

Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawai'i

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DATE: 1st February, 2018

TO: Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Suzanne Frazer, President, Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawai'i

RE: **TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2498**
Relating to polystyrene foam containers
Committee hearing on Thursday 1st February, 2018 at 2:30PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I am writing on behalf of Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawai'i (B.E.A.C.H.) in strong support of SB2498 which bans the use and sale of polystyrene foam food containers. B.E.A.C.H. strongly encourages the committee to pass this bill.

Polystyrene or number 6 plastic, is one of the three most harmful plastics in terms of chemicals. Polystyrene is made from petroleum and contains benzene which is carcinogenic. It leaches styrene, a chemical that is toxic to the brain and nervous system and has been found to adversely affect red blood cells, liver, kidney, stomach and cause cancer in animal studies.

Styrene is released especially when the container or cup is subjected to heat, so styrofoam containers and cups are a very bad choice for hot food and drinks. Oily and acidic foods and drinks also facilitate the migration of styrene from the container into the food/drink.

Polystyrene food containers have also been shown to have estrogenic activity (EA) meaning that the chemicals from polystyrene act like a synthetic form of estrogen or block the action of naturally occurring estrogen in the body and therefore cause endocrine disruption. In humans, chemicals having EA can cause prostate and breast cancer and many reproductive health problems. Unborn children, babies and young children are especially sensitive to low doses of chemicals having EA.

In the polystyrene plastics industry, workers have been found to have higher incidences of cancer including leukemia and suffer from many adverse health effects from the inhalation of styrene. Styrene causes neurotoxicity and therefore affects people's nervous system and also impairs the immune system.

Polystyrene containers are harmful to the environment. Plastic does not biodegrade. It does not have a timeline for disappearing. Plastic lasts forever. When plastic gets into the ocean it accumulates additional poisons such as dioxins, DDT, DDE and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Styrofoam has been found inside of sea birds and fish. The ingestion of plastic not only causes blockages and starvation, but the animals and birds are harmed through the uptake of toxic chemicals such as styrene which leaches from the ingested plastic and accumulates in the

fatty tissues of the animal. Styrene is also found in the fatty tissues of humans. In a 1982 study by the EPA (the National Human Adipose Tissue Survey), 100% of Americans studied had styrene in their fatty tissues.

We need to do everything we can to reduce plastic on beaches and in the ocean in order to save marine life. Polystyrene cups, containers and pieces of styrofoam can and do blow and wash into the ocean which is why polystyrene containers and cups need to be banned. Polystyrene foam is lightweight, easily breaks into pieces and is wind blown. Picking up small broken pieces of polystyrene foam in wind at the beach is difficult. According to Dr. Anthony Andrady, out of all the types of plastic, number 6 - polystyrene breaks down quicker when in sea water.

There are good, compostable alternatives to polystyrene foam available that are made from sugar cane and other vegetable fibres that do not contain benzene, styrene or petroleum. We also recommend that people bring their own containers made of glass, stainless steel or ceramic for food and drinks.

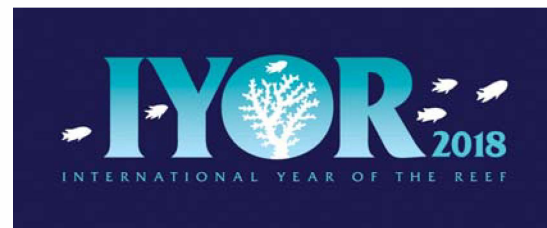
Your leadership is needed to help protect the people of Hawai`i, visitors, marine life, the food chain and the environment from the harmful effects of polystyrene foam. There is no better way to celebrate the 2018 International Year of the Reef than to pass this important bill.

Please accept this as written testimony in strong support of this bill.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Frazer.
President,
B.E.A.C.H.



Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawai`i is an all volunteer, non-profit organization that brings awareness and solutions to marine debris through environmental education, plastic reduction/litter prevention campaigns, and marine debris removal and research in order to protect marine life, sea birds and the ocean/coastal environment.

SB-2498

Submitted on: 2/1/2018 11:52:41 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/1/2018 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elizabeth Bishop		Support	No

Comments:

SB-2498

Submitted on: 2/1/2018 1:04:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/1/2018 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jacobby Young		Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill for the reduction of pollution and devastation of the environment that is caused by styrofoam. We need to place preference on materials that are reusable or that can decompose properly. Thank you.

SB-2498

Submitted on: 2/1/2018 11:11:32 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/1/2018 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maisa Thayer		Support	No

Comments:

It is important that we create a ban of foam containers, not only because of the environmental impact, but because of the reflection of our morals as a state. A law like this will change more people's daily impact and take the pressure off of consumers to make conscious choices. It allows every interaction between person and vendor to be one of piece of mind. I personally choose to not buy food from vendors that do sell food in foam containers. Hawaii must support this because it is ignorant to not to see the effects of our past unconcious decisions surfacing onto our shores.

Here is a list of some of the cities which have already implementing this policy:

- New York City (and several other cities in New York)
- Takoma Park, MD
- Seattle, Washington
- Washington DC
- Miami Beach, FL
- Freeport, Maine
- Portland, Maine
- Nantucket (City & County), Massachusetts
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Portland, Oregon (and several other Oregon cities)
- Los Angeles County and San Francisco, California (and many other cities and counties in CA)

Here are some facts on foam that make it obvious as to why we need to elimatate this from our islands:

- It does not biodegrade. It may break into small pieces, even minuscule pieces. But the smaller EPS gets, the harder it is to clean up.
- It is made of fossil fuels and synthetic chemicals. Those chemicals may leach if they come in contact with hot, greasy or acidic food. Yes, they keep your coffee hot – but they may also add an unwanted dose of toxins to your drink.
- Animals sometimes eat it. Turtles and fish seem to mistake EPS for food, and that can kill them. Not only can they not digest it, but the foam could be full of poisons that it has absorbed from contaminants floating in the water.

- It can't be recycled. Some commercial mailing houses may accept packing peanuts, but for the most part community recycling centers do not accept throwaway foam food containers.

SB-2498

Submitted on: 2/1/2018 1:42:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/1/2018 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
naomi egami		Support	No

Comments:

Honorable Senator Gabbard,

Supporting Senate Bill 2498, for our Honu, majestic creatures of the ocean, large & small, and the environment.

SB-2498

Submitted on: 2/1/2018 11:34:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/1/2018 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nicole Chatterson		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Agriculture and Environment Committee,

My name is Nicole Chatterson, and I am graduate student at UH Manoa studying local waste management, and I am in strong support of SB2498. If this committee chooses to allow the continued use of polystyrene, a strong statement will be made that the millions of public tax dollars (see 2016 DOT waste plan) spent on cleaning styrofoam from storm drains is negligible. At the same time, not moving forward with this ban makes a strong statement about the legislature's disregard for public and environmental well-being and alignment with private interests. Not passing this ban says to your constituents that: 1) the ethics of the business community is not important and, 2) the legislature is uneducated about the vast, affordable range of alternative products to styrofoam.

As a public servant your job is to protect the well-being of your constituents and the state, banning styrofoam and thus upholding ethical business practice would send a strong message that the citizens of Hawaii are indeed the priority of the state.

The basis of my support is twofold:

1. There are currently **plenty of alternatives** to Polystyrene food containers that restaurants have access to. While some of the options are still marginally more expensive, if we expand the demand by requiring restaurants to switch to more sustainable alternatives, the **price will go down**. This is a basic tenant of capitalist economics, and recognizing this phenomenon removes any doubts that business will survive a mandated switch from styrofoam. Over **140 + Ocean Friendly Restaurants** in Hawaii have **already committed to not using polystyrene**. This demonstrates that it is economically feasible for restaurants to not use foam.
2. The scientific community and general public are clear about the **environmental and fiscal implications of continuing to use polystyrene**. For example, we now know that the lightweight nature of polystyrene makes it particularly susceptible to escaping into our waterways and oceans. Further, that when in the water **polystyrene (like other plastics) accumulates ambient pollutants**, which creates an especially toxic material that **marine creatures are ingesting**. Regarding the fiscal implications of polystyrene, the Hawaii State

Department of Transportation produced a trash plan that showed **styrofoam and plastic bags as the top two contributors to the waste stream.**

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Nicole Chatterson