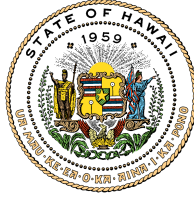


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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LAND
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Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Thursday, January 29, 2026
9:30 AM

State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 644
RELATING TO SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

House Bill 644 proposes to prohibit certain businesses from selling or distributing certain disposable or single-use food ware and beverage service items, including items containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) beginning on January 1, 2026. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

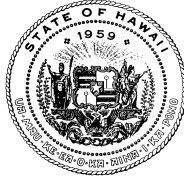
The Department recognizes the deleterious impacts of plastic debris on wildlife and their habitats as a primary natural resource issue throughout the State of Hawai'i. Plastic in the environment degrades both land and ocean-based habitat and impacts wildlife (aquatic and terrestrial) through ingestion, entanglement, smothering, and transport of invasive species. In addition, each step involved in the manufacturing, distribution, and ultimate disposal of single-use plastic products (e.g., bottles and containers) produces greenhouse gas emissions and will increase the current impacts of climate change on our aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. This measure would help reduce the plastic debris load entering Hawai'i's environment and contribute to the improved health of our wildlife and their habitats.

As this measure underscores, PFAS pose a significant threat to human health. PFAS have also been detected in our environment. PFAS in water and soil can lead to uptake in plants and animals. PFAS have been found in sea turtles, whales, dolphins, and Hawaiian monk seals around the state. Seafood consumption has been identified as one of the major contributors

of PFAS to the human diet. Recent studies have found PFAS in various samples of the U.S. seafood supply. While more research is needed to understand the full impact and effect of PFAS on the environment and its connection to human health, this measure would help to reduce the negative impacts and effects.

The Department recognizes that Chapter 342H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health (DOH) and defers to DOH regarding implementation of this proposed program. The Department also notes that this measure was introduced last year, and that certain dates should be updated accordingly.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



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 HB0644
RELATING TO SINGLE-USE PLASTICS**

REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hearing Date, Time, and Room Number: 01/29/2026, 09:30 am, 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined. This measure may impact the priorities identified in the
2 Governor's Executive Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department's)
3 appropriations and personnel priorities.

4 **Department Position:** The Department offers comments.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Management Division, Solid and Hazardous Waste
6 Branch (EMD-SHWB) provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

7 This measure proposes to prohibit businesses where food or beverages are packaged
8 and sold on the business' premises for individual consumption from using, selling, or
9 distributing disposable or single-use plastic food ware, beverage cups, lids, or other food
10 containers. The new statute would also prohibit such businesses from using, selling, or
11 distributing disposable or single-use food ware, beverages cups, lids, or other food containers
12 that contain regulated perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

13 The Department supports measures that protect public health and the environment by
14 minimizing PFAS exposure pathways and reducing waste contributed to landfills. However, we
15 recommend waiting until the packaging needs assessment required by Act 103, SLH 2025 is
16 complete before implementing new packaging prohibitions. Act 103, SLH 2025 requires the

1 Department to conduct a statewide needs assessment and establish an advisory council with
2 relevant stakeholders to determine what would be needed to transition to a more circular
3 system with less waste generation and more reuse, and the necessary infrastructure to sort and
4 locally process recyclable materials through an extended producer responsibility program for
5 packaging materials, including the items listed in this prohibition. As part of the assessment, the
6 Department plans to investigate what types of compostable packaging are currently in the
7 waste stream and evaluate potential contaminants of concern, including PFAS. Therefore, we
8 recommend using the results of the needs assessment to inform future prohibitions of
9 disposable or single-use plastic food ware, beverage cups, lids, or other food containers. The
10 Department is required to submit the completed needs assessment to the legislature by
11 December 31, 2027.

12 The Department respectfully requests clarification on how the term “prepared food” is
13 intended to be used. The term is defined but never used. We also request clarification on the
14 items prohibited. In the phrase “single-use plastic food ware, beverage cups, lids, or other food
15 containers” it is unclear if the term “plastic” applies to food ware only, or to the other items
16 listed as well. For example, does the proposed prohibition apply to plastic beverage cups only,
17 or to all beverage cups, including paper cups?

18 **Offered Amendments:** The Department recommends changing the referenced year from 2026
19 to 2027 and placing this language in Hawai‘i Revised Statutes Chapter 321 (HRS 321) instead of
20 the currently proposed HRS 342H in order to provide the Department the broadest flexibility to
21 promulgate rules relating to public health and the environment. Placing the language in HRS
22 342H, Solid Waste Pollution, may hinder the Department’s authority to promulgate
23 administrative rules that touch on public health issues that are not related to solid waste.
24 Additionally, HRS 321 Part XLVII, Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Prohibited,
25 already contains language prohibiting food packaging with intentionally introduced PFAS.

26 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**Testimony to the House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, January 29, 2026
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

RE: HB644 Relating to Single-Use Plastics

Aloha e Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber provides comments on House Bill 644 (HB644), which prohibits businesses where food or beverages are packaged and sold on the business' premises for individual consumption from using, selling, or distributing certain disposable or single-use food ware and beverage service items, including items containing PFAS.

HB644 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Economic Action. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

However, the Chamber is concerned that, as drafted, HB 644 would increase operating and compliance costs for local businesses—particularly small and locally owned food service and retail establishments—at a time when many are already facing significant economic challenges. UHERO's latest economic forecast indicates that businesses continue to struggle amid slowing visitor activity and broader economic softness. These pressures are compounded by reduced federal funding, supply-chain disruptions, and tariff instability. The Chamber also has concerns regarding implementation and infrastructure readiness. Although the measure allows limited use of compostable alternatives, compliance depends on regional collection programs and local processing facilities that are not yet consistently available statewide, particularly on neighbor islands. Without adequate infrastructure, transition support, or implementation flexibility, the measure risks shifting system-level gaps onto individual businesses and creating compliance challenges beyond their control.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



Date: January 27, 2026

To: Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

From: Solid Waste Reduction Task Force of Hawaii Environmental Change Agents (HECA) -

Re: HB 644 - Relating to Single-Use Plastics

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

The Solid Waste Reduction Task Force submits testimony **in support of HB 644**, which bans single-use plastic products and accelerates Hawaii's transition toward reusable, refillable, and reduction-based systems. HB 644 is a forward-looking policy that would meaningfully reduce plastic consumption while supporting the emerging reuse and refill marketplace.

We particularly support the exemptions for refillable containers and county-declared emergencies, which appropriately recognize existing circular systems and operational realities. Consistent with the Zero Waste Hierarchy, the Solid Waste Task Force supports policies that prioritize waste reduction and reuse ahead of recycling and composting as the preferred approaches to managing solid waste.

We do **not support the exemption for compostable plastics**, as compostable plastics remain single use, are rarely composted at scale in Hawaii, and risk displacing reuse and reduction pathways rather than complementing them.

We are willing to **support a delayed implementation date of a few years** to ensure a smooth transition and compliance, particularly as Hawaii explores expanded composting capacity, bottling producer responsibility models, and packaging EPR systems.

This bill represents an important step toward a more circular, resilient, and sustainable economy. We appreciate the committee's consideration and respectfully urge passage of HB 644.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

~Solid Waste Reduction Task Force of HECA
Lindsey Sabec-Kozuma



To: The Honorable Representative Nicole Lowen, Chair, the Honorable Amy Perruso, Vice Chair, and Members of the Energy and Environmental Protection Committee.

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: **Hearing HB644 RELATING TO SINGLE-USE PLASTICS**

Hearing: Thursday January 29, 2026 9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Energy and Environmental Protection Committee!

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean. The Climate Protectors Hawai'i seeks to educate and engage the local community in climate change action, to help Hawai'i show the world the way back to a safe and stable climate.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB644!

Hawai'i is uniquely and very negatively impacted by the explosive growth of waste globally and locally from single-use plastic cups, lids, and food containers. This waste fouls our ocean and beaches and kills marine and other wildlife, especially as it breaks down into microplastics.

Ocean plastic waste collects, concentrates, and conveys pathogens, bacteria, viruses, toxic algae, persistent organic pollutants, and heavy metals into our food chain and causes human infections and harm to coral. A study of 159 reefs in the Asia-Pacific has shown a 4 to 89 percent increase in coral disease likelihood when in contact with plastic (Lamb. et al., Science January 2018). Many plastic food ware items also contain PFAS that may leach into food and be very harmful to human health. Numerous states have passed laws restricting the use of PFAS in food packaging.

Plastic pollution is very expensive to remove and detrimental to the future of Hawaii's economy and environment. Plastic is usually made from fossil fuels and its production is contributing an ever-increasing amount to climate heating that endangers coral reefs, threatens our shorelines with sea level rise, and is leading to violent storms and wildfires. **Action is needed to shift away from single-use disposable plastic to more reuse and refilling of foodware and beverage service items to a more circular system.** The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i support the bill's exemptions for reusable, refillable containers and emergencies.

In recognition of current concerns about affordability and impact on small businesses, the Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i would be willing to propose a three year delay of implementation until July 1, 2029 (rather than January 1, 2026), to ease the transition away from single-use plastic cups, lids, and food containers. But, a transition from single-use plastic is indeed needed to protect public health and the environment and Hawaii's economy in the long term!

Please pass this bill to protect public health and the environment!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)



Mike Palmer, Chair – Ho'okipa Partners **Andy Huang, Past Chairman** – L&L Hawaiian Barbecue
Tambara Garrick, Treasurer – Hawaii Farm Project **Victor Lim, Government Relations Lead** – McDonald's
Address: 2909 Wai'ala'e Avenue #22, Honolulu, HI 96826

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Date: January 28, 2026

To: Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

From: Victor Lim, Legislative Lead

Subject: HB 644 Relating to "Single-Use Plastics"

The Hawaii Restaurant Association representing over 4,000 Eating and Drinking Place locations in Hawaii would like to offer the following comments for you.

1. Oahu and Maui has already implemented similar but not identical bills in their respected counties. The primary difference is that Maui doesn't regulate lids.
2. The cost difference of the fiber and PLA (plant-based resin) is about 2 to 3 times more than the products they replace. This resulted in higher prices for businesses and ultimately higher prices for the consumers.
3. The alternate products are usable but the heat tolerance vs plastics is much lower. Many businesses have switched to reusable plastic containers that are even more expensive, leading to even higher costs for both businesses and consumers. . We hope that these are being reused instead of going into the trash.
4. Bill 644 states the effective date as January 1, 2026, and we assume that this is in error and should be January 1, 2027. We would like to request that this be moved to 2028 to allow businesses to use up their inventories.
5. Contrary to popular belief, supply chain is still erratic due to the many municipalities mandating changes around the world and occasional hiccups in supply still do happen.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to share our concerns.



NATIONAL MARINE TEAM

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

January 29, 2026 9:30AM Via Videoconference

In **SUPPORT of HB 644**: Relating to Single Use Plastics and PFAS

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our 3.8 million members and supporters nationally, the Sierra Club's National Marine Team **strongly supports HB 644**, which would prohibit the use of plastic and non-nature biodegradable bioplastic foodware and cups, unless there is a regional commercial composting facility that can process the material, and prohibits the intentional addition of PFAS to all take out food ware. This bill builds on Act 152 which regulates PFAS in the most common types of food packaging containing PFAS, and specifically identifies wraps and liners, plates, food boats, and pizza boxes as types of food packaging that cannot contain PFAS in Hawai'i. However, additional types of food packaging can contain PFAS, including items like clamshell containers and molded fiber bowls. While great successes, both Act 152 and the FDA's voluntary phase out of PFAS containing food contacting substances with manufacturers in 2024 are incomplete. At least 11 states have a comprehensive ban on intentionally added PFAS in to go food ware, including California, New York, and Minnesota.

Plastics and non-nature biodegradable bioplastics remain one of the most littered and pernicious items in our environment, breaking down into microplastics that enter the food chain and harm our ecosystems. The truth about bioplastics is that they can include toxic additives to increase their performance, and some bioplastics like PLA are only compostable in industrial facilities. They are sold as a sustainable solution but they can take hundreds of years to decompose, effectively behaving like traditional plastic in the environment. Furthermore, there is no opportunity to recycle PLAs like traditional plastics, so their best case scenario is to end up in the landfill or incinerated, neither of which is ideal for Hawai'i's already challenging *opala* problem. Worse, some people may litter these plastics believing they will decompose in the environment.

While Hawai'i has been a proud leader in phasing out single use plastics, in particular at the county level, many of the strongest single use plastic bans around the country also include non-nature biodegradable bioplastics like PLAs, which Hawai'i's county bans do not. But we are more impacted by plastic litter than virtually anywhere else in the country, as we are surrounded

by 360 degrees of stunning ocean and delicate marine ecosystems and species. Furthermore, our state's economy depends greatly on the continued health of our oceans and marine resources. As a beautiful island culture, we must consider everything we put into the environment.

This bill continues to allow nature biodegradable foodware and cups, including the widely used paper to go boxes and cups, nature biodegradable plastics, natural rubber, bamboo, sugarcane, coconut husk, cassava, naturally occurring polymers such as proteins or starches or other biomass, fully recyclable aluminum and glass, or reusable containers. Businesses will be able to continue using their current distributors that already offer food ware and cups that would be compliant with this bill and existing similar laws.

Furthermore, HB 644 can help reduce the pressure on West O'ahu, which continues to unfairly bear the brunt of the Waimanalo Gulch landfill. Home and nature compostable food ware will reduce the volume entering the landfill, and fewer products with PFAS will reduce PFAS leakage into the *lepo*.

With this bill, Hawai'i has the opportunity to significantly make a difference in protecting our most valuable natural resources for future generations. Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB 644**. I am available to answer any questions you may have or work with you on this bill.

Mahalo,
Leilei Joy Shih-Casado, Ph.D.
Chair, National Marine Team, The Sierra Club
joyshih@hawaii.edu

January 28, 2026

To: The Honorable Nicole Lowen, Chair
Members, House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

From: Lindsay Stovall
Director, State and Regulatory Affairs

Re: **HB 644 – OPPOSE**

The American Chemistry Council (ACC) respectfully opposes HB 644, which would prohibit businesses that package and sell food or beverages on their premises from using, selling or distributing single-use plastic foodservice ware.

ACC membership includes the leading suppliers and manufacturers of plastics foodservice packaging products. ACC and its members support efforts to reduce litter and marine debris through performance-based solutions and outcomes.

ACC believes there is an opportunity to craft meaningful and impactful packaging and foodservice ware policy that considers the necessary role of packaging, including performance needs and assesses a multitude of attributes (e.g. recyclability, waste prevention, material efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions, collection and processing infrastructure, end markets, etc.) of all packaging materials. Combined, these considerations will help arrive at a policy solution that makes sense environmentally and provides the business community with practical and implementable compliance obligations. Policies that focus on banning a single material, rather than performance and system outcomes, risk unintended consequences such as increased material use, higher emissions, and greater waste.

A practical first step toward creating a more circular system for foodservice ware packaging made from all materials is to first understand the current system. This includes the types and quantities of foodservice ware in the waste stream, current recycling and composting rates, available sorting and processing infrastructure, end markets for collected materials, and the funding necessary to improve recovery rates. Simply banning plastic foodservice ware does not automatically mean those alternatives will be recycled or composted.

To that end, HB 750 was enacted last year, which requires the Department of Health conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to “determine what would be needed to transition to a more circular system with less waste generation, more reuse and the necessary infrastructure to sort and locally process recyclable materials through an extended producer responsibility program for packaging materials and paper products.” As directed by HB 750, the findings of the needs assessment must be submitted to the Legislature by December 31, 2027.

Moving to ban single-use plastic foodservice ware before the Department of Health has completed — or even begun — the needs assessment required by HB 750 is premature and risks undermining the Legislature’s own directive for a coordinated, data-driven approach to improving packaging circularity.

For the above stated reasons, ACC respectfully urges you **to vote NO on HB 644**. Thank you in advance for considering our views. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 916-448-2581 or via email at Lindsay_Stovall@americanchemistry.com. You may also contact ACC's Hawaii based representative Ross Yamasaki at 808-531-4551 or via email at ryamasaki@808cch.com.



January 28, 2026

Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
Committee On Energy & Environmental Protection
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Support With Amendments for HB 644: A Bill Relating to Single-Use Plastics

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of [Upstream](#) in **support of HB 644, with suggested amendments**. Upstream is a US-based non-profit and leading change agency for the reuse movement across the US and Canada. We advocate for innovative solutions to help people, communities and businesses shift from single-use foodware and packaging to reusables.

Reusable packaging and foodware have proven environmental, social, and economic benefits – that’s why reuse is at the top of Hawai’i’s waste hierarchy. **Reuse prevents waste at the source and outperforms single-use systems across nearly every environmental metric**, including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, water use, resource extraction, plastic pollution, and energy consumption. Reusable foodware for customers who dine on-site also [saves businesses money 100% of the time](#), with average small business savings between \$3,000 and \$22,000 per year. We have been encouraged to see this committee prioritize reuse in the past and we are pleased to see reusables emphasized in this bill as a solution for Hawai’i’s food service sector.

However, we do suggest a few changes to strengthen this bill. First, **we recommend that compostable plastics are removed from the exemptions in Chapter 342H(b)**. While Upstream appreciates and supports the exemption for reusable containers,

the exemption for compostable plastics is problematic. Although single-use plastics are often the primary focus of public concern, other single-use items, [including compostables and bioplastics](#), pose significant environmental and health risks as well. Compostables require more energy, water, toxic chemicals, and greenhouse gases to produce than even single-use plastics. When not properly processed in a commercial composting facility, compostables emit the potent greenhouse gas, methane, as they break down in landfills. They also cause increased contamination at composting facilities, preventing the resulting compost from being certifiably organic, and frequently [contain harmful chemicals such as PFAS](#).

Second, Upstream **supports the timely passage of HB 644 with only a minor modification to the effective date.** While we recognize the effective date of this Act must be adjusted to allow for feasible compliance as it is currently back-dated to the first of January this year, we do not support requests made by others to delay implementation until composting infrastructure is more widespread. Waiting to build composting infrastructure before advancing this bill would undermine its waste reduction goals by allowing businesses to continue using single-use, disposable foodware instead of transitioning to reusables. Further delay would also postpone urgently needed action to reduce single-use packaging, which continues to harm Hawai'i's environment and communities.

HB 644 could position Hawai'i as a national leader in reuse and waste reduction policy. We thank you for your consideration of our suggested amendments and urge you to pass this bill.

Please feel welcome to contact us at sydney@upstreamsolutions.org or kara@upstreamsolutions.org.

Mahalo for all you do,

Sydney Harris, Upstream Policy Director
Kara Stepanik, Upstream Policy Intern



COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

Testimony for HB644

Subject: Testimony in **Strong Support of HB644** – Relating to Single Use Plastic

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso and Members of the Committee,

I am Mendy Dant, President of Fair Wind Cruises and Kona Sunrise Charters, a family-owned snorkel business in Kona since 1971, and I strongly support HB644.

Our business has used only reusable or compostable food-serving products and materials since 2009. Using reusable products that are cleaned and sanitized in commercial dishwashers is more cost-effective than single-use products. Cardboard food containers work very well for take-out meals. The change from plastic straws has been adopted, as have reusable grocery bags in place of the single-use plastic bags.

Change is often fought, but in the end, when it is the right thing to do, people adapt, and problems are solved, or at least moved to a better place.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,
Mendy Dant
President
Fair Wind Cruises
Kona Sunrise Charters
Keauhou Bay, Kona, Hawaii



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: January 29, 2026

TIME: 9:30am

RE: Relating to Single Use Plastics

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.

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

HFIA appreciates the intent of this measure. We believe the right solution to the questions of foodware and serviceware will involve creating a unified state level statute that is created with input from each County, waste management agencies, impacted businesses, consumers, and advocacy groups.

Currently, each County has a different set of rules about foodware and serviceware, which presents a range of challenges for businesses operating in multiple counties. If passed, this regulation would add a fifth set of rules for businesses to try and comply with. We're concerned that as written it would not be possible for the majority of food businesses in the state to comply with this measure.

There are some very promising reuse pilot projects taking place around the state involving certain types of serviceware in certain settings. However, there are still a number of



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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

obstacles to widespread adoption that need to be addressed. No county has an operational composting facility at the moment, or public plans to get one running in a time frame that would be compatible with this measure. Consequently, if passed as is, this measure would mean that the vast majority of food businesses in the state would have no legal options for foodware or serviceware.

As the dialogue about this issue progresses, we look forward to working with the Legislature, County Councils, State and County Agencies, and other stakeholders to find solutions that work for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



January 29, 2026

LATE

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Conference Room 325
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: HB 644 - Relating to single-use plastics

The Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) is North America's leading authority on compostable products and packaging, certifying over 50,000 products from collection bags to food containers. For more than two decades, BPI has given composters and consumers confidence in compostability claims with the backing of science-based standards, while enabling authentically sustainable choices for brands and packagers. BPI champions a systems-wide transition to the circular bioeconomy through rigorous testing, policy advocacy, and industry collaboration, building the infrastructure for "A World Without Organic Waste"—where food scraps and certified compostable packaging become resources. BPI is a non-profit 501(c)(6). To learn more, visit www.bpiworld.org and follow us on LinkedIn.

BPI appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 644 and we are pleased to see Hawaii working to combat the negative impacts caused by conventional single-use food service ware. We have concerns, however, about how shortsighted language will impact compostable packaging and therefore oppose this bill unless amended.

First, the bill separates plastic compostables from non-plastic compostables, creating a false dichotomy between different materials. All products labeled as compostable should undergo the same certification process, based on the same conditions, regardless of their primary substrate. Most paper and fiber-based products, for example, contain adhesives, inks, binding material, or linings that if not certified, are likely non-compostable. As such, we encourage the committee to include all compostable material types by defining and using the term "compostable products" instead of "compostable plastics." This will ensure that all products labeled as compostable are certified by an independent third-party to meet the ASTM D6400 and D6868 standards.



Second, language establishes inequitable requirements for compostable plastics versus non-plastic compostables or refillables; use of compostable plastics is permitted only if there is regional access to a collection program and local facility that actively accepts and processes compostable plastics, while other compostable products are restricted only if they contain PFAS above 100ppm. While we appreciate the intent in requiring that there be an established collection program and facility to accept and process compostables, this requirement could hinder market growth opportunities for manufacture and use of compostables in the state. This in turn could discourage both food scrap diversion and development of collection programs and composting facilities. We'd note that refillables are subject to neither end-of-life requirements, despite also being dependent on collection systems, nor PFAS limits.

To provide the time and resources necessary to create robust infrastructure, whether for composting or refill, BPI urges the committee to remove the collection stipulation:

~~(A) By 2035, There is regional access to a collection program
for those plastics; and
(B) By 2035 A local facility actively accepts,
manages, and processes the plastics; and~~

And, we request that any PFAS limit should apply to all food service ware including reusable and refillable items and not just disposable or single-use items.

BPI welcomes the opportunity to discuss these topics in more detail. Please reach out with any questions or to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely

Kimby Davis

Policy Associate

Kimberly.Davis@bpiworld.org

HB-644

Submitted on: 1/27/2026 6:19:04 PM

Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support with comments. The date has already passed. Many businesses need to inventory and plan for future purchases. The law of unintended consequences: costs passed on to customers and affects business and revenue.

Maybe consider some sort of grace period. Our supplies come from the mainland. To be fair that date is reckless.

The intent is appreciated.

After 1/1/2026, prohibits businesses where food or beverages are packaged and sold on the business' premises for individual consumption from using, selling, or distributing certain disposable or single-use food ware and beverage service items, including items containing PFAS.

HB-644

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 7:47:54 AM

Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and Thankyou for considering this very important bill.
Please support HB644.

With few exceptions , single use plastic should be avoided. It is unnecessary. The afterlife is longer than the use it was intended for.

thankyou for considering this important step in reducing our toxic waste.

regards,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i

HB-644

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 9:07:27 AM

Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Mitsumori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members,

My name is Michele Mitsumori, and I SUPPORT HB644, which bans single-use plastic foodware containers and helps accelerate Hawai‘i’s transition toward reusable systems and waste reduction.

I support the exemptions for refillable containers and county-declared emergencies, which recognize existing systems and operational realities.

However, I do not support the exemption for compostable plastics, which are still single-use and are rarely composted at scale in Hawai‘i. So they are neither reusable nor reducing waste.

I also support delaying the implementation date -- currently set at January 1, 2026 -- by a few years to ensure a smooth transition and compliance. It is critical that the various systems -- including composting and expanding producer responsibility, both existing and emerging -- interact and reinforce each other.

Thank you for your leadership and support,

Michele Mitsumori
Hilo 96720

HB-644

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 9:44:36 AM

Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a Hawai'i Island resident who cares about our 'aina, this is a common-sense bill that should be supported. If Hawai'i is unable to recycle most plastic waste, we should do everything possible to reduce plastic use and provide positive incentives for businesses to use reusable containers.

Reduce-Reuse-Recycle: If we are unwilling to fund recycling, we must reduce.

Businesses always complain about the cost of changing systems, but there are easy alternatives. Meanwhie our landfills keep growing. In addition, plastic pollution is having really bad effects on our marine life.

Please support this bill. If necessary, change the date to january 1, 202,7 so businesses have a year to change their practices.

Mahalo nui,

HB-644

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 12:14:57 PM

Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stuart Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stuart Coleman, and I'm writing to support HB 644, which bans single-use plastic food ware containers, while also accelerating Hawaii's transition toward reusable, refillable systems, and waste reduction. At the very least, they should not be allowed inside restaurants where reusable plates and utensils can be reused. I support the exemptions for refillable containers and county-declared emergencies, but I have concerns about the exemption for compostable plastics. Compostable plastics are still single-use, and they are rarely composted at scale in Hawaii. I also support a delayed implementation date of a few years to ensure a smooth transition and compliance, particularly as Hawaii explores expanded composting capacity, bottling producer responsibility models, and packaging EPR systems. Mahalo for your consideration of this bill and for your help in reducing single-use plastic waste in Hawaii, especially with our overfilled landfills.

Aloha, Stuart Coleman, Hibiscus Pl., Hon., HI 96815

HB-644

Submitted on: 1/28/2026 1:22:09 PM

Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to decrease harmful plastics from our island environment.

Mahalo,

Diane Ware

Volcano Hi 96785-0698

HB-644

Submitted on: 1/29/2026 7:17:11 AM

Testimony for EEP on 1/29/2026 9:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	Cares	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support