



MEMORANDUM – April 2, 2008

To: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Members, House Committee on Economic Development and Business Concerns

From: Tim Shestek
Director, State Affairs & Grassroots

Re: **HCR 191 & HR 160 – OPPOSE**

The Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council (ACC) must respectfully oppose HCR 191 and HR 160, two resolutions that, among other things, encourage the use of so-called “environmentally preferable alternatives to non-biodegradable plastic bags.”

Recyclable plastic grocery bags are an environmentally friendly choice, especially considering the following information:

Plastic grocery bags are an extremely resource-efficient disposable bag choice.

- Plastic grocery bags require 40 percent less energy to manufacture than paper bags.¹
- For every seven trucks needed to deliver paper bags, only one truck is needed for the same number of plastic bags, helping to save energy and reduce emissions.
- It takes 91% less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than it takes to recycle a pound of paper.¹

Less material means less waste and fewer emissions.

- 2,000 plastic bags weigh 30 lbs; 2,000 paper bags weigh 280 lbs. Plastic bags take up a lot less space in a landfill.¹
- Plastic bags generate 80 percent less waste than paper bags.¹
- Plastic grocery bags make up a tiny fraction (less than 0.5 percent) of the U.S. municipal solid waste stream.²

¹ GUA - Gesellschaft für umfassende Analysen, The Contribution of Plastic Products to Resource Efficiency, Vienna, 2005, <http://www.plasticseurope.org/Content/Default.asp?PageID=517#>
Boustead Consulting, “Life Cycle Assessment for Three Types of Grocery Bags - Recyclable Plastic; Compostable, Biodegradable Plastic; and Recycled, Recyclable Paper,” 2007,

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Questions about Your Community Shopping Bags: Paper or Plastic*. See: www.epa.gov/region1/communities/shopbags.html. Downloaded from the Internet May 2007.

- The manufacture and use of paper bags generates 70% more air emissions than plastic.¹
- Plastic bags generate only 40% of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of non-composted paper bags and only 21% of the GHG emissions of composted paper bags.³
- The production of plastic bags consumes less than 4 percent of the water needed to make paper bags.³

ACC believes the most environmentally responsible solution to reducing bag litter and disposal is a comprehensive program aimed at recycling these bags so that they may be used as feedstock in the production of other products, such as new bags, pallets, containers, crates, and pipe. In many cases, demand for this material exceeds the available supply. **It is for this reason that we strongly supported HB 2434 HD 1.**

In our view, policies that promote recycling make the most sense from both an environmental and economic standpoint. *Prohibiting the use of one material or package type does not take into account the full “life cycle” analysis necessary for adequately assessing the environmental impact of any package or material.*

ACC therefore encourages you to oppose this resolution and instead support efforts and opportunities for all interested stakeholders to develop a system that effectively and efficiently helps to recycle these bags.

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to provide these comments. Should you have any questions or comments please contact our in-state representatives Red Morris and John Radcliffe at 808-531-4551 or you may contact me at 916-448-2581.

² U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Municipal Waste in the United States: 2005 Facts and Figures*. See: <http://www.epa.gov/garbage/pubs/mswchar05.pdf>.

³ Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests & Landscape (SAEFL). *Life Cycle Inventories for Packagings*. Environmental Series 250/1. 1998. Based on data from *Eco-Profiles of the European Plastics Industry, LDPE Film Extrusion: A Report by I. Boustead for PlasticsEurope*. March 2005. See <http://lca.plasticseurope.org/index.htm>.



HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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April 4, 2008

To: House Committee on Economical Development & Business Concerns
 Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair / Rep. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

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

Re: HCR 191 & HR REQUESTING COUNTIES TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE RETAILERS TO INCREASE THE USE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVES TO NON-BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC BAGS

Chairs & Committee Members:

We're already doing this and more. It was less than a year ago when this issue was brought to the attention of our industry. During that time, we have identified the problem, created a plan to address the issues, and have or are implementing the following:

- Kicked off the "Knot Your Bag" Educational Program as a means of keeping bags from flying. This is both a "stop the bleeding" tactic as well as a long range educational program;
- Reduce the use of plastic bags by promoting and marketing reusable bags ranging from those made from recycled plastic to designer fabric bags;
- Encouraging the reuse of plastic bags before discarding them for their ultimate purpose of trash disposal or as a doo doo bag.
- Creating a mechanism to recycle clean #2 and #4 plastic bags at retail stores, as provided in SB 651, SD2, HD1 that will be reported from House Finance Committee and is supported by HFIA. Representatives Brower, Hanohano, and Manahan from this Committee voted in support of the measure in House Finance this week. The bill requires us to do what we are already doing. This is good, because it will include those retailers that are not members of either the Hawaii Food Industry Association or the Retail Merchants of Hawaii.

While we appreciate the "keep their feet to the heat" strategy, the message that you are sending us with this resolution is that you don't trust us. That's fine, as we are not opposed to this measure, but it is disappointing that our reputation by at least some Legislators is so negative.



SUSTAINABLE
ISLAND PRODUCTS

Testimony before the:

Committee on Economic Development and Business Concerns (EDB)

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee

April 4th, 2008 9:30am, conference room 325

Re: HCR 191 Requesting Counties support alternatives to plastic bags

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee:

As the founder of Sustainable Island Products, a distribution company that exclusively sells biodegradable food & drink to-go supplies in Hawaii, I submit that there is a prevailing shift in the market for single use disposables.

Serving Hawaii County and other islands, and with a growth rate of over 20% per quarter, we have a customer base that is committed to transitioning away from products that are toxic to humans, creatures and the environment.

The public not only wants safer products (as seen by their adoption of them) but is willing to invest extra capital to support the cause of Sustainability for our islands.

Single use disposables are used more per capita in the State of Hawaii than in any other state. The import or manufacture of these products will inevitably continue.

The question is: which of the following scenarios you would support?

- Would you have toxic products that require petroleum to produce and that pollute our bodies, landfills and environment?
 - Toxic to landfill, toxic to burn.
- Would you have safe products that could be manufactured here on our islands, employ people in the process, and that can be returned to soil as compost after their use?
 - Safe to landfill, safe to burn.
- Can you envision a society that through public education and creative endeavor could **use re-usable bags** for all their shopping, thereby doing away with the disposable bag issue all together?
 - **There are many successful & documentable programs that promote re-usable bags.**

I am writing in strong support of HCR191 , requesting counties support alternatives to plastic bags.

I hope you will support HCR 191, and the future of our beautiful but fragile paradise.

Sincerely,
Jesse Law
President



www.menchunemagichawaii.com
A division of Menehune Green LLC

Attn. Committee on Economic Development and Business Concerns(EDB) Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee

April 4th, 2008 9:30am, Conference Room 325

RE: HCR 191

Hawaiian Earth Products, the State's largest commercial composting facility, is in support of the proposed resolutions HCR 191.

There are biodegradable and compostable alternatives to both plastic bags and styrofoam, which if used, would support composting of foodwaste throughout the islands. These alternatives could significantly improve the efficiency of a composting facility if implemented correctly and proper guidelines are followed . The crucial element is education and enforceable guidelines to eliminate cross contamination of non-biodegradeable materials while sorted and collected.

Hawaiian Earth Products currently processes Greenwaste, Clean Woodwaste (Untreated-Unpainted) and Pre-Consumer Fruit and Vegetable waste. While this has significantly reduced landfill volumes, the shift to include Post-Consumer Foodwaste and compostable food service packaging would have the greatest impact on landfill diversion. In addition, these wastes have a high nitrogen component, an excellent amendment to our existing compost and for agricultural use of finished organic compost. Greenwaste and Organics recycling is crucial to meeting the states goals, as it has the largest impact on reducing material going to thelandfill, is the most cost effective, and offers farmers reduced operational costs and improved crops. Compost further reduces water consumption, petroleum-based fertilizers, and herbicides. This will reduce run-off and ocean pollution protecting the environment in a sustainable practice preserving natural resources.

In the composting operation, our biggest concern is contaminants, which do not biodegrade. Plastics such as bags and styrofoam are such contaminants – difficult and expensive to remove. Please support these resolutions as a positive direction in meeting the recycling goals of Hawaii and preserving sustainable resources.

If you require additional information please contact me at 808-682-5895.

Mahalo,

Ron Westmoreland
Menehune Green LLC
Dbas Hawaiian Earth Products
91-400 Malakole Street
Kapolei, HI 96707
Office 808-682-5895
Fax 808-682-0762

91-400 Malakole St. * Kapolei, HI 96707 * Phone 682-5895 Fax 682-0762

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development & Business Concerns
State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

HEARING Friday, April 4, 2008
 9:30 am
 Conference Room 325



RE: HCR191 & HR160, Requesting Counties to Develop and Implement Programs To Encourage Retailers to Increase the Use of Environmentally Preferable Alternatives to Non-Biodegradable Plastic Bags.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

Retail Merchants of Hawaii (RMH) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing about 200 members and over 2,000 storefronts, and is committed to support the retail industry and business in general in Hawaii.

RMH does not support HCR191 and HR160. I urge your attention to the attached **ULS Report**, which reviews life cycle data relating to disposable, biodegradable and compostable grocery bags. With the exception of reusable tote bags, the environmentally friendly alternatives proposed by the counties are problematic:

- Compostable plastics do not degrade in landfills or in backyard compost piles, but must be sent to an industrial composting facility. By definition, composting and biodegradation release carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere.
- Paper sacks generate 70 percent more air and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags. It takes 91 percent less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than to recycle a pound of paper..

Our position, supported by the ULS Report, continues to be: Hawaii's retailers unquestionably support initiatives to preserve and protect our environment. The solution to the plastic bag issue is not in a total ban, but in the wise management of this resource, i.e., the "reduce, reuse and recycle" principle.

We are in strong support of SB651, HD2, Relating to Recycling, which was advanced in the Finance Committee on Tuesday, and appreciate the members' acknowledgment of the merits of a comprehensive program based on "reduce, reuse and recycle." Retailers have been pro-active: placing recycling bins at stores; providing reusable bags for consumers; and initiating educational messages. Larger retailers already ship the collected plastic bags to the mainland for recycling. Some retailers credit consumers up to 5 cents per reused or reusable bag and have reusable tote bags available for sale.

On March 22, eight Maui County retailers (Ah Fooks, Friendly Market, Haiku Grocery Store, Kualapuu Market, Misaki's Inc., Pine Isle Market, Pukalani Superette, and Wal-Mart) cooperatively sponsored "**Maui County Retailers Recycle.**" In one day, almost 2,000 reusable tote bags were given to customers in exchange for recyclable plastic bags; the bags collected filled a 45-foot shipping container. Wal-mart shipped the bags to the mainland for recycling.

If I may, I'd like to cite two excerpts from a recent news release (March 25, 2008) from the American Chemistry Council: http://www.americanchemistry.com/s_acc/sec_news_article.asp?CID=206&DID=7156

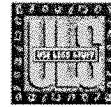
- "An estimated 812,010,000 pounds of post-consumer film (including plastic bags) was recovered in 2006. This represents a 24% increase from 652,477,000 pounds recovered in 2005."
- "Dave Heglas of TREX, a northern Virginia company that uses recycled plastic bags to manufacture green building materials, states 'We have recycled over 2.5 billion pounds of plastic over the last 10 years into lumber substitutes for outdoor decks.' "

Retailers have taken the important first step as caretakers of the environment. We welcome the counties' partnerships, but we must review the alternatives and make prudent choices. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carol Pringle'.

President

RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
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REVIEW OF LIFE CYCLE DATA RELATING TO DISPOSABLE, COMPOSTABLE, BIODEGRADABLE, AND REUSABLE GROCERY BAGS

I. BACKGROUND

In March 2007, the Board of Supervisors of the City of San Francisco passed an ordinance effectively banning the use of plastic grocery bags at supermarkets and large pharmacies. The Board's objective was to stop environmental degradation and reduce litter, and its solution was to legislate the replacement of traditional plastic bags with reusable bags or bags made from paper or compostable plastic.

In an effort to gauge the impact of the Board's decision, both in terms of environmental impact and litter reduction, the Editors of *The ULS Report* have examined a number of credible third-party research reports, and used the findings to develop their own conclusions and recommendations.

II. METHODOLOGY

An examination was made of three studies that compared the environmental impacts of various grocery bags, or provided data widely used to do so:

1. Carrefour Group, an international retail chain that was founded in France and is second only to Wal-Mart in terms of global retail revenues, commissioned a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) Study by Price-Waterhouse-Coopers/EcoBalance (*Évaluation des impacts environnementaux des sacs de caisse, February 2004, #300940BE8*) that compared the environmental impact of four types of bags: plastic made from high density polyethylene (HDPE), paper, biodegradable plastic (50% corn starch and 50% polycaprolactone compostable plastic), and reusable plastic (flexible PE). The study evaluated environmental impacts from material production, through bag manufacturing and transport, to end of life management.

The study was completed according to ISO standards 14040-14043, and peer reviewed by the French environmental institute, ADEME, the Agency for Environment and Energy Management. The first review was by Henri Lecouls, an independent lifecycle analysis expert assisted by Laura Degallaix, representative of the Federal Consumers' Union, Que Choisir, and Dominique Royet, World Wildlife Federation (WWF) representative. A second review was made by related parties: APME (European Plastics Manufacturers Association); CEPI (Confederation of European Paper Industries); and Novamont, manufacturer of the biodegradable plastic assessed in the study.

2. *Life Cycle Inventories for Packagings*, Environmental Series No. 250/1, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), 1998. The study was critically reviewed by corporate and association members representing the paper, plastics, glass, aluminum and steel packaging industries.

3. *Eco-Profiles of the European Plastics Industry*, performed by I. Boustead for PlasticsEurope, 2005. This series was developed by LCA pioneer Boustead Consulting and conforms wherever possible to ISO standards 14040-14043. The data on polyethylene film are also referenced in the SAEFL study listed above.

Relevant data published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were also reviewed. This information was found on the EPA's website (www.epa.gov), and includes data from its well-known *Municipal Solid Waste in the United States* series.

III. STUDY LIMITATIONS

1. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations are based on data that have been obtained through publicly available channels or through the broad group of contacts that *The ULS Report* has developed. There may be other data available that refute, confirm, or extend the findings herein developed.
2. Results are based upon an analysis of quantitative data, especially in relation to materials consumption, energy and water usage, pollution, and greenhouse gas (GHG) production. Because of their qualitative and personal nature, issues that transcend a scientific approach, such as the social value of renewable vs. non-renewable resources and composting vs. landfilling, are best considered independently by the reader.
3. Other than U.S. EPA data, the other studies originated in Europe and are based upon European manufacturing processes. Because production processes are relatively similar globally, the data provide accurate assessments between materials that can be used to draw valid conclusions in the United States.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Biodegradation/Compostability

While paper and certain plastics may be biodegradable or compostable in specially designed industrial facilities, evidence indicates that this feature may be of little value in the effort to reduce waste:

1. According to the EPA, "Current research demonstrates that paper in today's landfills does not degrade or break down at a substantially faster rate than plastic does. In fact, nothing completely degrades in modern landfills due to the lack of water, light, oxygen, and other important elements that are necessary for the degradation process to be completed."¹

As evidence of this, here is a photo of a newspaper buried in an Arizona landfill and dug up after more than three decades. As can be clearly seen, paper does not degrade rapidly in landfills. (Photo credit: Dr. William Rathje, Founder of The Garbage Project at The University of Arizona, and ULS Report Contributing Editor.)



Compostable plastics, which are produced from plant-based feedstocks, do not degrade in landfills, either. According to Natureworks®, a producer of a corn-based plastic known as PLA, containers made from its material will last as long in landfills as containers made from traditional plastics.²

2. In order to breakdown as intended, compostable plastics must be sent to an industrial or food composting facility, rather than to backyard piles or municipal composting centers. Since there are apparently fewer than 100 of these facilities functioning in the entire United States, the economic and environmental costs of wide-scale plastics composting are prohibitive, significantly reducing the value of such an alternative.³
3. By definition, composting and biodegradation release carbon dioxide (CO₂), a greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere, increasing the potential for climate change. For example, composted paper produces approximately twice the CO₂ emissions produced by non-composted paper. (See Paragraph B.2. just below for specific details.)

B. Waste, Energy Consumption, Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The evidence does not support conventional wisdom that paper bags are a more environmentally sustainable alternative than plastic bags. While this is certainly counterintuitive for many people, relevant facts include the following:

1. Plastic bags generate 60% less greenhouse gas emissions than uncomposted paper bags, and 79% less greenhouse gas emissions than composted paper bags. The plastic bags generate 3,097 tons of CO₂ equivalents per 100 million bags; while uncomposted paper bags generate 7,621 tons, and composted paper bags generate 14,558 tons, per 100 million bags produced.⁴
2. Plastic bags consume less than 4% of the water needed to make paper bags. It takes 5,527 cubic meters of water to produce 100 million plastic bags, versus 145,729 cubic meters of water to produce 100 million paper bags.⁵
3. Plastic grocery bags consume 40% less energy during production and generate 80% less solid waste than paper bags.⁶ Significantly, even though traditional disposable plastic bags are produced from fossil fuels, the total non-renewable energy consumed during their lifecycle is no greater than the non-renewable energy consumed during the lifecycle of paper and biodegradable plastic bags.⁷
4. Paper sacks generate 70 percent more air, and 50 times more water pollutants, than plastic bags.⁸
5. It takes 91 percent less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than it takes to recycle a pound of paper.⁹
6. After three uses, reusable plastic bags are superior to all types of disposable bags --paper, polyethylene and compostable plastic -- across all significant environmental indicators.¹⁰

C. Litter

While the data appear to indicate that paper and compostable plastic bags may account for less litter, data also indicates that this finding is offset by the increased environmental impacts these bags produce versus traditional plastic bags:

1. The manufacture of paper bags consumes three times more water and emits about 80% more greenhouse gases than the production of plastic bags.¹¹
2. Compared to disposable plastic bags, biodegradable plastic bags generate higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions, atmospheric acidification and eutrophication (a process whereby bodies of water receive excess nutrients that stimulate excessive plant growth, such as algae blooms).¹²

V. CONCLUSIONS/INDICATED ACTIONS

The conclusion to be drawn about how to reduce the environmental impacts and litter associated with grocery bags is very much in line with both longstanding EPA guidelines and the ULS Report philosophy: the issue is not paper or plastic, but rather finding ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle both of them - in that order. By putting more items in fewer bags, avoiding double bagging, switching to durable tote bags, and reusing and recycling disposable bags, significant reductions in material and non-renewable energy consumption, pollution, solid waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and litter, will occur.

And, while recycling can help save resources, its real value lies in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the minimization of waste going to landfills. Also, recycling helps reduce litter, as bags are contained and stored. Containment reduces the potential for them to be left in open spaces, where they become eyesores.

VI. SUMMARY

Legislation designed to reduce environmental impacts and litter by outlawing grocery bags based on the material from which they are produced will not deliver the intended results. While some litter reduction might take place, it would be outweighed by the disadvantages that would subsequently occur (increased solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions). Ironically, reducing the use of traditional plastic bags would not even reduce the reliance on fossil fuels, as paper and biodegradable plastic bags consume just as much non-renewable energy during their full lifecycle.

Further, an Internet scan of available government and non-profit information for the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia indicates that chewing gum and cigarette butts account for up to 95% of the litter generated in the English-speaking world.¹³ Thus, there would appear to be far better and potentially more effective legislative opportunities available if the objective is to significantly reduce litter.

Again, when it comes to reducing the environmental and litter impacts of grocery and merchandise bags, the solution lies in a.) minimizing the materials used to produce all types of bags, regardless of their composition, and b.) building public awareness and motivation to reduce, reuse and recycle these bags - in that order.



Robert Lilienfeld, Editor

Footnotes

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website, *Questions About Your Community: Shopping Bags: Paper or Plastic or... ?* (www.epa.gov/region1/communities/shopbags.html).

² *Corn Plastic to the Rescue*, by Elizabeth Royte, *Smithsonian*, August, 2006 (www.smithsonianmag.com/issues/2006/august/pla.php?page=1).

³ These figures were provided by a number of experts, but due to the fluctuating dynamics of the composting industry, no firm citation can be given. One article that mentioned the relative unavailability of industrial and food composting was *Composting that Plastic* by Eliza Barclay, *Metropolis Magazine*, March 1, 2004 (www.metropolismag.com/cda/story.php?artid=153). See also the *BioCycle* site www.findacomposter.com.

⁴ *Life Cycle Inventories for Packagings*, Volume 1, SAEFL, 1998, Environmental Series 250/I and *Eco-Profiles of the European Plastics Industry*, developed by I. Boustead for PlasticsEurope, March, 2005 (www.plasticseurope.org/content/Default.asp?PageID=404&IsNewWindow=True).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. EPA website, (www.epa.gov/region1/communities/shopbags.html).

⁷ *Évaluation des impacts environnementaux des sacs de caisse Carrefour (Evaluation of the Environmental Impact of Carrefour Merchandise Bags)*, prepared by Price- Waterhouse-Coopers/Ecobilan (EcoBalance), February 2004, #300940BE8. (www.ademe.fr/htdocs/actualite/rapport_carrefour_post_revue_critique_v4.pdf).

⁸ U.S. EPA website, (www.epa.gov/region1/communities/shopbags.html).

⁹ U.S. EPA website, (www.epa.gov/region1/communities/shopbags.html).

¹⁰ *Évaluation des impacts environnementaux des sacs de caisse Carrefour. Op cit.*

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See *Litter Composition Survey of England*, October 2004, produced by ENCAMS for INCPEN (www.incpen.org/pages/userdata/incp/LitterCompSurvey24Jan2005.pdf). Also see *Facts About Litter* from an Australian governmental site (www.environment.nsw.gov.au/litter/factsaboutlitter.htm), and equivalent government and non-profit sites in Canada and the United States, such as [Keep America Beautiful](http://www.KeepAmericaBeautiful.org).

wakai1-Karen

From: Windward Ahupua`a Alliance [info@waa-hawaii.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2008 1:06 PM
To: EDBtestimony
Subject: HCR191/HR160 - PLASTIC BAGS

SUBMITTED BY:

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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS CONCERS

Rep. Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

PUBLIC HEARING

9:30 am

Friday, April 4, 2008

Conference Room 325

**HCR191/HCR160 - REQUESTING COUNTIES TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT
PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE RETAILERS TO INCREASE THE USE OF
ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVES TO NON-BIO-DEGRADABLE
PLASTIC BAGS**

OPPOSE

My name is Shannon Wood, *Interim President* of the *Windward Ahupua`a Alliance*, a **501c3** Hawai`i non-profit corporation, which was established in July, 2002. *WAA's* organizational foci includes waste-to-energy, the **Four Rs**, landfills, shipping trash, illegal dumping, and other solid waste management issues.

Although we strongly supported this resolution before its first committee, we no longer can do so because the answer is not a soft resolution which does nothing to resolve the problems associated with plastic bags. Supporting it a waste of time as well as human energy & effort. No one across the street will pay any attention any more than the county governments in Hilo, Lihu`e or Wailuku will.

However, by passing **HCR191/HR160**, it certainly makes it look as if the *Legislature* is doing something about the plastic bag glut.

I want to emphasize that *WAA* strongly supports legislation which **requires all retailers & fast food sellers** to do away with petroleum-based plastic bags.

4/3/2008

We must **REDUCE** as well as **RE-USE**, **RECYCLE** and **RECLAIM** - and that will only happen when petroleum-based plastic bags are no longer available.

Unfortunately, both the **Finance Committee** and the **Senate Ways and Means Committee** refused to hold hearings earlier this session on bills mandating plastic bag phaseouts.

However, I am waiting on a **Finance Committee** report on **SB 651 SD2 HD1 Proposed HD 2** heard on Tuesday, April 1. Unless the changes **WAA** recommended are incorporated, then any attempts by the counties to supersede this very weak law would not be allowed. I have asked that the **Finance Committee** staff brief me on the recommended amendments, but as of this writing, that has not happened.

Here is the relevant section to which we object:

§Section 342 - C Conflict with other laws: (a) Unless expressly authorized by this part, a county or other public agency shall not adopt, implement, or enforce any ordinance, resolution, regulation, or rule that:

(1) Requires a store that is in compliance with this part to collect, transport, or recycle plastic carryout bags;

(2) Imposes a plastic carryout bag ban or fee upon a store that is in compliance with this part; or

(3) Imposes on a store that is in compliance with this part, auditing or reporting requirements on the store's at-store recycling program that are in addition to the requirements of section 342H - B(c)(3).

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 would wind up costing no more than two to ten cents - depending upon the manufacturer & the size - 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% per year when the *State of Hawai`i* is working towards significant reductions over the next 15 years.

In closing, if you feel compelled to pass out **HCR191/HCR160**, please print the resolutions on recycled paper so more trees don't have to die needlessly.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in opposition.

The Windward Ahupua`a Alliance works to educate & inform residents, visitors, businesses, policymakers, and the media about using Smart Growth planning principles which promote sustainability. These include: Designing long-term waste management systems; improving illegal dumping/derelict vehicle legislation & enforcement; developing & implementing comprehensive curbside recycling programs; providing research & support on public access issues; establishing both state & county-level "legacy lands" funds to support affordable workforce housing initiatives and critical land purchases to protect against inappropriate development; creating alternative energy systems to reduce Hawai`i's dependency on fossil fuels & to mitigate the impacts of global warming; and, setting long-term watershed protection policies based upon ahupua`a concepts & principles.