

LATE

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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In reply, please refer to:
File:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
S.B. 1370, RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Acting Director of Health

February 8, 2011
3 p.m.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health appreciates the intent of this measure to reduce
2 plastic bag waste, but respectfully opposes the measure at this time.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** The department estimates that the additional resources needed to plan, coordinate
4 and implement this new ban would total approximately \$150,000, including 1.5 FTEs. There may be
5 added costs to consumers who switch to paper bags or other reusable bags.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** The bill prohibits businesses with annual gross sales of over \$250,000 as of
7 January 1, 2012 from providing single-use plastic checkout bags to their customers, sets administrative
8 penalties, and encourages them to offer only paper bags, biodegradable plastic bags, or reusable bags for
9 sale instead. The emphasis of the bill on the mandatory use of paper, biodegradable, compostable or
10 reusable checkout bags, accompanies a ban on non-biodegradable, single-use plastic checkout bags.

11 While the department generally supports the reduction of solid waste, litter, and the use of
12 petroleum resources, we respectfully oppose this measure.

13 The department believes a statewide ban is inappropriate at this time. The plastic bag reduction
14 ordinances for both Kauai and Maui County just took effect in early January 2011. These ordinances
15 allow local businesses to charge customers for paper bags and other reusable checkout bags. The County

1 of Hawaii has attempted to pass a similar ordinance without success. Therefore, the department prefers
2 to let counties decide how to reduce use of non-biodegradable single-use plastic checkout bags.

3 Passage of a statewide ban also means that the department will have to enforce the ban, conduct
4 outreach and education, and evaluate requests from businesses who claim undue hardship, with no
5 additional staff or other resources.

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

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Contents of a dead sea birds.



Honu often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, their favorite food. 33-50% of all turtles found in American waters have plastic impacted in their stomachs



Plastic bag smothering coral, which needs access to flowing water to feed, and exposure to light to photosynthesize. This coral will be smothered to death.



Dead whale found in Puget Sound. Biologists found a surprising amount of garbage in its stomach, including more than 20 plastic bags, small towels, surgical gloves, sweat pants, plastic pieces, duct tape, and a golf ball.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2014/04/22/whale-found-dead-in-puget-sound-with-plastic-in-stomach/2014/04/22/>



Typical condition of Kamilo Beach on Hawaii



River in Los Angeles, CA



Contents of a dead whale found in the English Channel in 2008, published by Science Magazine.



Penguin found at Troubridge Island



Plastic bags in a landfill.



Plastic bags along Buriganga River in Bangladesh. The country of Bangladesh now has a BAN on plastic bags.