

Representative Hermina Morita, Chair  
Representative Mele Carroll, Vice Chair  
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection  
State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



HEARING Thursday, March 27, 2008  
9:30 am  
Conference Room 312

RE: HCR353 & HR290, Requesting the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and Hawaii Food Industry Association to submit a report to the Legislature on Their Public Education Campaign About "Reducing, Reusing and Recycling" Plastic Bags.

Chair Morita, Vice Chair Carroll, and Members of the Committee:

Retail Merchants of Hawaii (RMH) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing about 200 members and over 2,000 storefronts, and is committed to support the retail industry and business in general in Hawaii.

As in HCR353 and HR290, for the most part just about every measure introduced to address non-biodegradable/non-compostable plastic bags begins with the same litany of un-documented assumptions. Once again, I attach the ULS Report, which reviews life cycle data relating to disposable, biodegradable and compostable grocery bags. Please note the extensive list of footnotes substantiating these findings.

We therefore object to the first through the ninth "whereas" suppositions.

Our testimony in opposition of HB2434, which proposed a ban on plastic bags provided to consumers at the point of sale, began with the statement: **Hawaii's retailers unquestionably support initiatives to preserve and protect our environment. The solution to the plastic bag issue is not in a total ban, but in the wise management of this resource, i.e., the "reduce, reuse and recycle" principle.**

Earlier this session, RMH worked cooperatively with this Committee to advance, in HB2434, HD1, a comprehensive alternative to the ban: a program that allowed retailers to continue to provide plastic bags at check out for those customers who prefer them, to make reusable bags available for those customers who want them, and to provide convenient bins available to consumers to deposit excess plastic, which would then be recycled. Because changing consumer behavior was critical to the success of this program, an educational campaign was an integral component to the program.

Needless-to-say, the industry was disappointed when the House did not advance this recycling measure. Since solid waste and landfill issues are under the purview of government, we were further dismayed that government did not step up to support our educational efforts.

Many of Hawaii's retailers have already initiated recycling programs: providing recycling bins for consumers, making reusable tote bags available and crediting consumers for reusing plastic bags and reusable bags at check out. Larger retailers bale and ship the collected bags out of the state for recycling.

Recognizing the State's interest in the environment, as indicated in the tenth "whereas," and the industry's recycling initiatives already in place, as in the eleventh "whereas," we respectfully suggest that government partner with industry in a cooperative educational effort to engage Hawaii's residents to embrace **"reduce, reuse and recycle,"** and amend these resolutions to encourage the Department of Health to that regard. The results of our combined efforts would be reported to the Legislature on 2009. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

President

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## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE COUNTIES TO ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT GRAY WATER RECYCLING PROGRAMS FOR RESIDENTIAL IRRIGATION PURPOSES AS PROVIDED UNDER THE UNIFORM PLUMBING CODE STANDARDS.

1           WHEREAS, at 18 percent higher than the national average,  
2 Hawaii consumes the most water per capita in the nation, and the  
3 demand for water in Hawaii is not likely to decrease; and  
4

5           WHEREAS, the wastewater reuse rate is not as high as it  
6 could be--three of the four counties reuse wastewater at a rate  
7 of less than five percent, the remaining county at the rate of  
8 less than 15 percent, and the State at a rate of less than 25  
9 percent; and  
10

11           WHEREAS, a low wastewater reuse rate is also taxing on our  
12 wastewater treatment facilities--it will cost \$1,000,000,000 to  
13 repair an aging sewer system; and  
14

15           WHEREAS, much of the wastewater currently treated at the  
16 City and County of Honolulu's wastewater facilities is otherwise  
17 reusable gray water that can be diverted from the sewer system,  
18 which has often failed, with potentially disastrous consequences  
19 for the health, safety, and economic welfare of our residents  
20 and visitors; and  
21

22           WHEREAS, gray water can replace potable water for many  
23 uses, thereby saving money, increasing water supply and  
24 treatment effectiveness, and reducing operation and capital  
25 costs of treatment facilities; and  
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27           WHEREAS, gray water has a history of safe use in the  
28 nation, and does not contaminate the natural surface and ground  
29 waters because it is purified to a high degree in the upper,  
30 most biologically active region of the soil; and  
31



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1 WHEREAS, counties have jurisdiction over residential  
2 wastewater treatment in areas served by county sewer systems;  
3 and  
4

5 WHEREAS, under section 342D-70, Hawaii Revised Statutes  
6 (HRS), counties, with the approval of the Department of Health,  
7 may implement a gray water recycling program within their  
8 jurisdictions in which gray water, defined as any water from the  
9 domestic plumbing system of a residence, except toilets, is used  
10 to irrigate lawns and gardens; and  
11

12 WHEREAS, the counties have not implemented gray water  
13 recycling programs under section 342D-70, HRS, and, in adopting  
14 national plumbing standards, have deleted gray water reuse  
15 provisions; and  
16

17 WHEREAS, numerous other states facing water shortages have  
18 adopted gray water reuse standards that have reduced potable  
19 water use; now, therefore,  
20

21 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
22 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
23 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the counties are  
24 urged to implement a gray water recycling program that adopts  
25 the gray water standards for residential subsurface landscape  
26 irrigation as provided in the Uniform Plumbing Code; and  
27

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the counties are requested to adopt  
29 standards that:  
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- 31 (1) Limit each residence to use of 250 gallons of gray  
32 water per day;
- 33 (2) Ensure that overflow from a gray water system is  
34 adequately directed into a sewer system or on-site  
35 wastewater treatment and disposal system;  
36
- 37 (3) Require gray water storage tanks be adequately covered  
38 to eliminate breeding of mosquitoes or other vectors;  
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- 40 (4) Require gray water systems to be at least five feet  
41 above the ground water table;  
42  
43



# H.C.R. NO.

- 1 (5) Require all gray water piping to be clearly identified
- 2 as non-potable water;
- 3
- 4 (6) Prevent gray water from a residence from being used
- 5 outside of the residential property;
- 6
- 7 (7) Minimize the potential for contact with people or
- 8 pets;
- 9
- 10 (8) Prevent ponding and minimize standing water;
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- 12 (9) Ensure that the hydraulic capacity of the residential
- 13 property is not exceeded with the use of gray water;
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- 15 (10) Ensure that gray water is not sprayed;
- 16
- 17 (11) Prohibit the discharge of gray water to a water
- 18 course; and
- 19
- 20 (12) Ensure that gray water systems are not permitted in
- 21 flood zone areas;

22  
23 and

24  
25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
26 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health  
27 and the Mayor and the chairpersons of the county council of each  
28 county.

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OFFERED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

