.2 million in deposit funds between over two fiscal years for nearly 7.5 million pounds of material that could not be accounted for.

Improve HI-5 Program Before Doubling Cost to Consumers

Before Hawaii consumers are asked to double the deposit they pay for beverages, the HI-5 program needs reforms that will improve the accessibility, convenience and efficiency of the program while also reducing the program's fraud problem. We should not be increasing the burden on consumers to prop up a faltering HI-5 program that the state auditor has repeatedly stated is in need of significant improvements to work effectively.

Sincerely,

David Thorp

David Thorp
American Beverage Association
Vice President, State Government Affairs West



To
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. Richards III, Vice Chair

January 24, 2025; 1:00 pm
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

From: Terry G. Telfer, President, Reynolds Recycling, Inc.

Testimony in Support of SB184 Relating to Deposit Beverage Container Program

Aloha Honorable Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Reynolds Recycling, as Hawaii's largest HI-5 Deposit Beverage Container recycler, **strongly supports SB 180.**

When Hawaii had a bottle return law in the 1960s the deposit at that time was 5 cents for glass bottles, and the deposit on beverage containers is still the same. In consideration of the decline of the value of that nickel deposit in the past 60 years, it would make sense to bring the deposit value to an appropriate "modern" level. Currently 60% of Deposit states have deposits of 10 cents on all or some items.

Besides recycling convenience, and increasing the range of items that have deposits, the actual value of the deposit is one of the main reasons that consumers think it is not worth recycling. Many consumers say "5 cents is not worth standing in line for", which is one reason that the recycling rate in Hawaii is at the currently low level of 55% (*2023 rate). Bringing the deposit value up to 10 cents would be a start towards changing that mindset, and positively impacting the recycling climate in Hawaii.

Because of the above we **strongly support SB 184.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

(*Container Recycling Institute, Bottle Bill Resource Guide, www.container-recycling.org)

SB-184

Submitted on: 1/21/2025 3:00:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/24/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Dame	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB184. The bill provides no justification for raising the Deposit Beverage Containers Fee. As I recall, the Deposit Beverage Containers Fee Fund has an excess of money, thus we should not be raising costs on consumers.

Thank you.

TO: Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Natalie Iwasa
808-395-3233

HEARING: 1 p.m. Friday, January 24, 2025

SUBJECT: SB184, Beverage Container Deposit Increase - **OPPOSED**

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to provide testimony on SB184, which would increase the beverage container fee from 5 cents to 10 cents effective January 1, 2026. I oppose this bill.

All counties in Hawaii have recycling programs. There is no longer a need to “motivate” people to recycle beverage containers by charging a fee.

Rather than increase the fee, it should be removed altogether, along with the one cent that goes to cover administrative costs.

Please vote “no” on SB184.

Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Re: SB184 - RELATING TO THE DEPOSIT BEVERAGE CONTAINER PROGRAM

Aloha e Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards, III,

My name is BCN and I am a first year Global Environmental Science major at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am also an avid waterman, with canoe paddling as my main choice sport and a bit of dabbling in surfing, while also being an all-around lover of the islands I call home. I am writing today to advocate for the passing of SB184.

There is an 'ōlelo no'eau stating, "E mālama i ke kai, a e mālama i ke kai ia 'oe": take care of the ocean and the ocean will care for you. Humans have not cared for our world and the future of our oceans are in danger. All over the island, and especially on the windward coasts, microplastics from water bottles, fishing nets, etc., litter our shores. Recent studies have also shown that microplastics have been detected in placentas, meaning the future of our state and of our country are born with plastics in their bodies, with unknown consequences. Instead of our oceans teeming with life, we have our beloved honu and beautiful fish suffocating themselves on plastic, dying due to human pollution. With the state of our environment that my generation finds itself immersed in, I am constantly fearing for what my own future children will be able to experience in the water.

Passing this bill would create a further incentive for consumers to recycle, since inflation has made \$0.05 a rather insignificant sum of money. For the consumers, \$0.10 per can/bottle would allow them to make money faster, generating a positive externality effect of lesser pollution, as these bottles would then be properly processed and recycled. Consumers cause up to 60%-95% of plastic pollution due to the predominance of single-use plastics (bags, bottles, etc.), and creating an incentive for consumers to properly process their waste will help our environment in the long run. Protecting the environment will allow the future generations a hospitable place to live in.

I strongly urge you to schedule to pass SB184.

Mahalo nui loa,
BCN

Testimony in Support of SB184

Dear Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Herbert Richards III, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of Senate Bill 184, which proposes increasing the deposit and refund value for beverage containers from 5 cents to 10 cents under the Deposit Beverage Container Program.

This measure has the potential to significantly benefit our community and environment. By doubling the deposit value, SB184 provides greater financial incentive for individuals to recycle which can have many environmental, economic, and community benefits.

Environmental Benefits:

- Increased deposit value will likely result in higher recycling rates, leading to a cleaner environment.
- Litter often pollutes our local beaches and parks which harm ecosystems and marine life. With more incentive to recycle, we can mitigate this issue and preserve Hawaii's unique and fragile environment.

Economic Benefits:

- A cleaner environment directly supports Hawaii's food systems and agriculture by reducing waste in our soil and water, which can otherwise harm crop production and fishing practices.
- Tourism is important to Hawaii's economy; cleaner nature and beaches will enhance visitors' experiences and reinforce our reputation as a beautiful travel destination, which is important to sustaining the industry.

Community Benefits:

- SB184 aligns with our collective responsibility to be stewards of the land and to protect it for our future keiki. Educating communities about the value of recycling, combined with stronger incentives, can emphasize Native Hawaiian values of sustainability.
- The bill also provides a tangible benefit to those who rely on recyclables as a supplemental source of income.

As a Native Hawaiian concerned about the longevity of our 'āina, I strongly support this measure for its potential to create a healthier and more sustainable future for Hawaii. I respectfully urge you to pass SB184 and take this important step toward protecting our islands.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,
Sage Huston