

# CASE STUDY: Honolulu BBQ

**ReThink  
Disposable**  
STOP WASTE BEFORE IT STARTS

## BUSINESS PROFILE

**Name:** Honolulu BBQ  
**Business Type:** Restaurant  
**Location:** Alameda, CA  
**On-site dining:** 22 seats  
**Take-out:** 80%  
**Warewashing:** Mechanized Dishwasher (Rental)  
**Employees:** 2

Stephanie Hui and her husband Kevin Chow, run **Honolulu BBQ**, a 22-seat casual eatery in Alameda serving a complete menu of traditional Hawaiian grub. In line with the grab-and-go tradition of Hawaiian BBQ and unaware of the local single-use foodware reduction ordinance in the City of Alameda, Stephanie defaulted to using all disposable take-out foodware even when guests enjoyed their meal on-site. Every menu item had its own container. An order of kimchi came in a paper pail, musubi in a plastic clamshell, fries in another.

## Packaging Practices prior to ReThink Disposable:

- ➔ 4 varieties of plastic clamshells for entrees and fries
- ➔ 2 types of plastic to-go deli containers with lid
- ➔ Lined paper take-out pail for sides
- ➔ Lined paper cup for cold drinks
- ➔ Single-use plastic water cup
- ➔ Single-use plastic sauce cup with lid
- ➔ Plastic cutlery (fork, knife and spoon)



## Recommendations Implemented:

- ➔ Replaced plastic clamshells with durable melamine plates
- ➔ Replaced plastic deli containers with melamine bowls and lids
- ➔ Replaced disposable water cups with reusable plastic tumblers
- ➔ Replaced paper soda fountain cups with reusable tumblers, compliments of PepsiCo.
- ➔ Reusable basket for fries
- ➔ Installed a rental dishwasher and contracts for monthly servicing
- ➔ Implemented a 25-cent charge on take-out containers for guests dining on-site

By carrying out **ReThink Disposable**'s recommendations, Honolulu BBQ reduced their use of targeted disposable foodware items by an average **58%** and is preventing the use of **109,408** disposable items, weighing 1,984 pounds from entering the waste stream each year. After an initial investment of \$345 for durable foodware, Honolulu BBQ earns an ongoing annual net cost savings of **\$1,272**, which includes monthly dishwasher rental and servicing.

One item of note is a 35% increase in the use of the 1-compartment bio-plastic clamshell after implementation of **ReThink Disposable** recommendations. This happens from time to time when a business streamlines operations. At Honolulu BBQ, this clamshell is the preferred type, while other sizes are slowly phased out.



**Stephanie Hui,**  
**Owner:** "Save the environment and save money."



*BEFORE: 14 different single-use disposable packaging used, even when guests dined on site*



*AFTER: Honolulu BBQ completed a 100% switch from using all disposable to all reusable foodware*

## Results:

Disposable Product Replaced or Minimized	ReThink Disposable Recommendation Implemented	% Disposable Reduction	Payback Period (months)	Annual Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced (# of pieces)	Annual Net Cost Savings* (after payback period)	Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)	
3-compartment bioplastic clamshell	Replace with melamine plate	77%	0.7	8,074	\$1,211	937	
1-compartment bioplastic clamshell	Replace with melamine plate	-35% (increase)	-	+1,233 (increase)	-\$185 (increase)	-25 (increase)	
1-compartment plastic clamshell	Replace with melamine plate clamshell	83%	0.6	7,219	\$623	253	
Heavy duty deli plastic soup bowl with lid, 24 oz	Replace with reusable bowl and lid	100%	1.3	3,042	\$401	244	
Heavy duty plastic soup bowl with lid, 24 oz	Replace with reusable bowl and lid	7%	0	261	\$42	26	
3.25 oz sauce cup	Replace with ramekin	50%	2.8	5,069	\$79	20	
3.25 oz sauce cup lid	Eliminate use for dine in	50%	0	5,069	\$59	26	
12 oz plastic water cup	Replace with plastic tumbler	100%	0.6	6,518	\$180	169	
22 oz paper cup	Replace with plastic tumbler	85%	0	26,001	\$353	28	
22 oz paper cup lids	Eliminate use for dine in	64%	0	7,751	\$105	8	
Medium weight white fork	Replace with stainless steel fork	77%	0	20,184	\$111	111	
Medium weight white knife	Replace with stainless steel knife	55%	0	14,297	\$78	129	
Medium weight white spoon	Replace with stainless steel spoon	52%	0	6,280	\$34	38	
8 oz lined paper take-out pail	Replace with melamine plate	50%	1.5	876	\$143	19	
	Dishwasher Rental				-\$1,962		
				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109,408</b>	<b>\$1,272</b>	<b>1,984 lbs.</b>

\*Net Cost Impact considers any upfront and ongoing costs associated with the purchase and care of reusable items and capital improvements needed to carry out ReThink Disposable's recommendations. Net cost savings are based on avoided disposable foodware purchases.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

- \$1,272 in annual net cost savings, when considering monthly dishwasher rental and service
- 109,408 disposable items reduced per year
- 1,984 pounds of annual waste reduction
- No impact to labor costs
- Winner of Alameda County's 2019 StopWaste Business Efficiency Award



ReThink Disposable is a program of Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund conducted in partnership with local businesses and government agencies. Generous support is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. To learn more about the program, its partners, and funders, visit: [www.rethinkdisposable.org](http://www.rethinkdisposable.org).



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