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



1 is important, where feasible, to remove plastic marine debris
2 before it breaks 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 chemicals
6 or substances resist degradation and are biomagnified as they
7 move through the food chain, leading to toxic effects that
8 impact many ocean species, including birds, whales, turtles,
9 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 over its removal.
19 Regardless of which agency or group removes the plastic marine
20 debris, specialized equipment will be needed to remove the
21 debris effectively and efficiently from beaches and shorelines.



1 Funding is therefore necessary for research and development of
2 equipment that can most effectively and efficiently remove the
3 plastic marine 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; provided that for purposes of this section, "plastic
16 marine debris" means any discarded or abandoned plastic found on
17 any shore, beach, or any beach access right-of-way.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of
19 Hawaii water resources research center for the purposes of this
20 Act; provided that the University of Hawaii water resources



1 research center may contract with other entities as needed to
2 carry out the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



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. Takes effect on
7/1/2050. (HD1)

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