
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
DIVISION TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE BENEFITS AND COSTS TO
IMPLEMENT EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, the State has a duty to protect the environment,
2 economy, and public health; and
3

4 WHEREAS, globally, only nine percent of all the plastic
5 ever produced has been recycled, while the other ninety-one
6 percent is in landfills, has been incinerated, or is dispersed
7 throughout the environment; and
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9 WHEREAS, the oceans are now awash with at least one hundred
10 fifty million tons of plastic waste, an amount that researchers
11 say will soon surpass the weight of all the fish in the sea; and
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13 WHEREAS, a 2019 study reported that, globally, marine
14 plastic is responsible for an estimated lost of \$500,000,000,000
15 to \$2,500,000,000,000 annually in value benefits derived from
16 marine ecosystem services because of direct and indirect impacts
17 on tourism, transport and fisheries, and human health; and
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19 WHEREAS, Hawaii is especially vulnerable to the loss of
20 natural capital caused by plastic due to the State's reliance on
21 natural resources and marine ecosystems for the tourism and
22 fisheries industries; and
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24 WHEREAS, plastic micro-particles, which are present in air,
25 water, and food sources, can introduce toxins into a person's
26 body with unknown impacts to human health; and
27

28 WHEREAS, starting in the 1970s, the plastics industry
29 deployed strategic public relations campaigns designed to
30 convince consumers that their individual actions are a solution
31 for plastic pollution; and



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1 WHEREAS, the plastics industry and product manufacturers
2 avoided accountability by passing on the external costs of
3 plastic pollution to local, state, and federal governments, as
4 well as local businesses and organizations, through expenditures
5 on waste collection and disposal, habitat mitigation, and damage
6 to natural resources; and

7
8 WHEREAS, China was previously the biggest buyer of
9 recyclables worldwide, but recently implemented new restrictions
10 for imported waste; and

11
12 WHEREAS, as a result, Hawaii's counties are left with fewer
13 and more expensive options for recyclables, leading to even more
14 of these materials ending up in landfills and resulting in
15 growing costs for locally managed recycling programs; and

16
17 WHEREAS, in 2018, Kauai County changed the plastic
18 recycling program to only accept polyethylene terephthalate and
19 high-density polyethylene plastic bottles and jars and
20 eliminated the collection of plastic clamshells and food trays;
21 and

22
23 WHEREAS, in 2019, Hawaii County scaled back the types of
24 materials accepted for recycling, doing away with plastic
25 bottles and containers, paper, and non-corrugated cardboard; and

26
27 WHEREAS, the high cost of recycling and the narrowing
28 market for recyclable materials presents an opportunity to pivot
29 away from a reliance on individual recycling and toward a model
30 that places more responsibility for the end-of-life management
31 on the producer; and

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33 WHEREAS, producers should internalize the environmental and
34 public health costs of their products and design better products
35 and systems that reduce waste at the source and encourage the
36 reuse of more waste materials; and

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38 WHEREAS, making producers responsible for the true cost of
39 the goods they create will incentivize innovation in packaging
40 design that minimizes impacts, promotes the use of recycled
41 content in plastic packaging, and promotes reuse; and



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1 WHEREAS, an extended producer responsibility program in the
2 State would serve these goals, reduce taxpayers' burden, and
3 ensure better waste management services; now, therefore,
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5 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
6 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
7 of 2021, that the Department of Health Environmental Management
8 Division is requested to conduct a study on the benefits and
9 costs to implement extended producer responsibility in the
10 State; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health
13 Environmental Management Division is requested to analyze the
14 following in its study:
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- 16 (1) The implementation of extended producer responsibility
17 in the State, independent of other state and federal
18 packaging extended producer responsibility
19 initiatives;
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- 21 (2) The implementation of extended producer responsibility
22 packaging in the State in conjunction or synchronicity
23 with other state and federal initiatives;
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- 25 (3) The best science available relating to extended
26 producer responsibility and best packaging practices;
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- 28 (4) The costs and benefits to all stakeholders, including
29 but not limited to the environment, consumers,
30 taxpayers, government, and businesses;
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- 32 (5) The potential benefits and drawbacks of implementing
33 extended producer responsibility for packaging in the
34 State;
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- 36 (6) The feasibility of implementing extended producer
37 responsibility for packaging in the State;
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- 39 (7) The projected timeline for the implementation of
40 extended producer responsibility for packaging in the
41 State;



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1 (8) The expected savings, if any, for the State and
2 counties in costs relating to waste management and
3 recycling in the implementation of extended producer
4 responsibility packaging in the State; and
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6 (9) Any other issues the Department of Health deems
7 relevant; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that for the purposes of the study,
10 the Department of Health Environmental Management Division is
11 requested to consult with other state departments and community
12 organizations; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health
15 Environmental Management Division is requested to utilize
16 \$125,000 for the purposes of the study; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health
19 Environmental Management Division is requested to submit a
20 report of its findings and recommendations, including any
21 proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty
22 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024; and
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
25 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Health,
26 Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Mayor of the County of
27 Hawaii, Mayor of the County of Maui, and Mayor of the County of
28 Kauai.
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OFFERED BY: *Nicole E. Lowen*

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