May 1, 2017-

Aloha Chair Fukunaga and Members of PWIS Committee,

On behalf of the Sierra Club O‘ahu Group’s 8,000 members and supporters and as a participating organization in the Rise Above Plastics Coalition, we oppose the proposed CD2 to Bill 59 (2016), CD1, which would repeal the existing plastic bag ban we have in place and allow retailers to distribute thin or thick plastic bags to customers, provided customers are charged ten cents per bag. The proposed CD2 will cancel the work already done to eliminate plastic bags from the point of sale and we see it as a step back from the existing ordinance.

In previous Committee and Council meetings, we have been supporting Bill 59 (2016) because we understood that the intention of the bill is to promote environmental sustainability and “close the loophole” for allowing thick plastic bags to be considered “reusable bags”. We recognized that each version of Bill 59 was not perfect, but we believed that continuing the discussion was necessary to fine-tune amendments to the Bill. We appreciate the continued work of the Council to address the inefficient plastic bag ban. However, we strongly oppose the latest version of Bill 59, which is the proposed CD2 draft submitted by Councilmember Fukunaga.

We are in support of Councilmember Elefante’s hand-carried CD2, which would eliminate the usage of all plastic bags in 2020 while establishing a ten cent fee on paper bags. The position of the Sierra Club is to reduce all plastic bags - regardless of their thickness. If we cannot eliminate all plastic bags in Bill 59 (2016) and truly move towards sustainability and waste reduction, we ask that the committee defer this measure until better a consensus between the Council, environmental groups, and industry representatives can be reached.

Mahalo,

Jodi Malinoski, Sierra Club O‘ahu Group Coordinator