

EACP Committee

From: Alexis Chapman <alexisapchapman@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 1:55 PM
To: EACP Committee; Lauren Suzanne Zirbel
Subject: HFIA Opposition Testimony for EACP 2-18-20
Attachments: HFIA Testimony_Maui Plastic Ban_EACP 2-18-20.pdf

Hello, attached please find the Hawaii Food Industry Association's Testimony in Opposition to the proposed bill, Restricting the Use and Sale of Single Use Plastic Disposable Foodware, being heard by the Environmental, Agricultural, and Cultural Preservation Committee on February 18, 2020.

Please advise if any additional action is necessary in order for our testimony to be accepted.

Thank you,
Alexis

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TO:

Environmental, Agricultural, And Cultural Preservation Committee
Shane M. Sinenci, Chair
Shane M. Sinenci, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 18, 2020
TIME: 1:30pm
PLACE: Council Chamber

RE: County Communication 18-430 Restricting the Use and Sale of Single-Use Plastic Disposable Foodware

Position: Oppose

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA strongly supports a holistic approach to responsible waste management in Hawaii. We believe in the need to find local solutions like incentives and consumer driven initiatives, or local recycling and composting that would allow us to create resources out of waste from any source.

The definition of plastic in this bill is unusual and problematic, categorizing plastic as non-recyclable is also not accurate. PET plastic in particular can easily be recycled in a closed loop indefinitely, just like aluminum.

The food definitions used in this bill would include any locally produced food like chips or cookies. These items are sold in plastic film bags because there are not functional alternatives.

It would also disadvantage local producers since their packaging would be limited in ways that producers of food outside the County are not.

We suggest at minimum that the definitions in this bill be changed accordingly:

“Prepared food means, foods or beverages which are prepared on the premises by cooking, chopping, slicing, mixing, freezing, or squeezing, and which require no further preparation to be consumed. "Prepared food" is restaurant style food that is packaged after an item is ordered and is ready to be consumed with no additional heating or cooking on or off the premises of a food vendor. "Prepared food" does not include raw eggs, raw butchered meats, raw fish, raw poultry, or prepackaged foods.”

And that an exemption be added for “Prepackaged foods” which should be defined as follows,

“Prepackaged food means foods that are sealed or wrapped in a container prior to a food order. Prepackaged foods are presealed or contained items, including but not limited to food for wholesale, breads, cookies, milk, juice, snacks, candy, nuts, fruits, frozen meals, vegetables, or other items typically sold in a grocery store or a food manufacturer’s retail location.”

This bill has an implementation date of last year so businesses have no idea of what the actual implementation date will be. An overly fast implementation date for this bill would be extremely difficult if not impossible for many Maui businesses to Comply with. Stocking and packaging decisions are made far in advance, and businesses purchase large quantities of these types of products in or to reduce cost. For the polystyrene ban, which had a much more limited scope than this, 24 months was given for implementation. We would suggest that since this bill will impact many more businesses and many more products that more than two years will be needed for a successful change over if this measure is passed.

This measure seems to be modeled on Honolulu County’s Bill 40, which is having ongoing implementation issues. We would suggest that instead Maui County consider a measure modeled on Portland Oregon’s Single Use Plastic Reduction Policy¹, which allows for utensils and straws only on request and has been successfully implemented.

Bans may reduce one kind of waste, but it is just replaced with a different kind, and on Maui all waste meets the same end. We believe that a more proactive and functional way for the County to reduce the total amount of waste generated would be through things incentives, local composting and recycling, or consumer driven initiatives.

¹ <https://beta.portland.gov/bps/garbage-recycling/single-use-plastics-reduction-policy>

Maui County along with the food industry, environmental groups, and other stake holders are currently part of a statewide Plastic Working Group. We encourage Maui County to fully participate in this process by engaging with fellow members and giving the group time to create solutions that can work for our entire state. This measure is not the right choice for Maui County, and we ask that it be held.