

---

---

# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that plastic marine  
2 debris is fouling Hawaii's iconic beaches and the ocean, harming  
3 recreation and the State's largest industry: tourism. Most of  
4 this debris comes not from Hawaii, but from around the world,  
5 transported by ocean currents and accumulated in the State from  
6 the North Pacific Gyre, also known as the Great Pacific Garbage  
7 Patch. Plastic marine debris is essentially indestructible. It  
8 does not go away over time, but breaks down into smaller and  
9 smaller fragments, especially on beaches where it is exposed to  
10 sunlight and wave action. Both larger and smaller pieces of  
11 plastic marine debris have significant negative impacts on the  
12 environment and contribute to the potential death of marine  
13 animals and bird populations through ingestion. The smaller  
14 fragments, referred to as microplastics (less than five  
15 millimeters, or about the size of a sesame seed and smaller),  
16 are much more difficult to remove. Therefore, it is important,



1 where feasible, to remove plastic marine debris before it breaks  
2 down into smaller fragments.

3 The legislature also finds that harmful substances attached  
4 to plastic marine debris pose a risk to the marine environment  
5 and to humans. Persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic ("PBTs")  
6 chemicals or substances resist degradation and are biomagnified  
7 as they move through the food chain, leading to toxic effects  
8 that impact many ocean species, including birds, whales,  
9 turtles, seals, corals, small organisms, the fish that form the  
10 foundation of the local fishing industry, and potentially even  
11 humans that eat fish. It has been estimated that by 2050, there  
12 will be more plastic than fish by weight in the world's oceans.

13 The legislature therefore finds that plastic marine debris  
14 is creating unsanitary conditions and public nuisances and that  
15 removal of plastic marine debris from beaches is critical to  
16 Hawaii's economy and environment. Removal of plastic marine  
17 debris has been hampered by disagreement over which agencies  
18 have responsibility and jurisdiction. Regardless of which  
19 agency or group removes the plastic marine debris, specialized  
20 equipment will be needed to remove the debris effectively and  
21 efficiently from beaches and shorelines. Funding is therefore



1 necessary for research and development of equipment that can  
2 most effectively and efficiently remove the plastic marine  
3 debris.

4 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to enhance Hawaii's  
5 environment and protect its economy by making an appropriation  
6 to the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center for  
7 the research and development of specialized equipment for  
8 effectively and efficiently removing plastic marine debris from  
9 shores and beaches.

10 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
12 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for  
13 the purposes of researching and developing specialized equipment  
14 to effectively remove plastic marine debris from beaches and  
15 shorelines.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of  
17 Hawaii Water Resources Research Center for the purposes of this  
18 Act; provided that the University of Hawaii Water Resources  
19 Research Center may contract with other entities as needed to  
20 carry out the purposes of this Act.



# H.B. NO. 2439

1 For purposes of this section, "plastic marine debris" means  
 2 any discarded or abandoned plastic found on any shore, beach, or  
 3 any beach access right-of-way.

4 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.

5

INTRODUCED BY:

De Hitt  
S. Ains  
T. P.  
Ch. Todd  
R. n. Hitt

JAN 22 2020



# H.B. NO. 2439

**Report Title:**

Plastic Marine Debris; University of Hawaii; Water Resources Research Center; Specialized Equipment; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to research and develop specialized equipment for the removal of plastic marine debris.

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

