

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

LATE TESTIMONY

In reply, please refer to:
File:

**COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION, BUSINESS AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS**

H.B. 2125, H.D. 1, RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.
Director of Health**

**February 9, 2010
8:30 a.m.**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health opposes this bill as written.

2 **Fiscal Implications:** The bill imposes administrative duties on the department without new resources.

3 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill requires businesses to charge a 10 cent "offset fee" for each
4 disposable checkout bag that is provided to its customers, with some exceptions. Stores must submit the
5 fees to the department for deposit in the general fund.

6 The bill adds significant administrative functions to the DOH without adding any resources to
7 manage them. DOH will have to process the payments and receipts of fees from virtually all stores in
8 the state, with no new staff or other resources. DOH will also need to enforce the law. By contrast,
9 deposit beverage container program administration and enforcement are funded by the container fees
10 and un-redeemed deposits.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

12



LATE TESTIMONY

Feb. 8, 2010

House of Representatives Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business and Military Affairs

RE: Strong Support for House Bill 2125 – Offset Fee for Single-Use Plastic Bags

Dear Chair McKelvey, Vice-Chair Choy and Members of the Committee,

My name is Stuart Coleman, and I am the Hawaii Coordinator of the Surfrider Foundation. With almost 5000 members across the state, the Hawai'i Chapters of the Surfrider Foundation strongly support passage of HB2125, a bill designed to address the harms of non-biodegradable single-use plastic check out bags that are degrading the environment and harming marine life. Millions of sea birds and marine mammals die each year due to entanglement and ingestion of plastics.

This bill will encourage people to switch to reusable tote bags and improve Hawaii's natural environment. Imposing an offset fee also provides a practical and economical solution that will:

1. bring needed revenue to the state's general funds;
2. help local stores save money by buying fewer plastic bags;
3. help the counties cut costs in having to clean up these toxic tumbleweeds;
- and 4. extend the life of our landfills.

Governments across the world have successfully reduced plastic bag use, either through plastic bag bans or fees. Maui and Kaua'i County passed their own bans, and the Big Island came very close. The following countries and cities have all taken measures to reduce their plastic bag usage in an effort to protect their precious natural resources and valuable coastlines: Ireland, China, Tanzania, Taiwan, Australia, Italy, South Africa, San Francisco, Manhattan Beach, Malibu, Los Angeles, Edmunds (WA), Outer Banks (NC), District of Columbia, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai. Within the first year of imposing a fee, Ireland's plastic bag use dropped 90%. Eventually, all governments and people will realize how economically wasteful and environmentally damaging single-use plastic bags are. Will our state be a leader or a latecomer in this movement? Hawai'i will benefit by taking the lead on this policy.

The Hawaii Chapters are supporting HB2125 because Surfrider's mission is to preserve the health of our oceans and the quality of our beaches. Plastic bags that end up in the ocean or on our coastlines not only endanger sea turtles, seabirds, and marine mammals, but they also adversely affect the entire marine food web. Because plastic does not biodegrade, plastic waste never truly disappears; it only breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces called "micro-plastics," which are often consumed by fish and filter feeders that mistake them for food. Because plastics cannot be digested, they concentrate organic chemicals and environmental pollutants in the system, and bioaccumulate as they make their way up the food chain. So this is a human health issue as well as an environmental hazard.

Single-use plastic bags also have hidden costs that hit our wallets, and everyone pays for these



est. 1947

Hawaii Restaurant Association

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Fax: 808.944.9109
hra@hawaiirestaurants.org

February 9, 2010

Testimony in Strong Opposition to HB 2125 – EBM – 2/9/10, 8:30 a.m., Rm. 312

Chair McElvey, Vice Chair Choy, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Restaurant Association (HRA) respectfully opposes HB 2125 that seeks to impose a fee for every plastic disposable checkout bags that is distributed by businesses. The HRA would consider withdrawing its opposition, however, if the exceptions contained within the bill are broadened to cover restaurants where plastic bags are used to transport food containers prone to spillage and leaks.

The HRA appreciates the intent of this bill, which is to reduce the consumption of plastic bags for environmental and other reasons. The HRA submits, however, that there are less drastic measures to effect the same purpose, including requiring the use of biodegradable or recyclable bags.

In the restaurant industry, plastic disposable bags are used not simply to carry items but for consumer safety and other practical reasons including the prevention of leaks and spills of items that are often hot in temperature and sometimes greasy and aromatic.

Unlike supermarkets that sell primarily packaged foods, restaurants sell freshly cooked foods that are most often hot and contain liquids. We noticed an exception in this bill for “[b]ags used to contain or wrap frozen foods, meat or fish, flowers or potted plants, or other items to contain dampness.” Similarly, food from restaurants, contain “dampness” either from gravies, sauces, or the heat that results in condensation.

In addition, restaurants that are forced to collect a fee for take-out bags will likely suffer a further reduction in traffic and sales. In this difficult economy, consumers have already started to eat out less. This additional fee would further discourage them and exacerbate the fragile restaurant industry. With over 3,500 locations directly employing over 82,000 dedicated people, restaurants form a cornerstone of Hawaii’s economy that must be kept viable.

In summary, the HRA reiterates its **opposition to HB 2125.**

Very truly yours,

The Hawaii Restaurant Association
By: Bryan P. Andaya

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LATE TESTIMONY

**To: Economic Revitalization, Business and Military Affairs Committee
Rep. Angus McKelvey, Chair**

**From: Mariya Gold
2419 Ferdinand Ave
Honolulu, HI
96822**

Subject: Strong support for HB 2125 -- Reduce Usage of Disposable Plastic Checkout Bags

It just makes sense! Plastic bags are wasteful, bad for the environment and thus bad for our health. It is evident with more and more reports coming out that animals are dying and that the oceans are increasingly polluted, with disposable plastic bags being a major contributor.

I continue to be amazed at the amount of disposable plastic bags that are used every single time I go to the grocery store. It's as if there's a contest to see how many plastic bags can be used for each item purchased. I also find it amazing that a bill such as HB2125 has not yet been passed. It just makes sense, for our environment, for our health, and for our future.

I strongly support House Bill 2125!

Mahalo for your support, your awareness, and your attention to such an important, yet simple action.

With much aloha,

Mariya Kai Gold

LATE TESTIMONY

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am writing in support of HB2125 to lessen our use of plastic bags in Hawai'i and to put a tax of \$0.10 on them to encourage the public to bring their own reusable bags.

This is important to me and for the future of Hawai'i. As we all know, plastic never leaves the environment, once made it never fully decomposes, thus entering our ecosystems. The irreversible effects that plastic leaves in the environment is not worth our short term use for them.

Just as the local farmers markets do, our bigger stores can encourage people to bring their own bags.

Thank you for reading my testimony and hope that you will vote in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Ivory McClintock

LATE TESTIMONY

My name is Kiana Kauwe and I strongly support HB2125. I am the outreach and education coordinator for the Save Our Seal campaign, a coalition of 15 environmental NGOs that support the recovery of our Hawaiian monk seal.

Single-use bags are a part of our throwaway society. This developed culture contributes negatively affects our environment we depend on to survive. Bold action needs to be taken and I believe this measure is a significant step.

Only 1100 Hawaiian monk seals remain on earth and one of the threats to recovery is marine debris. Marine debris is a momentous problem affecting marine life and ecosystems. I urge you to help protect Hawaii's unique and fragile environment.

Mahalo.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2010 12:16 AM
To: EBMtestimony
Cc: sheilasarhangi@hotmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2125 on 2/9/2010 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for EBM 2/9/2010 8:30:00 AM HB2125

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Sheila Sarhangi
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: sheilasarhangi@hotmail.com
Submitted on: 2/9/2010

Comments:

Aloha,

Did you know that plastic bags never completely biodegrade? Just imagine this: The plastic bag that holds your groceries, which, as studies show, is used only for 12 minutes, remains on Earth forever. And when these petroleum-based products break down into smaller pieces, fish and other creatures of the sea consume them. Since we use the ocean as a food source, we are potentially exposing these toxic chemicals to our own bodies. Is this the way we see our future? Let's do something about this today, before it's too late.

To change the way the public thinks about plastic, I urge you to consider placing a fee on single-use plastic bags, as well as paper bags. The fee will contribute to the state's general fund, and to the stores themselves. It will also help keep our islands clean, and will reduce the demand on our Island landfills.

We live on islands; let's start acting like it.

Please support HB2125.

With Aloha,
Sheila Sarhangi

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2010 7:13 AM
To: EBMtestimony
Cc: charles3@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB2125 on 2/9/2010 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for EBM 2/9/2010 8:30:00 AM HB2125

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Charles Taylor
Organization: Environmental Law Society, William S. Richardson School of Law
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: charles3@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 2/9/2010

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee of Economic Revitalization, Business and Military Affairs, In my humble opinion, the pervasiveness of plastics in our ocean is an environmental issue as serious as the threat of global warming. Plastics never fully biodegrade, but instead break down into smaller and smaller particles. These plastic particles pass up the food chain, first through microscopic organisms, and then up to larger predatory fish (and eventually, to humans). The implication of this bioaccumulation of plastics into the tissues of marine animals and humans is not fully known, but many scientists fear it may have grave consequences on marine ecosystems on a macro-level. Furthermore, countless whales, turtles, and birds die from plastic bag ingestion every year, mistaking the bags for jellyfish and squid. Human civilization has existed for thousands of years without plastic bags and can definitely continue without them. The idea that plastic bags represent "progress" because they are inexpensive and seemingly infinite is a dangerous and irresponsible mentality. We owe it to our children and the countless generations to come to leave our oceans clean and healthy. Hawaii, as an ocean and coastal community, is directly affected by the wastefulness of single-use plastic bags, as they wind up in the ocean around us. We need strong political will to stand up to the petro-chemical industry lobbyists who try to keep our citizens addicted to plastic bags. They value short-term profit over long-term sustainability and try to frame the issue of a tax on plastic bags as one that is "anti-business". This could not be further from the truth. A plastic bag tax or ban is business neutral and, more importantly, pro-health and pro-environment. Hawaii should set an example for the rest of the states to follow. Please pass HB 2125. Mahalo for your time and consideration. Charlie Taylor
Director, Environmental Law Society
William S. Richardson School of Law
University of Hawaii, at Manoa

LATE TESTIMONY

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2010 2:40 PM
To: EBMtestimony
Cc: jjshot@aim.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2125 on 2/9/2010 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for EBM 2/9/2010 8:30:00 AM HB2125

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jackie Lott
Organization: Individual
Address: 2500 Kino Road Kalaheo Hi 96741
Phone: 8083320822
E-mail: jjshot@aim.com
Submitted on: 2/9/2010

Comments:

Every day i swim snorkel in the Kauaiian water. There is people trash everywhere, plastic bags, fishing line, food wrappers, cans, bottles. We think we have litter on land, but we don't eat algea, kelp, etc, which the people trash resembles or is connested to. Please help the innocent victims, the turtles; fish; seals and more. There are hundreds of people each year from all over the world, visiting Kauai, who tell me they are here mainly to see the various wildlife our bad people habits are endangering. That is tourism dollars lost in addition to not accepting the responsibility as humans to be gaurdians of the sea.