



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Thursday, April 14, 2022
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325
on
SCR 57/SR 52

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO ENDORSE THE NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY GLOBAL COMMITMENT AND THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO SET TARGETS TO FULFILL THE NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY GLOBAL COMMITMENT.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **offers comments** on SCR 57/SR 52, which requests the Governor to endorse the new plastics economy global commitment and the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to set targets to fulfill the new plastics economy global commitment.

The OPSD-Statewide Sustainability Branch previously participated in the State's Plastic Source Reduction Working Group and strongly supports the recommendations of that working group report.

Additionally, as the publisher of the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan, and lead agency of that State's Sustainability Branch representing both sustainable development and climate change policy development, OPSD strongly supports the development of circular economic policies for the State of Hawai'i.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development would like to emphasize that for the past 5 years, the Statewide Sustainability Branch is only staffed with 1 state employee, and notes that this Concurrent Resolution does not provide additional staff support to the agency, or budgetary support to the branch. It is not feasible for the State of Hawai'i's government to continue to rely upon 1 sole employee for this extensive amount of work.

However, if provided a sufficient amount of staffing, including digital support staffing, the Statewide Sustainability Branch looks forward to reviewing and managing the Aloha+ Challenge Targets, the State of Hawai'i's UN Sustainable Development Goals Targets, the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan's progress, and other sustainable targets like the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment as proposed in this resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SCR-57-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/12/2022 8:35:18 AM

Testimony for EEP on 4/14/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawai'i and Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawai'i and Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **SUPPORT!**

SCR-57-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2022 4:08:47 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/14/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our islands are the endpoint for plastic production and waste. It gets to Hawaii and has nowhere else to go, piling up on our beaches, by our roadsides, in our landfills, and breaking down into microplastics that we eat and breathe, and absorb into our bodies, having unknown effects on our health. We need to start the process of change.

SCR-57-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/12/2022 10:33:47 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/14/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elijah Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While bans on plastics may seem environmentally virtuous, the practical consequences of such policies are more than meets the eye.

Plastics can be damaging to the environment through pollution and the endangerment of marine wildlife, but they are much more environmentally-friendly with respect to their manufacture. Plastics are far less environmentally-harmful to produce than "reusable" bags made of paper or even fabric. Paper and cloth bags, while labelled "reusable," are rarely, if ever, used frequently enough to outweigh their tremendous environmental cost of production. Using a plastic bag once is far less burdensome on the environment (in terms of emissions) than using a paper bag several or a cloth bag dozens of times. Of course, many of us don't use paper bags more than a few times, nor can we continue to use the same cloth bag for many years (it would take decades of daily usage to make the initial environmental impact of production equivalent equivalent to the environmental impact of single-use plastics over the same period).

The suggestion that bans on plastics are beneficial to the environment is short-sighted. They are symbolically useful but counter-productive. To ban plastics is to send a rhetorical message that pollution is serious and needs to end, but it is also to increase pollution under the guise of sustainability.

As it relates to concerns of pollution and marine wildlife, these harms, which are admittedly significant, may be addressed in other ways, such as better management of the disposal of plastics.

This proposal is ill-informed and ineffective. It seeks to address optics rather than realities, ignoring the pragmatic benefits of plastic-usage.