

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOLS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the department of
2 education accumulates a large amount of food waste and rubbish
3 from two hundred ninety-six schools. Most of this food waste
4 and rubbish ends up in landfills, significantly impacting the
5 State's environment and finances. The legislature further finds
6 that the State does not have a state-wide food waste law.

7 Although the city and county of Honolulu enacted its
8 municipal waste ban requiring owners of food establishments to
9 collect and recycle food waste, our landfills are nearing
10 capacity at an alarming rate, requiring immediate action to
11 reduce waste.

12 According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),
13 food waste is the single largest component in landfills and
14 makes up about twenty-two per cent of municipal solid waste,
15 contributing substantially to greenhouse gas emissions. During
16 the public informational meeting on the Waimanalo gulch sanitary
17 landfill in August 2024, the city and county of Honolulu



1 department of environmental services said that the department of
2 education contributes the most food waste to the Waimanalo gulch
3 landfill.

4 Composting food waste with digesters would produce clean,
5 mulch free of coconut rhinoceros beetles for local farmers,
6 addressing the community concern over unclean mulch from
7 commercial sources such as nurseries and big-box stores. Mulch
8 from commercial sources has been linked to spreading invasive
9 species.

10 The legislature believes that integrating food digesters
11 into schools aligns with Hawaii's sustainability goals, sets a
12 powerful example for state-run institutions such as hospitals,
13 prisons, and other public facilities, and demonstrates
14 leadership in waste reduction and environmental stewardship.

15 The nutrient-rich soil produced from composting school food
16 waste could directly benefit local farms and gardens, fostering
17 a circular economy that supports sustainable agriculture and
18 reduces dependency on imported soil amendments.

19 The legislature also believes that implementing food waste
20 composting in schools would empower Hawaii's youth to be leaders
21 in sustainability, promote hands-on environmental education, and



1 foster a culture of responsibility for the aina (land), while
2 decreasing the amount being taken to the landfill and thereby
3 reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

4 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of
5 education to establish a food waste composting pilot project at
6 the Nanakuli high and intermediate school.

7 SECTION 2. The department of education shall establish a
8 food waste composting pilot project at the Nanakuli high and
9 intermediate school. For purposes of the pilot project the
10 department of education shall collaborate with environmental
11 organizations, local farmers, and waste management experts to
12 ensure the proper implementation, monitoring, and utilization of
13 the compost produced.

14 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
17 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
18 year 2026-2027 for the food waste composting pilot project at
19 Nanakuli high and intermediate school, including for the
20 acquisition and maintenance of food digesters.



S.B. NO. 790

1 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
2 of education for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

4

INTRODUCED BY: *Samantha Dolack*



S.B. NO. 790

Report Title:

Composting; DOE; Food Waste Composting Pilot Project; Nanakuli High and Intermediate School; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Department of Education to establish a food waste composting pilot project at Nanakuli High and Intermediate School. Appropriates moneys.

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