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# 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

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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

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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



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

32  
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



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;  
24
- 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;



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 \$150,000 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  
23

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.

