
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
DIVISION TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE BENEFITS AND COSTS TO
IMPLEMENT EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, the State has a duty to protect the environment,
2 economy, and public health; and

3
4 WHEREAS, globally, only nine percent of all the plastic
5 ever produced has been recycled, while the other
6 ninety-one percent is in landfills, has been incinerated, or is
7 dispersed throughout the environment; and

8
9 WHEREAS, the oceans are now awash with at least one hundred
10 fifty million tons of plastic waste, an amount that researchers
11 say will soon surpass the weight of all the fish in the sea; and

12
13 WHEREAS, a 2019 study reported that, globally, marine
14 plastic is responsible for an estimated lost of \$500,000,000,000
15 to \$2,500,000,000,000 annually in value benefits derived from
16 marine ecosystem services because of direct and indirect impacts
17 on tourism, transport and fisheries, and human health; and

18
19 WHEREAS, Hawaii is especially vulnerable to the loss of
20 natural capital caused by plastic due to the State's reliance on
21 natural resources and marine ecosystems for the tourism and
22 fisheries industries; and

23
24 WHEREAS, plastic micro-particles, which are present in air,
25 water, and food sources, can introduce toxins into a person's
26 body with unknown impacts to human health; and

27
28 WHEREAS, starting in the 1970s, the plastics industry
29 deployed strategic public relations campaigns designed to



1 convince consumers that their individual actions are a solution
2 for plastic pollution; and

3
4 WHEREAS, the plastics industry and product manufacturers
5 avoided accountability by passing on the external costs of
6 plastic pollution to local, state, and federal governments, as
7 well as local businesses and organizations, through expenditures
8 on waste collection and disposal, habitat mitigation, and damage
9 to natural resources; and

10
11 WHEREAS, China was previously the biggest buyer of
12 recyclables worldwide, but recently implemented new restrictions
13 for imported waste; and

14
15 WHEREAS, as a result, Hawaii's counties are left with fewer
16 and more expensive options for recyclables, leading to even more
17 of these materials ending up in landfills and resulting in
18 growing costs for locally managed recycling programs; and

19
20 WHEREAS, in 2018, Kauai County changed the plastic
21 recycling program to only accept polyethylene terephthalate and
22 high-density polyethylene plastic bottles and jars and
23 eliminated the collection of plastic clamshells and food trays;
24 and

25
26 WHEREAS, in 2019, Hawaii County scaled back the types of
27 materials accepted for recycling, doing away with plastic
28 bottles and containers, paper, and non-corrugated cardboard; and

29
30 WHEREAS, the high cost of recycling and the narrowing
31 market for recyclable materials presents an opportunity to pivot
32 away from a reliance on individual recycling and toward a model
33 that places more responsibility for the end-of-life management
34 on the producer; and

35
36 WHEREAS, producers should internalize the environmental and
37 public health costs of their products and design better products
38 and systems that reduce waste at the source and encourage the
39 reuse of more waste materials; and

40
41 WHEREAS, making producers responsible for the true cost of
42 the goods they create will incentivize innovation in packaging



1 design that minimizes impacts, promotes the use of recycled
2 content in plastic packaging, and promotes reuse; and

3
4 WHEREAS, an extended producer responsibility program in the
5 State would serve these goals, reduce taxpayers' burden, and
6 ensure better waste management services; now, therefore,

7
8 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
9 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
10 of 2021, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Health
11 Environmental Management Division is requested to conduct a
12 study on the benefits and costs to implement extended producer
13 responsibility in the State; and

14
15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health
16 Environmental Management Division is requested to analyze the
17 following in its study:

- 18
19 (1) The implementation of extended producer responsibility
20 in the State, independent of other state and federal
21 packaging extended producer responsibility
22 initiatives;
23
24 (2) The implementation of extended producer responsibility
25 packaging in the State in conjunction or synchronicity
26 with other state and federal initiatives;
27
28 (3) The best science available relating to extended
29 producer responsibility and best packaging practices;
30
31 (4) The costs and benefits to all stakeholders, including
32 but not limited to the environment, consumers,
33 taxpayers, government, and businesses;
34
35 (5) The potential benefits and drawbacks of implementing
36 extended producer responsibility for packaging in the
37 State;
38
39 (6) The feasibility of implementing extended producer
40 responsibility for packaging in the State;



- 1 (7) The projected timeline for the implementation of
- 2 extended producer responsibility for packaging in the
- 3 State;
- 4
- 5 (8) The expected savings, if any, for the State and
- 6 counties in costs relating to waste management and
- 7 recycling in the implementation of extended producer
- 8 responsibility packaging in the State; and
- 9
- 10 (9) Any other issues the Department of Health deems
- 11 relevant; and
- 12

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that for the purposes of the study,
14 the Department of Health Environmental Management Division is
15 requested to consult with other state departments and community
16 organizations; and

17

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health
19 Environmental Management Division is requested to utilize
20 \$150,000 for the purposes of the study; and

21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health
23 Environmental Management Division is requested to submit a
24 report of its findings and recommendations, including any
25 proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty
26 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024; and

27

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
29 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director
30 of Health, Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Mayor of
31 the County of Hawaii, Mayor of the County of Maui, and Mayor of
32 the County of Kauai.

