



HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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January 29, 2008

To: House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Rep. Hermina M. Morita, Chair / Rep. Mele Carroll, Vice Chair

By: Richard C. Botti, Pres. or Lauren Zirbel, Gov't Relations

Re: HB 2434 RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Chairs & Committee Members:

While we recognize the problem and challenge, we do not agree with the proposed solution. From a business standpoint, we look at a means of addressing the issue to accomplish the goal the most effective, least costly, and most consumer responsive manner.

The goal is to get plastic bags out of our land, sea, and air. Based on this, along with the fact that we do understand the challenge, we support the three "Rs" along with our Knot Your Bag program. Industry has created and is implementing this program at this time, as follows:

- Reducing consumer's demands of plastic bags by providing the availability of re-usable bags for customers. This trend is taking hold with much publicity.
- Supporting and implementing recycling programs where consumers can take their clean, dry, Numbers 2 and 4 plastic bags to retailer stores to be recycled. California has mandated grocery and drug stores of a certain size to do just this. We would support such legislation in Hawaii, as it would address the goal of removing plastic bags to the greatest extent possible, from our landfills.
- HFIA has created a marketing program to educate consumers to "KNOT YOUR BAG" before disposing of it. This program has had a great positive consumer reaction, and is having an immediate impact on the problem. It is simple and cost free. A knotted bag won't become airborne.

Consumers are already re-using their plastic bags. It is because they provide the best possible packaging to transport personal items of all sorts, and to dispose of wet and smelly waste, such as disposable diapers, dog poo, fish waste, etc. They have handles, thus many consumers demand

them for these reasons.

Again, the issue of plastic bags ending up in our land, sea, and air by consumers can be easily addressed with education as simple as our KNOT YOUR BAG program. The real problem is coming from our landfills, where consumers use plastic bags to contain wet waste, then bulldozers spreading waste at the landfills, breaking open plastic bags where they can easily become airborne with our strong tradewinds. The only solution we have for this is to get the bags out of the landfill, and to either recycling them, or be assured that they end up in a Waste To Energy facility. It won't make much difference whether they are compostable or biodegradable, they will fly away. Whether they degrade will depend on the elements they require to accomplish this.

We are at a turning point with the introduction of a plastic bag ban because at this point in time, a recycling program will fail if the mix of plastic entering the recycling system is contaminated with biodegradable or compostable bags that do not meet the needs of the recycler. Thus, it is the Legislature that must decide which direction you want everything to go. There is no sense in us recycling plastic bags if the bags will end up in the trash anyway because they are rejected by the recycler because of contamination. Please remember that not all plastic bags are included in this ban.

Moving to biodegradable and/or compostable bags will not solve the problem with bags entering our land, sea, and air, as they will not degrade unless certain conditions are met.

The ultimate solution should be Waste To Energy. Everything can be mixed, they will be out of the landfill, the mix of plastic is not an issue, and 26 boxes of plastic bags are about equal to one barrel of crude oil, thus reducing import requirements for fuel oil.

Bottom line:

- We all have the same goals. We just may have a different roadmap to guide us there.
- New technology is being invented almost daily. We do not believe anyone wants to stifle future solutions that may have better ends to the problem.
- Every time we landfill 300 pounds of plastic we are landfilling close to what can be turned into a barrel of oil. Every time we send 300 pounds of plastic to the Mainland or China, we are exporting close to a barrel of oil that could have been used as energy right here in Hawaii. This does not take into consideration how much fuel it takes to transport the product a minimum of 2,500 miles across the sea. Therefore, we feel that the best possible end result is to turn our packaging and waste into energy.
- There will be a major increase in cost and at least temporary shortages in product that will occur with the "stick" approach taken by HB2423.

Janice Lehner

From: Windward Ahupua`a Alliance [info@waa-hawaii.org]
Sent: Monday, January 28, 2008 11:20 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Subject: HB 2434 - Relating to Environmental Protection

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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Hermina Morita, Chair

Rep. Mele Carroll, Vice Chair

HB 2434 - RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Strongly Support

PUBLIC HEARING

8:30 am

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Conference Room 312

The *Windward Ahupua`a Alliance* strongly supports **HB 2434** because it will help reduce the impacts of jamming the landfills with one type of solid waste which will take decades, if not centuries, to decompose. Burning plastic in *H-Power* facilities is not the best way to handle it because the residual ash needs to be disposed off properly and, besides, no one wants to have a landfill in the neighborhood.

We also must remember that *H-Power* at best only burns about 70% of our solid waste. The rest sits in a landfill along with the ash.

We need to **REDUCE** as well as **RE-USE, RECYCLE** and **RECLAIM**.

Like so many folks, we have animals whose waste we need to dispose of properly. Even though this is an intermediate re-use of plastic bags, they still go into the garbage can and then into the landfill or *H-Power* after that.

About a year ago, I started researching corn-based "plastic" which decompose within months as a substitute for petroleum-based materials thinking that I could buy these products for garbage can liners and pet waste disposal and use cloth bags for shopping. I'd bought into the retailers' arguments that it was too expensive to use anything but regular plastic and that it would drive up costs.

It turns out that these corn-based products when purchased in very large quantities by supermarket chains would wind up costing no more than two cents - depending upon the manufacturer - per bag. That

is certainly affordable and definitely makes much more sense than shipping our solid waste across the Pacific Ocean - thus increasing our greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 5% when the *State of Hawai`i* is working towards significant reductions over the next 15 years. We urge that you pass **HB 2434**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.