



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

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB1993 HD1
RELATING TO BEVERAGE CONTAINERS.**

REPRESENTATIVE MARK M. NAKASHIMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

Hearing Date: February 13, 2024

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
2 Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department's) appropriations and
3 personnel priorities. If implemented as proposed, the Department may require additional
4 positions to be established.

5 **Department Testimony:** This measure (1) creates a grant pilot project for reverse vending
6 machines (RVMs); (2) removes an exemption that effectively requires retailers of a certain size
7 in a high-density population area to operate a redemption center even if located within two miles
8 of a certified redemption center; and (3) removes the requirement for the state and county to
9 evaluate the need for a redemption center due to the exemptions specified in subsection
10 342G-113(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS).

11 The Department recognizes and supports the idea of encouraging more consumers to
12 redeem their deposit beverage containers by improving their accessibility to redemption centers.
13 We offer the following comments on this measure.

14 With regard to the (RVM) grant program, we note that drafting and adopting
15 administrative rules takes time and would prevent immediate implementation of the program.
16 We also note that several longtime Certified Redemption Center (CRC) operators utilized RVMs
17 in their facilities in the early days of the Deposit Beverage Container (DBC) Program but
18 eventually discontinued their use due to staffing and logistical issues. Currently, there are no
19 CRC operators that utilize RVMs in their operations.

1 For the amendment on lines 1 to 2, page 3 “of the kind, size, and brand sold by the
2 dealer;” we note that this conflicts with subsection 342G-114(d)(1), HRS, which requires CRCs
3 to accept all eligible deposit beverage containers. Implementing this change could result in
4 reduced customer convenience by allowing retailer operated CRCs to accept only the DBC
5 products that they sell. This may require customers to travel to multiple CRCs (as they did to
6 purchase the deposit beverages) to redeem their containers and seemingly contradicts the overall
7 intent of this measure.

8 For the proposed elimination of the high density population area exemption (lines 11 to
9 14, page 3) We note that §11-282-03, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) defines “High-
10 Density population area” to mean all United States Postal Service Zip Code areas on Oahu,
11 which contain three or more dealers of 5,000 or more square feet of interior space; or a resident
12 population of 17,500 or greater. This covers the majority of the island with the exception of the
13 North Shore, Kahuku to Kaaawa, and Waimanalo. A “Rural area” means a non-high-density
14 population area. The Department estimates that there are approximately 125 retailers of at least
15 5,000 square feet in high-density population areas. We have no estimate on the number of
16 retailers that maintain less than 5,000 square feet of space.

17 For the proposed change in the square footage exemption on page 4, lines 1 and 2, we
18 recognize that the requirement to operate a CRC may pose financial and logistical hardship for
19 smaller “Mom and Pop” retailers.

20 For the proposed deletion beginning on page 4, line 18 through page 5, line 3, the
21 Department notes that we currently use the authority provided to contract for redemption
22 services on Hawaii Island and Lanai.

23 Finally, with regard to the implementation date for this measure we recommend that the
24 Legislature allow time for dealers to develop a plan for a redemption center, negotiate leases,
25 enter contracts with recyclers, obtain necessary permits and certifications, purchase equipment,
26 and hire staff.

27 **Offered Amendments:** None

28 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1993-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 9:33:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/13/2024 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arwen Revere	Wild Kids Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee members,

My name is Arwen Revere, and I am a high school student from Kailua, and a member of the environmental organization Wild Kids, which I am representing today. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill No. 1993 HD1, which proposes the establishment of additional regional centers for the redemption of refillable beverage containers. As an organization, we believe that this bill is a vital step towards enhancing the state's commitment to environmental sustainability and reducing plastic waste.

The provision to repeal certain exemptions for beverage dealers from the requirement to operate redemption centers and the amendment to the types of containers they must accept for redemption are commendable actions. This move aligns with the global imperative to reduce the environmental impact of single-use plastics and encourages responsible waste management practices within our communities.

We are particularly enthusiastic about the inclusion of a reverse vending machine pilot program in this bill. Establishing a program to deploy reverse vending machines through grants from the deposit beverage container deposit special fund is an innovative approach that not only facilitates convenient and efficient recycling but also encourages public participation in sustainable initiatives. The utilization of such technology can significantly contribute to achieving our recycling goals while promoting a cleaner and greener Hawai'i. By prioritizing the establishment of additional regional centers and implementing a pilot program for reverse vending machines, we are investing in the future health of our communities and the preservation of Hawai'i's natural beauty.

We urge the committee to support House Bill No. 1993 HD1 and take decisive action to strengthen Hawai'i's position as a leader in sustainable practices. By expanding regional centers for beverage container redemption and embracing innovative solutions like reverse vending machines, we can collectively work towards a more environmentally conscious and resilient future.

Mahalo for your attention to this critical matter, and I appreciate your dedication to fostering a sustainable and thriving Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Arwen Revere



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Gary Okimoto, Safeway Hawaii, *Chair*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Vice Chair*
Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 13, 2024
TIME: 2:05
PLACE: Room 329

RE: HB1993 HD1 Relating to Beverage Containers

Position: Comments

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee,

HFIA believes that encouraging recycling of HI-5 eligible containers, and all types of recyclable material is an important goal. Regional centers for the redemption of refillable beverage containers may prove to be an important step in encouraging recycling of these containers. We note that there was not a reason given in the measure for removing the distance exemption and we do not believe this will be an effective way to address some of the issues with the deposit beverage container program.

In regards to promoting increased recycling of HI-5 eligible beverage containers we encourage legislators to read the auditor's summary and full report here:

<https://auditor.hawaii.gov/summary/report-no-19-08-financial-and-program-audit-of-the-department-of-healths-deposit-beverage-container-program-june-30-2018/>

Lack of additional redemption centers close to existing redemption centers is not among the problems identified in the report, and removing the distance exemption is not one of the auditor's recommendations.

It is important to understand that most retailers do not control the space in which they operate their stores. Landlords have strict rules about what types of behavior is allowed on their

property. In many cases landlords do not sanction the collection of waste, including recyclables, in large quantities inside or outside the premise of a retail location.

The retail businesses that supply their communities with beverages in HI-5 recyclable containers have not been identified as a source of any of the many problems noted in the auditor's report. However, recent changes and implementation of some of the auditor's recommendations have added reporting requirements for these companies and created a substantial administrative burden. Removing the distance exemption would create yet another burden for these businesses, one which will not address the core problems with the program.

We encourage the legislature to continue to look for ways to improve recycling, and address already identified problems with beverage container recycling in Hawaii, in ways that do not place more unnecessary burdens on the food and beverage retailers in our communities.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify.