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# 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 consumers in Hawaii  
2 use over 300,000,000 single-use plastic bags per year and these  
3 bags are one of the most common forms of litter in the State.  
4 These lightweight bags blow out of trash receptacles and  
5 landfills onto the land and into the ocean. Many different  
6 marine species are endangered by plastic bags, such as sea  
7 turtles, sea birds, and monk seals. Although single-use plastic  
8 bags are used on average for fewer than fifteen minutes, they  
9 remain as part of the environment for decades, because they are  
10 manufactured from fossil fuels and never truly degrade, breaking  
11 down only into toxic microplastics.

12           In addition, single-use plastic bags have created blight on  
13 Hawaii's natural beauty and an economic burden for the counties  
14 to clean up. Less than five per cent of plastic bags are ever  
15 recycled. Furthermore, these bags contaminate the waste stream  
16 and need to be removed at recycling centers, where they often  
17 clog the machines.



1           Although the use of reusable bags has increased, some  
2 retailers still provide paper bags for consumers to carry their  
3 purchases. However, paper bags cost retailers significantly  
4 more than plastic bags.

5           In an effort to deal with the environmental and economic  
6 problems caused by single-use plastic bags, all of Hawaii's  
7 counties have enacted ordinances prohibiting the distribution of  
8 these bags at many retail points of sale. However, differences  
9 exist between the various county ordinances.

10           The purpose of this Act is to establish a working group to  
11 study methods of reducing the use of both single-use plastic  
12 bags and certain non-recyclable paper bags.

13           SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall convene a  
14 working group to study various methods to reduce the use of all  
15 disposable bags, including single-use plastic bags and paper  
16 bags, such as by:

- 17           (1) Increasing the use of reusable bags; and
- 18           (2) Assessing a fee on all disposable bags, whether paper  
19           or plastic, to help offset costs for retailers.



1           (b) The working group shall be chaired by the head of the  
2 office of solid waste management of the department of health and  
3 shall consist of the following members:

4           (1) A representative of the city and county of Honolulu,  
5                 to be appointed by the mayor;

6           (2) A representative of the county of Hawaii, to be  
7                 appointed by the mayor;

8           (3) A representative of the county of Maui, to be  
9                 appointed by the mayor;

10          (4) A representative of the county of Kauai, to be  
11                 appointed by the mayor; and

12          (5) A representative of the department of business,  
13                 economic development, and tourism, to be appointed by  
14                 the director.

15          (c) The head of the office of solid waste management of  
16 the department of health shall also invite members of  
17 environmental organizations and business organizations to  
18 participate as members of the working group.

19          (d) No member of the working group shall be made subject  
20 to chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of that  
21 member's participation as a member of the working group.



1           (e) The working group shall submit a report of its  
2 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
3 legislation, to the legislature by November 30, 2015. The  
4 report shall be prepared by the department of health.

5           SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

Working Group; Reduction in the Use of Disposable Bags

**Description:**

Establishes a working group to study methods to reduce the use of all disposable bags. (HB1507 HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

