

JAN 21 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

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

1 PART I

2 SECTION 1. This Act shall be known and be cited as the
3 "Hawaii Environmentally Friendly Schools Act".

4 SECTION 2. The legislature finds that the State's public
5 schools generate large amounts of daily waste, much of which
6 consists of single-use plastic food service items such as
7 utensils, trays, and packaging. National studies estimate that
8 United States schools produce more than fourteen thousand tons
9 of solid waste each day, with nearly half composed of disposable
10 food materials. The legislature believes that the continued use
11 of these items in public schools contributes to plastic
12 pollution that burdens the State's waste management systems and
13 undermines efforts to promote sustainability in public
14 facilities.

15 The legislature further finds that plastic pollution poses
16 a direct threat to the State's ocean resources, coastal
17 ecosystems, and community well-being. Reducing single-use



1 plastics in schools will help the State fulfill its
2 constitutional duty to conserve and protect the State's natural
3 beauty and all natural resources for future generations.

4 The legislature further finds that the State has taken
5 significant steps in recent years to address climate change and
6 promote environmental stewardship through statewide initiatives
7 such as the establishment of a "green fee" tax on tourists to
8 fund environmental protection and climate change resilience
9 projects, the establishment of the Hawaii Climate Change
10 Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, and the State's commitment
11 to achieve net-zero emissions and one hundred per cent renewable
12 energy by 2045. These efforts reflect the State's recognition
13 that local action is critical to protect its fragile ecosystems
14 and island communities from the accelerating impacts of global
15 climate change.

16 The legislature believes that expanding sustainability
17 practices within public schools complements these statewide
18 initiatives by reducing waste, conserving energy, and
19 cultivating environmental responsibility in the next generation.
20 Establishing environmentally friendly schools will ensure that



1 public schools contribute directly to the State's long-term
2 vision of climate resilience and ecological balance.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish an
4 environmentally friendly schools initiative within the
5 department of education to integrate environmental stewardship
6 into school curricula, establish sustainability programs, phase
7 out single-use plastics, and increase availability of water
8 bottle filling stations on public school campuses.

9 PART II

10 SECTION 3. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended by adding a new section to part II, subpart B, to be
12 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

13 "§302A- Environmental stewardship; curricula plan;
14 public schools. (a) The department shall:

15 (1) Develop and implement a statewide environmental
16 stewardship curricula plan for public school students
17 in through grade; and

18 (2) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, ensure that
19 each public school offers an environmental stewardship
20 course during each school year.



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1 (b) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, each public
2 school shall offer an environmental stewardship course for
3 students in through grade. The curriculum shall
4 emphasize:

5 (1) The protection and sustainable management of the
6 State's natural resources, including land, water, air,
7 minerals and energy sources;

8 (2) The reduction of pollution and waste; and

9 (3) The Hawaiian cultural value of malama aina as a
10 guiding principle of environmental stewardship.

11 (c) By June 30, 2028, and by each June 30 thereafter, the
12 superintendent shall report to the legislature and board on the
13 environmental stewardship courses and content offered during the
14 previous school year at the schools in each complex area."

15 SECTION 4. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended by adding a new section to part II, subpart C, to be
17 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

18 **"§302A- Sustainability programs; recycling and**
19 **composting.** (a) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the
20 department shall establish and administer sustainability
21 programs, including recycling and composting programs, to be



1 implemented at public schools to reduce solid waste and promote
2 environmental stewardship among students.

3 (b) Each public school shall participate in the program or
4 develop and implement a recycling and composting plan consistent
5 with department guidelines.

6 (c) The department may provide funding, technical
7 assistance, and educational materials to support program
8 implementation and shall coordinate with county solid waste
9 management agencies and nonprofit organizations to facilitate
10 collection and processing.

11 (d) The department may adopt policies or rules to
12 implement this section, including requirements for waste
13 separation, collection, and reporting.

14 (e) The department shall submit an annual report to the
15 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
16 each regular session, beginning with the regular session of
17 2028, that includes a summary of school participation, program
18 expenditures, and waste diversion results achieved under this
19 section."



SECTION 5 Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part VI, subpart A, to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§302A- Single-use plastic food service products; prohibited. (a) Beginning July 1, 2027, no public school shall distribute or use single-use plastic utensils, trays, straws, or other disposable plastic food service products in any school cafeteria.

(b) The department may authorize limited exemptions if the department determines that a suitable nonplastic or reusable alternative is not reasonably available, or if the use of single-use plastic is necessary for health, safety, or disability-related accommodation.

(c) The department shall adopt policies and procedures to implement this section, including a timeline for the transition to reusable or compostable alternatives, standards for acceptable products, and guidance for schools on procurement and disposal practices.

(d) The department shall submit a report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2028 that includes the status of



implementation, any exemptions granted, and recommendations for
further reducing waste in public school food service
operations."

SECTION 6. (a) The department of education shall increase
the number of water bottle filling stations available on public
school campuses to promote waste reduction and student health.

(b) Beginning July 1, 2028, each public school shall have
at least one operational water bottle filling station accessible
to students and staff; provided that implementation shall be
subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this
purpose.

(c) The department of education may contract with
qualified vendors or public agencies for the design,
procurement, installation, and maintenance of water bottle
filling stations.

(d) The department of education shall adopt policies to
ensure stations are regularly maintained, sanitary, and
accessible to students, and may prioritize installation at
schools with the highest enrollment or limited access to potable
water.



1 (e) The department of education shall submit a report to
2 the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening
3 of the regular session of 2029 that includes the number of
4 refillable water bottle filling stations installed, schools
5 served, and progress toward statewide implementation.

6 (f) For the purposes of this section, "water bottle
7 filling station" means a plumbing fixture connected to the
8 potable water distribution system and sanitary drainage system
9 that is designed and intended for filling personal use drinking
10 water bottles or containers at least ten inches in height. A
11 "water bottle filling station" may be separate from or integral
12 to a drinking fountain and may incorporate a water filter and a
13 cooling system for chilling the drinking water.

14 PART III

15 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
17 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to be
18 expended as follows:

19 (1) \$ to establish public school sustainability
20 programs, including recycling and composting programs;



(2) \$ to implement the phase-out of single-use plastic food service products in public school cafeterias; and

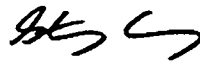
(3) \$ to procure and install water bottle filling stations in public schools.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 8. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

INTRODUCED BY:





S.B. NO. 2213

Report Title:

DOE; Environmentally Friendly Schools Act; Environmental Stewardship Curriculum; Sustainability Programs; Recycling and Composting Program; Single-Use Plastic Products; Water Bottle Filling Stations; Reports; Appropriations

Description:

Requires the Department of Education to establish a statewide Environmental Stewardship Curricula Plan for public schools for certain students. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, requires public schools to offer an environmental stewardship course for certain students. Requires the Department of Education to establish and administer sustainability programs, including recycling and composting programs, to be implemented at public schools. Beginning 7/1/27, prohibits the use or distribution of single-use plastic utensils, trays, straws, and other disposable plastic food service products in public school cafeterias. Beginning 7/1/28, requires each public school to have at least one operational refillable water bottle filling station accessible to students and staff. Requires reports to the Board of Education and the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

