

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A FEE ON BOTH SINGLE-USE
PLASTIC BAGS AND PAPER BAGS**

WHEREAS the amount of debris in our marine environment has increased drastically over the last few decades, one of the sources being the approximately half billion plastic grocery bags distributed in Hawai'i each year;

WHEREAS single-use plastic bags on our local beaches, and in our tributaries and oceans, are having detrimental effects on our ocean's habitat and marine life, and associated recreation and tourism;

WHEREAS single-use plastic bags are consistently among the top five most common types of litter found at beaches surrounding the Hawaiian Islands and over 6,000 plastic bags were collected from Hawai'i's beaches during the 2010 annual beach cleanup;

WHEREAS plastic bags never fully biodegrade, they instead break down into tiny pieces from the sun through photo-degradation, which attract and accumulate various toxins that then enter the ocean food chain;

WHEREAS plastic bags threaten a variety of marine life including whales, Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, and sea birds through ingestion, choking, infection, and/or entanglement;

WHEREAS recycling is not a sufficient solution to plastic bag pollution and there exist readily and widely available alternatives to single-use plastic bags such as reusable bags;

WHEREAS Maui and Kauai counties recently enacted plastic bag bans;

WHEREAS paper is not an eco-friendly alternative to single-use plastic bags;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council hereby supports the efforts of local businesses to transition away from single-use plastic bags;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a fee bill on both single-use plastic and paper bags similar to the ones passed in Ireland, Washington, DC and other places around the world would dramatically reduce marine plastic pollution and litter throughout the islands while also promoting the use of reusable bags;

ADOPTED by the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council on January 13, 2012.



Timothy E. Johns, Chair