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Chamber of
Sustainable
Commerce
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI
96823

Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Vice-Chair
Comm. on Commerce & Consumer Protection

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Comm. on Agriculture and Environment

Tuesday, March 19, 2024
9:30 AM in Room 229

RE: **HB1688 HD2** Relating to Environment - **SUGGESTING AMENDMENTS**

Dear Chairs Keohokalole & Gabbard, Vice Chairs Fukunaga & Richards and Members of both Committees,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 100 small businesses across the State of Hawaii that strive for a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity; we know Hawaii can strengthen its economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment. This is why we offer the following amendments on HB1688 HD2, which requires the Department of Health to conduct a statewide needs assessment and establish an advisory council to determine what would be needed to transition to a more circular system with less waste generation, more reuse, and an extended producer responsibility program for packaging materials and paper products.

While topics like extended producer responsibility, recycling, and waste-to-energy draw a range of opinions for and against, the broad consensus among Hawaii business owners, environmental groups and policymakers is that **reuse strategies will yield the greatest benefits.**

Everyone agrees that creating the infrastructure needed to establish a reuse economy will take a major investment. Last year, our Chamber was happy to submit **testimony in favor of Senator Gabbard's SB1458**, which would have engaged companies with sales of over \$500 million dollars worth of fast moving consumer goods in an EPR program that would raise the funding needed to establish reuse infrastructure throughout the state at no cost to Hawaii businesses.

Given that there is no debate regarding the value of reuse strategies, it seems more prudent for the state to pass legislation that will lead to the development of the infrastructure needed to put them into play.

For this reason the Chamber suggests amending HB1688 HD2 to 1) remove the provisions that duplicate ongoing efforts to assess Hawaii's waste stream and identify waste reduction options, 2) remove the provisions aimed at addressing the differences among the various stakeholders regarding extended producer responsibility, recycling and waste-to-energy and 3) substitute them with ones that will effectively establish reuse infrastructure throughout the state.