

LATE

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Kalani English, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Seth Corpuz-Lahne
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RE: Support for SB 243, Relating to the Deposit Beverage Container Program

Hearing: Tuesday February 17, 2009
Conference Room 225
2:245 PM

Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair English, members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support to SB 243. I'd like to thank Chair Gabbard and Senator Hooser for introducing this important bill to fix our recycling program.

Before the Deposit Beverage Container Program was passed it was modified in conference committee to exempt retailers within two-miles of a redemption center. On O'ahu, far and away the largest consumer of disposable beverages, two-miles from a redemption center is practically the entirety of Honolulu and its suburbs. This has meant that the largest retailers of beverage containers, supermarkets as well as wholesalers such as Sam's Club and Costco, have been largely exempt from redeeming empty containers. From the very start of the program, the difficulty of redeeming containers has been cited as a fault in the program.

This bill will partially close this loophole and make strides toward fulfilling the original intent of the Deposit Beverage Container Program, while addressing the concerns of smaller retailers. However it seems that it is possible that some of the supermarkets might still be exempted from redeeming beverage containers. It is at these dealers where it is most important to have redemption centers, and where the loophole has been the most damaging to the efficacy of the program.

I would like ask the Committee to amend SB 243 so that all supermarkets are required to redeem empty beverage containers, or contract with someone to operate a redemption center on their premises, regardless of their square-footage. Mahalo.