



January 29, 2021

Agriculture and Environment Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Surfrider Foundation would like to offer this testimony in support of SB582.

The Surfrider Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves, and beaches. Surfrider maintains a network of over 150 chapters and academic clubs nationwide, including 4 chapters in the Hawaiian Islands. Addressing plastic pollution and ensuring the protection of clean water are two of Surfrider Foundation's primary focus areas.

The impacts and presence of plastic pollution are clearly documented - not only in Hawai'i but across the world. Plastic pollution in Hawaii ranges from microplastics that contaminate coastal waters and harm marine life to massive piles of plastic waste along Kamilo Beach, nicknamed "Plastic Beach." Studies indicate that 17 water bodies around the Hawaiian islands are impaired by plastic pollution. Surfrider Foundation's chapters across the state have for years been removing and documenting plastic pollution in coastal areas. In 2020 alone, the Surfrider Foundation Kaua'i Chapter removed an estimated 60,000 pounds of plastic pollution from the island's shorelines.

In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acknowledges the need to incorporate plastic pollution into Hawaii's 303(d) List of Impaired Waters determinations. In a [final ruling](#) dated March 30, 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rescinded its approval of the State of Hawai'i 2018 Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters, citing specifically that "the State's submission does not demonstrate that it has satisfied its statutory and regulatory obligation to assemble and evaluate all existing and readily available data and information related to plastics." As a result, EPA Regional Administrator John W. Busterud unilaterally decided to list Tern Island and Kamilo Beach as "impaired" by plastic pollution and ordered Hawai'i to include them in water-quality management plans to reduce the impact of plastic pollution on its waters, beaches and wildlife.

Plastic pollution, however, impairs multiple beaches and coastlines across Hawai'i and poses serious threats to coastal ecosystems and public health. Surfrider Foundation therefore strongly supports SB 582 to amend [HRS § 342D-1](#) to explicitly include "plastic" within the definition of "Pollutant."

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in support of SB 582, submitted on the behalf of the Surfrider Foundation's 4 Hawai'i Chapters and their 400+ members.

Sincerely,

Lauren Blickley

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Blickley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hawai'i Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation