WHEREAS, plastic is a major pollutant in the Pacific Ocean, other bodies of water, beaches, land, and landfills; and

WHEREAS, plastic caps from beverage containers for products such as water, juice, and milk are not recyclable in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the reason plastic caps cannot be recycled in Hawaii is that they are constructed out of number five plastic (polypropylene), while bottles are constructed out of number one or number two plastic (polyethylene terephthalate or high density polyethylene); and

WHEREAS, plastic caps often end up as litter on beaches and in parks, sometimes discarded by people collecting recyclable bottles that are redeemable for deposit; and

WHEREAS, the plastic caps, or parts of caps, cause harm when ingested by marine birds and mammals; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, a federal marine debris removal effort found 4,781 bottle caps on Midway Island's shoreline despite being 1,300 miles from Honolulu; and

WHEREAS, several states have implemented plastic recycling programs that cost-effectively reduce pollution from plastic while also creating economic development opportunities; and

WHEREAS, plastic caps are part of a successful plastic recycling program in North and South Carolina that employs more than one thousand three hundred people, processes more than
seven hundred fifty million pounds of plastic per year and had sales of nearly $450,000,000 in 2012; and

WHEREAS, plastic caps have also been successfully recycled by companies such as Aveda, which has collected one hundred forty-five million caps since 2008 to recycle into product bottles and has encouraged some American cities to accept "caps-on" recycling; and

WHEREAS, an Indiana company named Green Tree Plastics LLC makes products such as planters from recycled plastic caps and partners with schools to set goals for collecting plastic caps which are used to make products of their choosing; and

WHEREAS, plastic caps from Hawaii can currently be recycled only by mail to programs outside the State such as Preserve Gimme 5, a New York company that recycles plastic to make products such as toothbrush handles; and

WHEREAS, if Hawaii were to have its own plastic cap material recovery program, plastic caps could remain on discarded bottles, and both bottles and caps could be recycled, while also potentially creating economic development opportunities in the State; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, that the counties of the State of Hawaii, in conjunction with the Department of Health, are urged to study the potential effects of increasing plastic recycling to include plastic caps, including the study of program models in other states and regions that may have application in Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the counties of the State of Hawaii and the Department of Health are requested to submit a report of their findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2019; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the mayors of each county and the Director of Health.

OFFERED BY:

Cindy Evans
Lynn De Crito
Hilda E. Lowe

MAR 06 2018