

SB 2559

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

In reply, please refer to:
File:

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
S.B. 2559, RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

February 2, 2010
3:30 p.m.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health opposes this bill as written because of the added
2 burdens it imposes on the department.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** The bill imposes substantial administrative duties on the department without new
4 resources. The amount of added cost is uncertain, but added costs will occur.

5 **Purpose and Justification:** Effective January 1, 2012, this bill bans the distribution to customers of
6 non-biodegradable single-use plastic checkout bags by businesses with annual gross sales over
7 \$300,000.

8 DOH generally supports the reduction of solid waste, litter, and the use of petroleum resources.
9 State policy already sets source reduction and recycling as the top two priorities for solid waste
10 management (HRS §342G-2(b)). We favor reducing plastic marine pollution because of its effect on
11 wildlife.

12 The bill adds significant administrative functions to the DOH without adding any resources to
13 manage them. DOH will have to enforce the law at many businesses in the state, with no new staff or
14 other resources. DOH will also have to rule on claims by businesses to be exempt because of hardship

1 conditions. By contrast, deposit beverage container program administration and enforcement are funded
2 by the container fees.

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

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February 1, 2010

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Tim Shestek
Senior Director, State Affairs
American Chemistry Council

Re: **SB 2559 - OPPOSE**

The American Chemistry Council (ACC) must respectfully oppose SB 2559, legislation that would prohibit the distribution of fully recyclable plastic shopping bags by certain businesses beginning in 2012. Though we support the intent of reducing plastic bag litter and waste, we believe that the most environmentally responsible and economically sustainable solution to addressing this issue is a comprehensive program aimed at recycling these bags so that they may be used as feedstock in the production of other products, such as new bags, pallets, containers, crates, and pipe. Recycling policies have been recently adopted by the State of California, New York, Rhode Island, and Chicago and many voluntary initiatives are underway in other jurisdictions.

Recycling of plastic bags is growing fast in the United States. In 2008 over 832 million pounds of plastic bags and wraps were recycled, representing a 28 percent increase in only a few years. According to EPA data, recycling of polyethylene bags and wraps reached 12 percent in 2007.

Prohibiting the use of plastic bags will invariably lead to an increased use of the more costly paper bag alternative, which would result in increased costs for consumers and greater impacts on the environment. In fact, a recent study of the ban on plastic bags in San Francisco shows that this policy has dramatically increased paper bag use and done little to promote reusable bags¹. Furthermore, the San Francisco Examiner reported (January 25, 2010) that the city's bag ban has increased one local grocers expenses "by \$900,000 a year in its 15 San Francisco stores."

ACC urges the committee to consider the overall environmental and economic impacts that could result with a plastic bag prohibition.

¹ Use Less Stuff, A Qualitative Study of Grocery Bags in San Francisco, September 2008, <http://eygnus-group.com/use-less-stuff/Field-Report-on-San-Francisco-Plastic-Bag-Ban.pdf>

- Plastic grocery bags require 70 percent less energy to manufacture than paper bags and generate 50% less greenhouse gases.
- For every seven trucks needed to deliver paper bags, only one truck is needed for the same number of plastic bags, helping to save energy and reduce air emissions.
- Plastic bags generate 80 percent less waste than paper bags.²

In his recent review of life cycle data relating to disposable, biodegradable, and reusable grocery bags, Robert Lilienfeld of “Use Less Stuff” (www.use-less-stuff.com) concluded that “Legislation designed to reduce environmental impacts and litter by outlawing grocery bags based on the material from which they are produced will not deliver the intended results. While some litter reduction might take place, it would be outweighed by the disadvantages that would subsequently occur (increased solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions). Ironically, reducing the use of traditional plastic bags would not even reduce the reliance on fossil fuels, as paper and biodegradable plastic bags consume just as much non-renewable energy during their full lifecycle.” He notes that:

- Even though traditional disposable plastic bags are produced from fossil fuels, the total non-renewable energy consumed during their lifecycle is no greater than the non-renewable energy consumed during the lifecycle of paper and biodegradable plastic bags.³
- Paper sacks generate 70 percent more air, and 50 times more water pollutants, than plastic bags.⁴
- It takes 91 percent less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than it takes to recycle a pound of paper.⁵
- While the data appear to indicate that paper and compostable plastic bags may account for less litter, data also indicates that this finding is offset by the increased environmental impacts these bags produce versus traditional plastic bags.⁶

Furthermore, though the city of San Francisco banned plastic grocery bags, a 2008 San Francisco Streets Litter Re-Audit, a city-commissioned study, revealed that total bag litter increased by 1.5% after the ban and plastic bag litter remained the same before and after the ban at only 0.6% of the litter composition;

² Boustead Consulting, “Life Cycle Assessment for Three Types of Grocery Bags - Recyclable Plastic; Compostable, Biodegradable Plastic; and Recycled, Recyclable Paper,” 2007.

³ Évaluation des impacts environnementaux des sacs de caisse Carrefour (Evaluation of the Environmental Impact of Carrefour Merchandise Bags), prepared by Price- Waterhouse-Coopers/Ecobilan (EcoBalance), February 2004, #300940BE8. (www.ademe.fr/htdocs/actualite/rapport_carrefour_post_revue_critique_v4.pdf)

⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website, Questions About Your Community: Shopping Bags downloaded from the Internet, May 2007.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ REVIEW OF LIFE CYCLE DATA RELATING TO DISPOSABLE, COMPOSTABLE, BIODEGRADABLE, AND REUSABLE GROCERY BAGS, The ULS Report, June 2007 <http://www.use-less-stuff.com/>

It does not make environmental sense to ban fully recyclable plastic grocery bags when alternative products could leave a greater environmental footprint.

ACC would welcome the opportunity to partner with the State of Hawaii, the grocery and retail industry, recyclers, and other interested stakeholders to enhance and/or develop a system that effectively and efficiently helps to recycle these products. Our industry is involved in many similar programs in California, Washington State, Illinois, and Philadelphia to name just a few.

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to provide these comments. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me at 916-448-2581 or via email at tim_shestek@americanchemistry.com. You may also contact ACC's Hawaii based representatives Red Morris or John Radcliffe at 808-531-4551.



HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

1188 Bishop St., Suite 608, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone (808)533-1292 - Fax (808)599-2606 - Email: hawaiifoodind@aol.com

February 2, 2010

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

By: Richard C. Botti, President
Lauren Zirbel, Government Relations

Re: SB 2559 RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Chairs & Committee Members:

While we recognize that we cannot continue to continually pump millions of bags into the economy, we feel that the provisions of this bill do not attack the problem, but rather attack the symptom, which is litter.

While litter is the visible sign of a problem, we identify the issue as follows:

- While consumers are paying more attention to the 3 Rs, we need to do much more in educating consumers of their responsibility in this area; and
- While we are recycling, we are missing the main issue where we have the opportunity to move forward with sustainability by utilizing our waste to generate energy, which will provide a solution to our landfills becoming landfills.

Our industry was given the challenge to create a solution on paper that would address this issue. We came up with the following:

HFIA's Proposal

HFIA is proposing that the Legislature impose an ADF (Advance Disposal Fee) on all single use bags used at retail establishments at the rate of one cent per bag regardless of size, payable to the State, with 90% of the revenues distributed to each county based on a de facto population earmarked to fund education to encourage bad use reduction, reuse and recycling, as well as Waste to Energy projects that will utilize or divert landfill waste. County funding would be contingent upon legislative preemption of existing or proposed county ordinances relating to the subject matter.

With landfills becoming landfills, we believe the future will include mining our landfills for a source of energy. The best example of this is plastic has approximately the same British thermal unit (BTU or Btu) as does oil. Yet we are landfilling it when we could be reducing our consumption of imported oil by using all products packaged in plastic as energy. We need to use 5% of the funding for long range planning to ultimately reduce our landfills by mining them as a source of energy, and to study a means of separating plastic prior to entering our landfill to be used as a strategic energy reserve.

Require 5% of the total revenues generated from the ADF to educate consumers on the importance of:

- Reducing single use bag consumption;
- Reusing bags for other purposes such as wet waste, trash, lunch bags, etc.;
- Promoting reusable bag use by consumers; and
- Recycling of all types of bags, whether they are compostable, biodegradable, regular plastic, or paper.

Bags are a very small part of environmental challenges. They are however what people see, and thus are the target. You now have the choices of addressing the issue of bags creating litter, or addressing the future by helping create a Hawaii where the packaging used to import what we consume is also a part of our energy source.

Adopting the provisions of SB 2559 will provide some immediate gratification. However, we are already seeing less bag litter because of what our stores are already doing, such as:

- Paying customers for using their own reusable bags;
- Creating recycling bins for consumers to take not only plastic bags, but other plastics for recycling;
- Selling or giving away reusable bags and encouraging customers to use them; and
- Using compostable and/or biodegradable bags.

While it is not practical for all tourists to bring their own to the store when they shop, the impact that we are currently seeing is in the right direction. But, it only addresses the bag part of our larger environmental challenges.

Many may not realize that throwing away 'PLASTIC' is throwing away a ready fuel source. Plastic is primarily petroleum and burns with high efficiency. Plastic in HPOWER or Waste To Energy plants makes sense, since it helps generate heat needed to address other waste with a lower Btu.

The Energy Values Of Different Materials When Incinerated*

Material	**BTU per pound
Plastics	11,000 - 20,000
Rubber	10,900
Newspaper	8,000
Corrugated Boxes (paper)	7,000
Yard Wastes	3,000
Food Wastes	2,600
Average for MSW	4,500 - 4,800



With respect to the HFIA Proposal, what we are offering is a concept that will have:

- Minimal cost to consumer avoiding cost pass through;
- Simplified collection and distribution of funds that will help counties build a Waste to Energy infrastructure;
- Provide revenues to educate consumers on their responsibility; and
- Provide research for a strategic energy reserve, and a means of mining our landfills so as to reduce their size in future years.

What is most interesting about this proposal, is that it was created by grocery retailers and their suppliers as competitors. They avoided attacking each other as competitors to address the common goals of everyone as citizens of Hawaii. Of course we did have legal counsel present to monitor our discussions.

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair
Committee on Energy and Environment
State Capitol, Honolulu, HI 96813

HEARING Tuesday, February 02, 2010
 3:30 pm
 Conference Room 225



RE: **SB 2559, Relating to Environmental Protection**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English and Committee Members;

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

RMH strongly opposes SB 2559, which requires retailers in the state to distribute only recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable checkout bags.

Hawaii's retailers absolutely support initiatives to preserve and protect our environment. The solution to the plastic bag issue is not prohibition of recyclable bags, but in the **wise management** of this resource, i.e., the "**reduce, reuse and recycle**" principle. We unquestionably encourage the broadest use of reusable tote bags as the ultimate solution, and have been proactive in providing these for our customers. However, we do know that consumers' acceptance and use of these bags will not be universal or practical at all times and the industry must provide an alternative.

Plastic bags provided by retailers today are recyclable, and many retailers provide convenient recycle bins at their locations. The stated purpose of this bill is to reduce the production of waste via a reduction in the use of plastic bags, yet the focus is specific to the free bags provided by businesses at check out and ignores the multitude of plastic bags available for sale. Consumers report that they reuse their plastic grocery bags for everyday household tasks like lining waste baskets and sanitary cleaning up after pets. If these free bags are not available, consumers undoubtedly will purchase plastic bags for these uses.

As in those cities which have banned plastic bags, Hawaii's retailers will switch to recyclable paper bags for their customers purchases. But this alternative comes at considerably high cost, not only in the actual purchase price of paper bags, but also in increased costs to ship these bags to Hawaii. For every one container that delivers plastic bags, seven containers are needed to deliver the same number of paper bags; this volume measure is critical for ocean freight. Ultimately, these costs must and will be passed on to the consumer.

Paper is not the best choice as there are serious environmental impacts of air and water pollution and green house gas emissions with this alternative. Paper bags generate 70% more air and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags. Please refer to the ULS Report: http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-ess-p2-recycling-PaperPlasticSummary_2.pdf

We respectfully submit for your consideration a comprehensive recycling program that prescribes that retailers provide: 1) visible and accessible collection bins for recycling; 2) reusable bags for purchase and use in lieu of plastic; 3) education via recycling messages printed on recyclable bags; and 4) that the collected plastic bags are recycled. An informal survey of our larger members revealed that collectively 10,000 tons of cardboard and plastic (bags and shrink-wrap) were shipped to the mainland for recycling last year.

Our mutual goals are to maximize the usage of reusable bags, to provide plastic bags to consumers for their personal, practical uses, and to recycle the excess bags, without over-burdening our residents. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Carol Pregill, President

RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
1240 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 215
Honolulu, HI 96814
ph: 808-592-4200 / fax: 808-592-4202



Conservation Council for Hawaii

Testimony Submitted to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environmental
SB 2559 Relating to Environmental Protection
Hearing: Tuesday, February 2, 2010 3:30 pm Room 225

In support of SB 2559

Aloha. Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 2559, which requires retailers in the State to distribute only recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable checkout bags.

SB 2559 would encourage more residents and visitors to use reusable bags. This would reduce the number of sea turtles and other marine wildlife that are killed or harmed by ingesting disposable plastic bags. Sea turtles ingest plastic bags, mistaking them for food, and may suffer a gruesome death. The ingested bag may get trapped in the turtle's gut, prevent food from going down, lead to absorption of toxins, and reduce the absorption of nutrients from real food. Trapped food decomposes, leaks gases into the body cavity, and causes the turtle to float. The turtle then slowly starves to death or succumbs to other secondary life-threatening conditions, such as a boat strike.

SB 2559 would also reduce the number of disposable bags we use, and the energy needed to manufacture, ship, and discard them. This saves the people and the government money, and contributes to a more sustainable way of living on these islands. Americans go through more than 100 billion plastic bags each year, yet less than 5% are ever recycled. Let's make a positive change and not support this wasteful practice any longer.

We hope you will reconsider allowing the use of biodegradable single-use plastic bags, which still end up in our ocean and harm marine life.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Marjorie Ziegler



Hawai'i's Voice for Wildlife – *Ko Leo Hawai'i no na holoholona Iohiu*

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President: Maura O'Connor * Treasurer: Kim Ramos * Secretary: Douglas Lamerson
Directors: Madelyn D'Enbeau * Maka'ala Ka'auomoana * Hannah Springer
Executive Director: Marjorie Ziegler



Feb. 1, 2010

Hawaii Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

RE: Strong Support for Senate Bill 2559 – Regulating Single-Use Plastic Bags

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair English 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 ("Surfrider") strongly support passage of SB2559, 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 hundreds of thousands of marine mammals die each year due to ingestion and entanglement of plastics. There is no reason why people can't switch to reusable tote bags, and we feel this bill will improve Hawaii's natural environment, save stores the cost of buying plastic bags and the counties from having to clean them up, while also extending the life of our landfills.

Governments across the world have successfully reduced plastic bag use, either through plastic bag bans, or through fees or taxes. Maui and Kaua'i County passed their own bans, and the Big Island came very close. The following countries 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, and South Africa. And these cities have followed their lead: San Francisco, Manhattan Beach, Malibu, Los Angeles, Edmunds (WA), Outer Banks (NC), District of Columbia, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai. 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 only benefit if it seizes the opportunity to lead this movement.

The Hawaii Chapters are supporting SB2559 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, 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 are also a threat to our wallets, and everyone bears the cost of these so-called "free" bags. Taxpayers spend as much as \$0.17 on each "free" plastic bag they receive because taxpayers are expected to subsidize the recycling, collection, and disposal of these toxic

tumbleweeds. Retailers spend as much as \$0.05 per bag (a price which is incorporated into the price of food and goods, then passed on to consumers) when they provide a consumer with a “free” plastic bag. States, cities, and counties together spend about \$4.41 per capita, per year on general litter abatement.¹ Without disposable plastic bags in the picture, this money will be better spent.

Surfrider’s Hawaii Chapters respectfully suggest that a few amendments be made to SB2559: (1) Non-recyclable paper check out bags are mentioned in Section 1 of the Bill as hazardous to the environment, however, they are not banned. To clarify the intent of the Bill, we feel it should be amended to either prohibit non-recyclable paper bags in addition to non-biodegradable plastic bags, or to simply not mention paper bags at all. (2) Section 3 of the Bill should be amended so that the Act does not apply to bags provided by businesses for items that are sold without packaging (e.g. food sold in bulk, vegetables, flowers, bakery goods, and dry-cleaning).

Mahalo for your time and consideration and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Stuart H. Coleman
Hawaii Coordinator
Surfrider Foundation
808-942-3841

¹ “The True Cost of Single-Use Bags,” by Heal the Bay. Available at: www.healthebay.org



Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

PO Box 2577, Honolulu, HI 96803
808.538.6616 hawaii.chapter@sierraclub.org

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
February 2, 2010, 3:30 P.M.

(Testimony is 2 pages long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT FOR SB 2559 WITH A PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committees:

The Hawai'i Chapter of the Sierra Club supports the intent of SB 2559, which requires retailers to only distribute recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable checkout bags but proposes amending it with the language in SB2560. It is our believe that requiring an offset fee for each bag distributed to customers may be more politically feasible and would serve to create a direct market reflection of the actual economic and environmental costs created by the abuse of single-use plastic bags in Hawai'i.

Plastic bags simply are not in Hawai'i's sustainable future and strong efforts should be made to discourage their continued use. Consider:

- Plastic bags contribute to litter and pose a consistent threat to avian and marine life in Hawai'i -- the endangered species Capitol of the world;
- Plastic bags are manufactured from a polluting resource that is becoming increasingly scarce;
- Plastic bags contribute to a growing trash problem on all our islands and foible the State's waste diversion efforts;
- Americans throw away nearly 100 billion plastic bags each year; and only 0.6 percent of plastic bags are recycled.

Hawai'i is faced with a solid waste crisis. A study completed for the City and County of Honolulu by consulting group R.W. Beck, the "2006 Waste Characterization Study" (available online at www.opala.org), reveals some shocking facts about Oahu's solid waste situation. Since the last waste characterization study in 1999, the trash from Oahu households increased by 30.2% from 316,491 tons annually in 1999 to 412,016 tons in 2006 (R.W. Beck, "2006 Waste Characterization Study," April 2007, at 3-11). The population increased by roughly 3% over the same period (878,906 to 906,000) -- meaning waste generation from households increased 10 times faster than population growth. The proliferation of plastic bags contributes to this problem.

Plastic bags are an expense that is not directly seen by customers. The cost of purchasing tens of millions of plastic bags in Hawai'i annually is most certainly passed on to local consumers, but it is not a visible cost and, thus, normal market controls do not take place. As with anything "free," we tend to take advantage of the ready supply plastic bags without considering the indirect costs.

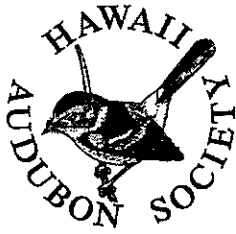
Plastic bags tax our economy and environment when they are littered or placed in our overflowing landfills. For example, a recent study conducted in Seattle concluded -- even with a high 13% recycling rate (greater than the national average of 3-5%) -- approximately 1,650 tons of plastic bags were put into the landfill annually. The net cost to Seattle and ratepayers of collecting, transferring and disposing of waste was calculated to be approximately \$121 per ton or approximately \$200,000 for plastic grocery bags.

Even if plastic bags are burned at H-POWER (only on O'ahu) they are essentially converted to greenhouse gasses, further hastening global climate change, and ultimately not addressing the root of the problem. Similarly, with nearly 40% of the State's solid waste-stream able to be diverted from disposal at the landfill, plastic bags pose the single-most significant challenge to composting facilities, contaminating the compost, getting wrapped in the splines of processing equipment, and reducing the value of the compost product.

It should be noted that two highly successful business in Hawai'i -- Costco and Wholefoods -- do not offer its customers plastic bags. These businesses are flourishing. The switch by Wholefoods alone kept 100 million plastic bags out of the environment between April 22, 2008 and end of 2008.

The plastic bag measure before this Committee recognizes the critical issues at stake for our environment and encourages consumers to take responsible, proactive action, to change their habits. We urge this Committee to consider the various approaches that numerous cities across the United States, as well as several countries around the world have taken in addressing the challenges posed by plastic bags. We hope you will move this measure forward.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.



For the Protection of Hawaii's Native Wildlife

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Committee on Energy and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

Hearing: Tuesday, February 2, 2010; 3:30 P.M., Conference Rm. 225

Re: SB2559 – Relating to Environmental Protection

Testimony in Support

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment. On behalf Hawaii Audubon Society I am happy to offer this testimony in support of SB2559, which requires retailers in the State to distribute only recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable checkout bags.

The Hawaii Audubon Society was founded in 1939, and has over 1,500 members statewide. The Society's primary mission is the protection of Hawaii's native birds, wildlife, habitats as well as our aquatic and coastal resources. This includes advocating for policies and legislation that protects our unique ecosystems from hazards of plastic litter.

We have reviewed SB2559 in detail and believe it to be a practical measure that will accomplish the bill's intent, to reduce the State's production of waste and therefore reduce the State's negative impact on the natural environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

Sincerely,

George Massengale, JD
Legislative Analyst



est. 1947

Hawaii Restaurant Association

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February 2, 2010

Testimony in Opposition to SB 2559 – ENE – 2/2/10, 3:30 p.m., Rm. 225

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Restaurant Association (HRA) **respectfully opposes SB 2559** that would require the use of recyclable plastic bags. 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 protect the natural environment. The HRA submits, however, that recyclable bags are not suitable when holding containers containing freshly cooked foods. Recyclable bags break down and melt much easier and are not sturdy enough to handle hot liquids and grease for those times when food containers may leak or spill.

In restaurants, 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 fresh produce, meats, and frozen items. Similarly, food from restaurants, contain "dampness" either from gravies, sauces, or the heat that results in condensation.

In addition, restaurants that are forced to use recyclable bags will likely experience an increase in dissatisfied customers who will find gravies, sauces, and other liquids leaking through recyclable bags. These negative experiences will discourage potential customers from purchasing take-out food at restaurants. In this difficult economy, consumers have already started to eat out less. This additional burden at this inopportune time would further exacerbate the economic challenges the restaurant industry currently faces. 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 SB 2559.**

Very truly yours,

The Hawaii Restaurant Association

By: Bryan P. Andaya

Board of Directors 2009-2010

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Executive Director Gail Ann Chew

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2010 10:10 AM
To: ENETestimony
Cc: octopus@maui.net
Subject: Testimony for SB2441 on 2/2/2010 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for ENE/WTL 2/2/2010 2:45:00 PM SB2441

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Rene Umberger
Organization: Hawaii Reef Fish Recovery Project
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: octopus@maui.net
Submitted on: 2/2/2010

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Hee,
Thank you for hearing this bill, essential to saving the monk seal. I am in full support of SB 2441. These seals are a global treasure and it is up to us to protect them from extinction. The first time I saw one was while scuba diving 20 years ago off Kahoolawe (when it was still legal to do so). It approached me with curiosity and so wanting it to not fear me, I adopted a seal posture, swimming as if I too, were a seal. It worked, and the seal stayed for a minute or two before swimming off. Since then, more and more monk seals are showing up on our reefs, approaching ever closer, looking into our eyes and trusting that we won't harm them. Now that people are murdering these animals I regret that I have not flapped my arms to scare them away - teaching that humans are not to be trusted - ever. This bill is needed to add a serious deterrent to those who view our precious marine life as nothing more than target practice. The seals were here before we were, and with much luck and your good efforts they will be here long after we are gone.
Mahalo,
Rene Umberger

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: chad deal [chad@chaddeal.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2010 10:11 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

chad deal
chad@chaddeal.com
po box 223841
princeville, HI 96722

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Chad

Chad Deal (R)(ABR)
EcoBroker Certified
Kaua'i Tropical Properties (Broker in Charge) President , Kaua'i Developers Council
chad@chaddeal.com
808 482-0338

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: trevor smith [t_smitty2@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 8:46 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

trevor smith
t_smitty2@hotmail.com
726A 16th ave
honolulu, HI 96816

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because plastic bags are wasteful, and a symbol of environmental degradation, plastic kills marine animals including the 7 whales that beached in Italy recently. There is no need for disposable plastics, please be courageous and vote with integrity.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Mele Coleman [melecoleman@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 1:02 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Mele Coleman
melecoleman@gmail.com
6247 Milolii Place
Honolulu, HI 96825

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because non-biodegradable plastic check out bags unnecessarily degrade Hawai'i's precious environment and harm marine life; this Bill is an great way for the State to encourage the use of reusable bags. Similar laws have been passed worldwide and proven to be very successful. Because Hawai'i is the endangered species capitol of the world, our community is well aware of the negative impacts of plastic bags and will be accepting of the new legislation.

Not only are plastic bags a significant source of litter and waste on land, they also adversely affect the entire marine food web. Plastic bag litter makes its way to the ocean and never truly disappears. Small plastic particles are mistaken for food by filter feeders while various forms of other marine life ingest intact plastic bags. Although plastics cannot be digested, they concentrate organic chemicals and environmental pollutants, and bioaccumulate as they make their way up the food chain.

Big businesses do not need to distribute non-biodegradable plastic bags to remain competitive; more sustainable and affordable alternatives are readily available (e.g. Costco and Whole Foods are thriving and neither distribute plastic bags). Please push this Bill forward. I respectfully suggest that two amendments be made to the Bill: (1) Although non-recyclable paper bags are mentioned in the Bill's purpose as a hazard to the environment, they are not banned. This inconsistency should be addressed. (2) Section 3 of the Bill should be improved to include more exceptions. For an example of possible exceptions, please see HB2125.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Diana LaBedz [DianaLaBedz@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 10:26 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Diana LaBedz
DianaLaBedz@aol.com
P. O. Box 808
Waimea, HI 96796

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because everything done to protect our environment and wildlife is IMPORTANT to island living.

The use of plastic bags is more than a danger to wildlife. Something that's this simple is something easy for our leaders to support. Much more needs to be done, this is just a beginning. Our Planet Earth is dying because of the thoughtlessness of our human behavior.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Paul Massey [paul@kauainature.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 9:34 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Paul Massey
paul@kauainature.com
P.O. Box 2078
Kapaa, HI 96746

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because plastic checkout bag use in the state of Hawaii is an unnecessary, wasteful, and environmentally damaging activity that is long overdue for eliminating. Shoppers have plenty of alternatives such as bringing their own reusable bags or purchasing one at the retail location where they are shopping. Often a single purchased item can be hand carried and does not need a bag at all.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Ken Taylor [taylor021@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 9:37 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Ken Taylor
taylor021@hawaii.rr.com
1720-A Makaleha Pl.
Kapaa, HI 96746

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because...we owe the children of today and tomorrow a sustainable future. Plastic bags never completely biodegrade; are a significant source of litter, endanger marine life and will remain in our environment forever.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: timothy brock [bomblasticplastic@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 1:07 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

timothy brock
bomblasticplastic@yahoo.com
1702 crow valley rd nw apt 1010
dalton, GA 30720

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....i have seen what a problem plastic bags have caused in hawaii and in my home state of georgia, also, these bans have been successful worldwide and they require fossil fuels to make.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Stacy Takekawa [stacykt@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 1:10 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Stacy Takekawa
stacykt@hawaii.edu
1082 Maunawili Rd.
Kailua, HI 96734

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because I think the elimination of plastic bags in Hawaii is a worthy environmental goal that has economic implications as well.

I studied abroad in Galway, Ireland as an undergraduate student of Whitman College. Upon my first visit to the grocery store (Tesco) I discovered that they did not provide the single-use, non-biodegradable plastic bags upon checkout. Irish citizens were bringing all forms of reusable bags to the store with them to take their groceries home. I began to take my camping backpack to the store to fill it with groceries, and walking the mile and half back to my apartment with a single bag full of food on my back.

While not all people can use camping backpacks, people of all shapes and sizes will find the right method for them to take items they purchased wherever they need to go.

What are the arguments for non-reusable plastic bags? They are convenient? It has been our country's wasteful custom to provide these plastic bags at the grocery stores. Change has to start somewhere, and I suggest we follow the lead of others who have implemented the sensible, practical, environmental, economical policy of a ban on non-reusable plastic bags in grocery stores and the like.

I understand the bill being considered could have wide-ranging impacts on all types of businesses, but I think if we can first target the really big commercial guys--the grocery stores, the super-stores--the rest will eventually find it easier to follow suit.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

-Stacy Takekawa
William S. Richardson School of Law
First Year Law Student

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Jessica Rivera [jessicajunebug@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Jessica Rivera
jessicajunebug@yahoo.com
PO Box 622
Lawai, HI 96765

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because plastic bags kill wildlife, take away from our island's natural beauty, and never go away.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Victoria Cullins [WildSide@SailHawaii.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:49 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Victoria Cullins
WildSide@SailHawaii.com
87-1286 Farrington Hwy.
Waianae, HI 96792

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 and thank you for hearing it.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Brad Parsons [kuaibrad@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:37 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Brad Parsons
kuaibrad@hotmail.com
P.O. Box 223374
Princeville, HI 96722

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

If the Legislature must be involved in this matter, I support Senate Bill 2559.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Jasmine Cardinale [espresso4me2@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:42 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Jasmine Cardinale
espresso4me2@yahoo.com
77-6527 Alii Dr
Kailua Kona, HI 96740

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Aaron Jacobus [jacobus.aaron@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:43 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Aaron Jacobus
jacobus.aaron@yahoo.com
77-6527 Alii Dr
kailua Kona, HI 96740

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Diana Condie [dmcondie@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:44 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Diana Condie
dmcondie@yahoo.com
Alii Dr
Kailua Kona, HI 96740

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Mariya Gold [mariyakai@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 2:37 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Mariya Gold
mariyakai@gmail.com
2419 Ferdinand Ave
Honolulu, HI 96822

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable 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 SB2559 has not yet been passed. It just makes sense, for our environment, for our health, and for our future.

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559!

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

With much aloha,
Mariya Kai Gold

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Melissa Slack [messlack@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 1:59 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Melissa Slack
messlack@yahoo.com
5 Beech Street
Newburgh, NY 12550

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Tim Clark [clarkt@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:06 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Tim Clark
clarkt@hawaii.edu
1708 Wilhelmina Rise
Honolulu, HI 96816

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Morita, Vice Chair Coffman, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559. I am a marine biologist in Hawaii and have seen the negative impact plastics have on our marine life. For my PhD I researched the foraging ecology of the manta ray in Hawaii. Manta rays feed on plankton, and we would routinely observe them skimming plastic pieces off the waters surface as they fed. Plastic bags litter our ocean, and are consumed by fish, sea turtles, and sea birds. Studies of the North Pacific central gyre have found six times as much plastic by weight as plankton. Endangered sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jelly fish, ingesting the bags and dying when they can't pass them through their intestine. Sea birds swallow plastic pieces, mistaking them for food and die from starvation. Plastics are ingested by fish and litter our coral reefs. While single use plastic bags break down into smaller plastic pieces over time, these pieces never leave our environment. SB2259 would help reduce the level of plastics in our

environment by banning single use plastic bags. Instead, people would be encouraged to invest in our environment by bringing their own reusable bags. I hope you will invest in Hawaii's future by supporting SB2259.

Mahalo,

Tim Clark

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Scott Jarvis [sjarvis22@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 2:46 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Scott Jarvis
sjarvis22@hotmail.com
PO Box 1664 4427 One'One Rd.
Hanalei, HI 96714

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because it represents a first step in really doing something about the plastic and refuse problems.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Chris Perritt [cperritt@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 2:48 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Chris Perritt
cperritt@yahoo.com
78-7005 Ola Kino St
Kailua Kona, HI 96740

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because these types of bans have been successful worldwide.

Non-biodegradable plastic checkout bags are a hazard to our natural environment.

They remain in our environment forever and are a significant source of litter.

Plastic bags endanger marine life and decrease the health of our oceans

A ban on non-biodegradable plastic bags will encourage consumers to use reusable bags and reduce the amount of non-biodegradable plastic waste Hawaii produces.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Marjorie Bonar [margeb@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 3:49 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Marjorie Bonar
margeb@hawaii.rr.com
400 Auli`i Dr.
Pukalani, HI 96768

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 only if it is amended to ban all plastic bags. While a step in the right direction, the biodegradable factors are too inconclusive and create a potential for abuse by definition.
Just eliminate single use bags.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: pamela burrell [good.designworks@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

pamela burrell
good.designworks@hawaiiantel.net
po box 289 5564 kahiliholo rd
kilauea, HI 96754

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because it is a simple habit change of BYOB (bring your own bag) to the stores. It is time we change our ways and become conscious of what happens to these bags after we use them and how they are made.

As a member of Zero Waste Kaua'i on Kaua'i we passed a similar bill. We need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel and simply reuse shopping bags.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII
MĀNOA

RL: 2256

SB 2559
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Public Hearing – February 2, 2010
3:30 p.m., State Capitol, Conference Room 225

By
Peter Rappa, Environmental Center
Melissa Ihori, Environmental Health and Safety
Nicole Lowen, Environmental Center

SB 2559 requires retailers in the State to distribute only recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable checkout bags. Our statement on this measure does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Worldwide production of single use plastic grocery bags is estimated to be over 500 billion each year. In the U.S. alone consumers throw away 100 billion single use plastic grocery bags each year. Most end up in landfills where they can last for a thousand years. Except for those bags that are recycled, about 5 percent each year or burned in garbage to energy plants, all the plastic bags that have ever been made are still in the environment, in smaller and smaller pieces. Some of the plastic ends up in the marine environment where it kills an estimated 100,000 marine animals per year. We support the intent of this proposed legislation which attempts to address some of the problems caused by handling of single use plastic grocery bags by prohibiting their use, with some exceptions, from retail outlets that have gross annual sales of over \$300,000. However, we believe there are other ways to achieve the results of getting rid of non-biodegradable single use plastic bags.

This legislation encourages the use of recyclable and biodegradable plastic and paper bags by large retail outlets. The use of recyclable or biodegradable plastic or paper bags may be an overall plus for the environment; however, there are still many problems with reliance on this strategy to solve the problems associated with non-biodegradable single use plastic bags. First of all, providing a recyclable bag is no guarantee that a consumer will in fact recycle it, and providing a biodegradable bag does not ensure that this bag will be composted. An EPA study indicates that only about 5 percent of plastic bags used in the nation are recycled.

Biodegradable plastic bags break down best under specific conditions, usually as part of a composting program. If these composting programs do not exist, then these bags may end up in a landfill. If buried in the landfill where the mix of oxygen and water may not be optimal, they may take years or even decades to degrade. Furthermore, although these bags may eventually biodegrade in a landfill, they will not biodegrade into usable compost, but will likely be contaminated by other materials present. Even composted correctly, these bags take up to 18 months to degrade. If they escape into the environment, they can still hang around for months caught in trees, blocking drainage ditches or ending up in the nearshore waters.

Use of reusable cloth bags addresses the problems caused by the use and handling of single use plastic bags without the downsides of the biodegradable bags. The problem is getting people to switch to using reusable bags. Ireland seems to have found a way to do this. In 2002 they passed the first country wide plastic bag tax. The aim of the tax was not to raise revenue, though it did raise 9.6 million in its first year, but to change people's behavior. In that area it was a great success. The tax resulted in a 90 percent drop in the use of plastic bags, from 1.2 billion annually to about 230,000 today. Hawaii would do well to look into implementing a similar program.

Another way to proceed is to copy the City of San Francisco. The San Francisco City Council banned the use of plastic bags for carry out retail in 2007. The ordinance is the first such law in any city in the United States and has been drawing global scrutiny to see how it works. The city banned hard-to-recycle plastic bags in grocery stores, and so far, that translates into 5 million fewer plastic bags every month.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Renate Seldon [msrenate@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 4:43 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Renate Seldon
msrenate@hotmail.com
p.o. box 1526
anahola, HI 96703

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: joyce jenkins [jason060603@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 5:23 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

joyce jenkins
jason060603@msn.com
po box 2735
inwood, WV 25402

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Richard Kamis [kamii@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 10:32 PM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: S.B. #2559

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT;
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 225
DATE: Tuesday, February 2, 2010

To: Senator Mike Gabbard; Committee Chair, Senator J. Kalani English; Committee Vice Chair,
and Committee Members of the Energy an Environment Committee

RE: Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 2559: Relating to Environmental Protection

Dear Energy and Environment Committee:

We fully support Senate Bill 2559: Requires retailers in the State to distribute only recyclable, reusable or biodegradable check-out bags and we respectfully urge support for this Bill.

Thank you,

Richard and Elizabeth Kamis
2957 Kalakaua Avenue
96815

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: sarah elliott [sarah_teresi@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2010 7:42 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

sarah elliott
sarah_teresi@yahoo.com
1941 vermont ave
west sacramento, CA 95691

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: David Maddox [david.j.maddox@juno.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2010 12:27 AM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

David Maddox
david.j.maddox@juno.com
77-350 Ainanani St
Kailua Kona, HI 96740

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because non-biodegradable plastic bags do not degrade and are a significant source of litter. They also are a danger to animals both on land and in the sea. There are easy, biodegradable options available that would replace non-biodegradable plastic bags.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Judie Lundborg [judie@aloha.net]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 11:02 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Judie Lundborg
judie@aloha.net
4865 Nonou Rd
Kapaa, HI 96746

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 for the following reasons: bags are not biodegradable, they are a constant source of litter and they are harmful to marine wildlife.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: John Harder [dumpdoctor@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 10:19 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

John Harder
dumpdoctor@hotmail.com
PO Box 272
Anahola, HI 96703

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

Zero Waste Kauai, a local non-profit with over 60 active members strongly supports House Bill 2125, however we are concerned it would override plastic bag bans recently passed on Kauai and Maui. In addition we feel the major portion of any funds collected should be targeted to support County recycling efforts and coastal water protection programs.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: sara Stuart [saraasc@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 10:09 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

sara Stuart
saraasc@gmail.com
3027 Kaimuki Ave
Honolulu, HI 96816

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because we need to begin our upward climb to island sustainability and banning unnecessary non-biodegradable is 100% possible. Cities all over the world have proven this and we as an island nation need to step up and prove that we too value our natural resources. Plastic bags kill marine life and fill our landfills. There is no reason not to pass this bill. We can do it! Ho'oponopono!

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Michelle Bodily [bodily@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 10:06 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Michelle Bodily
bodily@hawaii.edu
898 Leighton St.
Honolulu, HI 96821

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because there are better alternatives to the NON-biodegradable plastic bags we have in Hawaii. I have witnessed the changes at the University of Hawaii at Manoa to using biodegradable plates. With that said, and evidence that the future of our world is doing something to make a difference for themselves and future generations. Let the people on higher political standing start to help make Hawaii a cleaner, more self sustaining place. Falling pebbles are all it takes to start a landslide. Let's continue on our journey (as inhibitors of this world) to make it better. Reduce non-biodegradable plastic that ends up in our landfills and blown over our islands!

Please help, Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Lisette Langlois [Mangokoaparadise@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 9:08 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Lisette Langlois
Mangokoaparadise@gmail.com
POBOX 1002
Waimea, Kauai, HI 96796

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because....

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Anne Thurston [athurston@irmt.org]
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 7:58 PM
To: Sen. Mike Gabbard; Sen. J. Kalani English; ENETestimony
Subject: Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Mike Gabbard
J. Kalani English
Committee on Energy and Environment

Anne Thurston
athurston@irmt.org
3639 Keoniana Road
Princeville, HI 96722

Tuesday, February 2, 2010 03:30 PM

Strong support for Ban on Non-Biodegradable Plastic Checkout Bags

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment, I strongly support House Bill 2125 because plastic bags are very harmful to our environment, and it is time that we are mature enough to take responsibility for our actions. There is no reason for us to receive plastic bags when we shop and every reason why we should not. Landfills are already a problem, plastic bags are not biodegradable, and they are already damaging marine life.

Please let us put a stop to this.

I strongly support Senate Bill 2559 because

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 8:17 PM
To: ENETestimony
Cc: carl.imparato@juno.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2559 on 2/2/2010 3:30:00 PM

Testimony for ENE 2/2/2010 3:30:00 PM SB2559

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Carl Imparato
Organization: Individual
Address: P.O. Box 1102 Hanalei, HI
Phone: 808-826-1856
E-mail: carl.imparato@juno.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2010

Comments:

Aloha members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

Although I generally consider myself to be an advocate for the environment, I strongly oppose SB2559, for three reasons.

First, "single-use checkout bags" have many uses after their initial use. Many people, including myself, use them at home, use them for garbage disposal, and use them for picking up animal waste. Banning stores from giving out these bags will increase costs for Hawaii residents by requiring them to purchase what they currently obtain for free. Why impose another tax on people?

Second, I do not believe that these bags constitute a major source of waste. They take up incredibly little space in landfills compared to all other trash. And as a person who picks up litter along my local highway, I can honestly say that plastic bags are an very small part of the trash that is on the highway.

Finally, I strongly resent more "big brother" government. Do not place more restrictions on my life, particularly when the purported societal benefits are would be meager to non-existent.

There are instances when it is legitimate for government to impose restrictions on citizens in order to protect the general welfare. This is NOT one of those instances. I strongly resent our government trying to force me and other citizens to conform to the behavioral standards of extremists who want to require that when I go to the supermarket, I must bring a half-dozen cloth bags with me. If some citizens want to shop that way, it is their right to do so. But please do not impose that burden on the rest of us, especially when the purported societal benefits of these new behavioral restrictions would be minimal.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Carl Imparao