
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the excessive use of
2 single-use checkout bags presents an unnecessary hazard to the
3 natural environment. Single-use checkout bags:

4 (1) Require crude oil, a polluting fossil fuel, for their
5 manufacture;

6 (2) Pose serious health risks to legally protected sea
7 turtles and marine mammals;

8 (3) Contribute to unsightly litter;

9 (4) Burden overcrowded landfills;

10 (5) Are recycled minimally;

11 (6) Contribute to deforestation and greenhouse gas
12 emissions; and

13 (7) Are manufactured using large quantities of water and
14 non-renewable energy.

15 An environmentally friendly alternative to the single-use
16 checkout bag is the reusable bag, which consumers can easily
17 acquire, clean, and store.



1 The legislature finds that the State has a compelling
2 interest in protecting its precious natural environment.
3 Several countries as well as international and domestic cities
4 have successfully implemented laws that have resulted in a
5 significant reduction in single-use checkout bag usage, with
6 associated fees expended on environmental protection programs.
7 The health and welfare of the people of Hawaii would benefit
8 from a significant reduction of single-use checkout bag waste
9 and litter.

10 The legislature further finds that the improper disposal of
11 bags, particularly plastic bags, pollutes Hawaii's streams and
12 coral reefs and strangles and starves endangered marine animals.
13 Increasing the resilience of these ecosystems to these threats
14 requires litter removal, strengthening water quality measures
15 such as reducing discharge of pollutants in developed areas and
16 controlling erosion caused by deforestation and invasive
17 species, and reducing erosion and sedimentation of reefs.
18 Protecting Hawaii's streams and marine areas from these high-
19 priority threats will help offset the damage caused by
20 ubiquitous single-use checkout bags.

21 The legislature also finds that production of paper and
22 plastic single-use checkout bags requires the consumption and



1 combustion of large quantities of fossil fuels, trees, and
2 water. Plastic bags require large amounts of crude oil to
3 produce, and the production of paper bags can use twenty times
4 more fresh water and four times more energy than plastic bags.
5 In the United States alone, over fourteen million trees are used
6 to create paper bags, causing significant greenhouse gas
7 emissions and removing forests that absorb large quantities of
8 carbon dioxide. Disposing paper and plastic bags by burning
9 further increases greenhouse gas emissions.

10 The legislature further finds that protecting Hawaii's
11 forests from damage from invasive species helps to mitigate the
12 climate change caused by the production and disposal of single-
13 use checkout bags. The intergovernmental panel on climate
14 change considers reducing or preventing deforestation as the
15 climate mitigation option with the largest and most immediate
16 carbon stock impact in the short term.

17 Forest protection also increases Hawaii's resilience to the
18 likely effects of climate change caused by burning fossil fuels.
19 Major threats of climate change to Hawaii's water supplies are
20 predicted, including drought from higher temperatures, reduced
21 rainfall, and rising sea levels salting coastal freshwater
22 aquifers. Climate change may also result in severe storm



1 events, causing flooding and erosion. Through Act 152, Session
 2 Laws of Hawaii 2000, the legislature recognized that fresh water
 3 is not an infinite resource and its high quality, quantity, and
 4 sustainability depend upon forested watersheds. Hawaii's
 5 forests significantly increase water capture and break the
 6 impact of heavy rains, reducing flooding and erosion and
 7 siltation of reefs and fisheries. Protecting watersheds is
 8 crucial for Hawaii's resiliency to climate change by ensuring
 9 water availability and buffering severe storm events.

10 The purpose of this Act is to reduce the adverse impact of
 11 single-use checkout bag waste on Hawaii's precious and unique
 12 natural environment by establishing an offset fee for the
 13 distribution of single-use checkout bags and directing use of
 14 the fee revenues to fund programs to mitigate the damaging
 15 effects of single-use checkout bags by improving water quality
 16 and resilience to climate change.

17 SECTION 2. Chapter 342H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
 18 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and
 19 to read as follows:

20 "PART . SINGLE-USE CHECKOUT BAG FEE

21 §342H-A Definitions. As used in this part, unless the
 22 context otherwise requires:



1 "Business" means any commercial enterprise or
2 establishment, including sole proprietorships, joint ventures,
3 partnerships, and corporations, or any other legally cognizable
4 entity, whether for profit or not for profit, and includes all
5 employees of the business.

6 "Mil" means one thousandth of one inch.

7 "Proprietary information" means business information
8 covered by any of the exceptions to public disclosure under
9 chapter 92F.

10 "Reusable bag" means a bag with handles that is
11 specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is
12 made of:

- 13 (1) Cloth or other machine-washable fabric; or
- 14 (2) Durable material suitable for reuse, including plastic
15 that is at least 2.25 mils thick.

16 "Single-use checkout bag":

- 17 (1) Means a bag made of plastic that is less than 2.25
18 mils thick, or a paper package or sack, whether
19 recyclable or non-recyclable, that is provided by a
20 business to a customer, and is designed for one-time
21 use to contain and transport merchandise; and

- 22 (2) Does not include:



- 1 (A) Bags used by customers inside a business to
2 package loose items, such as fruits, vegetables,
3 nuts, grains, or candies, or small hardware
4 items;
- 5 (B) Bags used to contain or wrap frozen foods, meat
6 or fish, flowers or potted plants, or other items
7 to contain dampness;
- 8 (C) Bags used to protect or transport prepared foods
9 or bakery goods;
- 10 (D) Bags provided by pharmacists to contain
11 prescription medications;
- 12 (E) Newspaper bags for home newspaper delivery;
- 13 (F) Door-hanger bags;
- 14 (G) Laundry, dry cleaning, or garment bags, including
15 bags provided by hotels to guests to contain wet
16 or dirty clothing;
- 17 (H) Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags
18 intended for use as garbage, pet waste, or yard
19 waste bags;
- 20 (I) Bags used to contain live animals, such as fish
21 or insects sold in pet stores; or



1 (J) Bags used to transport chemical pesticides,
2 drain-cleaning chemicals, or other caustic
3 chemicals sold at the retail level; provided that
4 this exemption shall be limited to one bag per
5 customer.

6 "Small business" means a business that grossed \$500,000 or
7 less in revenues in the previous year.

8 **§342H-B Distribution of single-use checkout bags; fee.**

9 (a) Beginning January 1, 2013, all businesses in the State
10 shall charge and collect a fee of 10 cents for each single-use
11 checkout bag that is provided to customers; provided that, if
12 after July 1, 2016, the department determines that the statewide
13 distribution of single-use checkout bags has not decreased by at
14 least seventy-five per cent from the effective date of this Act,
15 the fee shall automatically increase to 25 cents on January 1,
16 2017.

17 (b) Businesses subject to the requirements of this part
18 shall indicate on each customer transaction receipt the number
19 of single-use checkout bags provided and the amount of the fee
20 charged.

21 (c) Nothing in this part shall preclude businesses from
22 making reusable bags available for sale to customers.



1 (d) Of the fees collected pursuant to subsection (a), a
2 business may retain:

3 (1) Up to twenty per cent from January 1, 2013, through
4 December 31, 2013; and

5 (2) Up to ten per cent from January 1, 2014, and
6 thereafter;

7 provided that all fees retained shall be subject to chapters 235
8 and 237; provided further that any taxes imposed on the fees
9 retained shall not be charged to any consumer.

10 (e) Businesses subject to the requirements of this part
11 shall conduct educational outreach to their customers regarding
12 the single-use checkout bag fee program.

13 **§342H-C Remittance of fees.** (a) No later than the last
14 day of each month, each business subject to the requirements of
15 this part shall remit to the department the fees collected
16 pursuant to section 342H-B(a), less the amount retained pursuant
17 to section 342H-B(d), during the immediately preceding month;
18 provided that a small business may remit the fees on a quarterly
19 basis on the last day of the month following the end of a
20 quarter.

21 (b) Payments and receipts of fees shall be reported on
22 forms prescribed by the director. Any proprietary information



1 obtained by the department shall be kept confidential and shall
2 not be disclosed to any other person.

3 (c) Businesses shall be subject to penalties and interest
4 for late or underpaid fees.

5 (d) The department shall deposit all fees collected under
6 this part into a special account in the environmental management
7 special fund established by section 342G-63; provided that of
8 the fees deposited:

9 (1) The first \$800,000 per year shall be expended by the
10 department for administrative, education, audit,
11 compliance, and enforcement activities associated with
12 collection of the single-use checkout bag fee; and

13 (2) Any remaining balance shall be distributed as follows:

14 (A) Twenty per cent shall be deposited into the
15 environmental response revolving fund established
16 under section 128D-2, to be expended by the
17 department; and

18 (B) Eighty per cent shall be deposited into the
19 natural area reserve fund established under
20 section 195-9, to be expended by the department
21 of land and natural resources for watershed
22 protection, restoration, and acquisition.



1 **§342H-D Violations.** (a) It shall be a violation of this
2 part for any business that is subject to the requirements of
3 this part to pay or otherwise reimburse a customer for any
4 portion of the fee required to be charged and collected pursuant
5 to section 342H-B.

6 (b) Violations of this part or any rule adopted pursuant
7 to this part shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$1,000
8 for each violation.

9 **§342H-E Injunctive and other relief.** The director may
10 institute a civil action in any court of competent jurisdiction
11 for injunctive and other relief to correct or abate violation of
12 this part or any rule adopted pursuant to this part, to collect
13 administrative penalties, or to obtain other relief.

14 **§342H-F County ordinances.** (a) Nothing in this part
15 shall be construed to preempt or in any manner affect a county
16 ordinance prohibiting or restricting single-use checkout bags;
17 provided that the fee established under section 342H-B shall be
18 applicable to single-use checkout bags that are not prohibited
19 or restricted by a county ordinance.

20 (b) Nothing in this part shall prohibit a county from
21 enacting ordinances that are more stringent in the control or
22 prohibition of single-use checkout bags than this part.



1 **§342H-G Business reporting.** By March 31 of each year, all
2 businesses that are required to charge and collect the single-
3 use checkout bag fee pursuant to section 342H-B shall submit to
4 the department, on forms prescribed by the department, an annual
5 report for the previous calendar year containing the following
6 information:

7 (1) The number of single-use checkout bags provided to
8 customers; and

9 (2) The number of reusable bags provided to customers.

10 **§342H-H Audit authority.** The records of each business
11 subject to this part shall be made available, upon request, for
12 inspection by the department or a duly authorized agent of the
13 department. Any proprietary information obtained by the
14 department or its duly authorized agent shall be kept
15 confidential and shall not be disclosed to any other person,
16 except:

17 (1) As may be reasonably required in an administrative or
18 judicial proceeding to enforce any provision of this
19 part or any rule adopted pursuant to this part; or

20 (2) Under an order issued by a court or administrative
21 agency hearings officer.



1 §342H-I Rules. The director shall adopt rules, pursuant
2 to chapter 91, as may be necessary for the purposes of this
3 part.

4 §342H-J Annual report. The department shall submit to the
5 legislature an annual report, no later than twenty days prior to
6 the convening of each regular session, which shall include the
7 department's efforts to effectuate this chapter, the number of
8 single-use bags distributed, the statewide reduction rate in the
9 amount of single-use bags distributed, and any recommended
10 policy changes needed to better effectuate the purpose of this
11 part."

12 SECTION 3. Section 342G-63, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

14 "(c) The department shall expend moneys contained in the
15 environmental management special fund to:

16 (1) Partially fund the operating costs of the program
17 including its regulatory functions and the development
18 of waste reduction and diversion activities as
19 mandated by chapter 342G;

20 (2) Fund statewide education, demonstration, and market
21 development programs, through direct contract or
22 direct transfer of funds to the counties and the



1 department of business, economic development, and
2 tourism, or under a grant program that may be
3 developed under rules pursuant to chapter 91; [and]

4 (3) Provide for annual training for municipal solid waste
5 operators in compliance with 40 Code of Federal
6 Regulations Part 258 and chapter 11-58, Hawaii
7 Administrative Rules[-];

8 (4) Fund administrative, audit, compliance, and
9 enforcement activities associated with the single-use
10 checkout bag fee established by part , chapter
11 342H; and

12 (5) Fund educational outreach regarding the single-use
13 checkout bag fee program established by part ,
14 chapter 342H:"

15 SECTION 4. No later than March 31, 2013, each business, as
16 defined in section 2 of this Act, that is required to charge and
17 collect the single-use checkout bag fee pursuant to this Act
18 shall submit to the department of health a one-time report
19 listing the number of single-use checkout bags and reusable bags
20 provided to customers by that business for the 2012 calendar
21 year.

1 SECTION 5. If any provision of this Act, or the
2 application thereof to any person or circumstance is held
3 invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or
4 applications of the Act, which can be given effect without the
5 invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions
6 of this Act are severable.

7 SECTION 6. Nothing in this Act shall be interpreted or
8 applied so as to create any requirement, power, or duty in
9 conflict with any federal or state law.

10 SECTION 7. In codifying the new sections added by section
11 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute
12 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating
13 the new sections in this Act.

14 SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 9. The revisor of statutes shall insert the
17 effective date of this Act in the appropriate place in section 2
18 of this Act.

19 SECTION 10. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Environmental Protection; Single-use Checkout Bags; Fee

Description:

Requires businesses in the State to collect a fee for single-use checkout bags provided to a customer. Allows businesses to keep twenty per cent of the fees for the first year of the program and ten per cent of the fees thereafter, subject to income and general excises taxes. Requires fees to be collected on single-use checkout bags not prohibited by county ordinance. Deposits all fees into a special account in the environmental management special fund. Requires first \$800,000 of all fees collected to be expended by DOH for costs relating to administrative, education, audit, compliance, and enforcement activities associated with the fee. Requires any remaining fees collected to be deposited in the environmental response revolving fund and the natural area reserve fund. Requires reports to the legislature. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

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