

April 5th 2021

Senator Brian Schatz
722 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mazie Hirono
109 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Kai Kahele
1205 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

To the Honorable Senator Schatz, Senator Hirono, and Representative Kahele,

As community organizations, businesses, scientists, educators and concerned citizens who care deeply about Hawaii's ocean and the economy it supports, we are writing to urge you to support the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act (BFFPPA). This comprehensive bill shows a commitment to real solutions by reducing throwaway plastics and encouraging producer responsibility while putting a pause on the production of more plastic pollution.

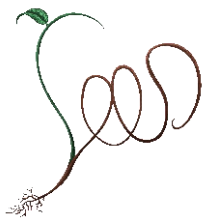
The location of the Hawaiian Islands in relation to the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, commonly referred to as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, exposes Hawaii's coastlines to high debris loads. When compared to other U.S. Pacific Coastal areas, Hawaii receives 2-3 times the amount of debris accumulation (NOAA, 2020). The Hawaiian Island's near-shore habitat drives ocean-based tourism and supports extensive coral reef systems, which hold over \$33 billion in economic value to the state (NOAA, 2011). These fragile ecosystems protect our coastlines, provide habitat to a wide variety of marine life, and contribute to the State's economy through myriad ways.

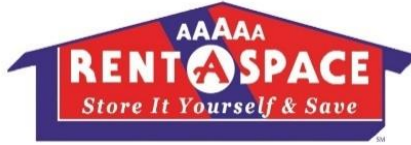
The plastic pollution crisis is threatening the health of these natural resources. The problem has grown so massive that our broken waste management systems are unable to handle it, with the U.S. ranked as the world's largest generator of plastic waste (Law et al., 2020). Recent studies show that the amount of plastic entering our oceans will triple in the next 20 years if we continue business-as-usual (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2020), leading to more debris littering our coastlines here at home. Without reducing plastic waste or holding producers accountable, the burden falls on local governments, taxpayers, and ultimately human and environmental health. This legislation provides the opportunity to create a circular economy of reusable products rather than throwaway plastics made from fossil fuels.

The BFFPPA, soon to be re-introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley (OR) and Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CA), builds on statewide laws across the country and outlines plastic reduction strategies to improve the health of our people and our planet. Key components of this bill:

1. **Extended Producer Responsibility:** The bill requires producers of packaging, containers, and food-service products to design, manage, and finance waste and recycling programs.
2. **Reduce Plastic Consumption and Waste:** The bill bans certain single-use plastic products that are not recyclable, places a fee on remaining carryout bags, and creates a nationwide beverage container refund program.
3. **Stop Overburdening Systems Here and Abroad:** The bill prohibits plastic waste from being shipped to developing countries and closes waste export loopholes by banning waste exports to countries who themselves re-export to developing countries. Additional provisions would spur massive investments in U.S. domestic recycling and composting infrastructure.
4. **Limit Plastic Production:** The bill places a temporary pause on new plastic facilities until the Environmental Protection Agency updates and creates important regulations on those facilities.

We, the undersigned, strongly encourage you to join Representative Ed Case in becoming co-sponsors for this bill. This legislation will take the necessary strides towards a cleaner, healthier future for this planet.





*ALL 81 SURFRIDER OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS (STATEWIDE) IN SUPPORT