
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON
RECYCLABLE, BIODEGRADABLE, AND COMPOSTABLE LABELING IN THE
STATE TO DETERMINE IF THE LABELING IS ACCURATE AND NON-
DECEPTIVE.

1 WHEREAS, there is no national legislation or standard for
2 recyclable, biodegradable, and compostable product labeling; and
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4 WHEREAS, consumers rely on product labeling, including
5 symbols such as the "chasing arrows" triangle and biodegradable
6 and compostable claims, to make informed decisions about
7 recycling and composting; and
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9 WHEREAS, the chasing arrows symbol and biodegradable and
10 compostable product labeling have long been a source of
11 confusion for consumers; and
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13 WHEREAS, the chasing arrows symbol indicates the type of
14 plastic resin used in a product and does not guarantee
15 recyclability; and
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17 WHEREAS, recycling programs see high rates of contamination
18 when items that are generally recyclable are mixed in with items
19 that cannot be recycled; and
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21 WHEREAS, sorting through contaminated items is costly, and
22 often leads to most items being sent to landfills, including
23 materials that could have been recycled if they had been
24 properly sorted; and
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26 WHEREAS, approximately ninety-eight percent of virgin
27 plastics are made from fossil fuels; and
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29 WHEREAS, as renewable energy demand increases across the
30 country, fossil fuel companies are seeking to recoup lost
31 profits by increasing plastics production; and



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2 WHEREAS, in 2019, plastics generated 3.4 percent of global
3 greenhouse gas emissions, and these emissions are projected to
4 increase significantly as plastics production expands, with the
5 plastics industry expected to surpass coal-fired power plants as
6 a major leading source of greenhouse gas emissions; and
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8 WHEREAS, addressing climate change requires reducing
9 greenhouse gas emissions, including by decreasing the production
10 of virgin plastics and increasing plastic recycling rates; and
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12 WHEREAS, most packaging or products labeled as
13 biodegradable or compostable are designed to break down in
14 industrial composting facilities and will not break down under
15 home composting conditions; and
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17 WHEREAS, access to industrial composting facilities is
18 limited, and, even where such facilities exist, food and yard
19 waste are often prioritized over biodegradable and compostable
20 packaging and products due to contamination risks and capacity
21 constraints; and
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23 WHEREAS, as a result, biodegradable and compostable
24 packaging and products often end up in landfills, which are not
25 conducive to biodegrading or composting, leading to these
26 materials either persisting or breaking down anaerobically,
27 which can produce greenhouse gas emissions; now, therefore,
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29 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
30 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
31 of 2026, that the Department of Health is requested to conduct a
32 study on recyclable, biodegradable, and compostable labeling in
33 the State to determine if the labeling is accurate and non-
34 deceptive; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study includes:
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- 38 (1) An assessment of products sold or distributed in
39 Hawaii that have the chasing arrows symbol, including
40 an evaluation of the types of such products that are
41 or are not actually recyclable in the State;
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- 1 (2) An assessment of products sold or distributed in
2 Hawaii that are labeled as biodegradable, including an
3 evaluation of the types of such products that are or
4 are not actually biodegradable in the State;
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- 6 (3) An assessment of products sold or distributed in
7 Hawaii that are labeled as compostable, including an
8 evaluation of the types of such products that are or
9 are not actually compostable in the State;
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- 11 (4) An examination of the distinction between home
12 compostable and industrial compostable products, and
13 whether such products meet recognized industry
14 standards, such as ASTM International standards for
15 compostability;
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- 17 (5) An analysis of the gaps between consumer expectations,
18 product labeling practices, and actual recycling and
19 composting capabilities and outcomes in the State;
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- 21 (6) An analysis of common contaminants that may be
22 introduced into the recycling stream, composting
23 facilities, or the environment due to misleading or
24 unclear recyclable, biodegradable, and compostable
25 labeling;
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- 27 (7) A review of existing standards, definitions, and
28 labeling guidelines for recyclable, biodegradable, and
29 compostable products, including but not limited to
30 ASTM International standards, the Federal Trade
31 Commission's Green Guides, and any relevant state or
32 municipal guidelines; and
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- 34 (8) Recommendations for recyclable, biodegradable, and
35 compostable labeling standards or guidelines to
36 enhance clarity, reduce contamination, and improve
37 recycling and composting rates; and
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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
40 requested to submit a report of its findings and
41 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the



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1 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
2 the Regular Session of 2027; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
5 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health.

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OFFERED BY: *Miss E. Lane*

MAR 16 2026

