

October 25, 2022

**Re: V3 Discussions on preparations to Apply for the US Environmental Protection Agency's Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program. Advice to DEM on Priorities for grant proposals.**

Recycling is important, but must be combined with Elimination of Single Use Plastics and other materials.

Recommendations to reduce the volume of material necessary to be recycled.

- 1) **Adopt Hawaii Island Version of California's SB-54 Legislation** passed on June 30, 2023. Plastic Pollution and Prevention Responsibility Act that directly requires reduction of plastic packaging including distributed or imported on or after January 1, 2023. The bill also requires not less 65% of the plastic covered material be recycled on or after January 1 2032.

As California is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, major vendors will be driving to compliance with this law, and makes adopting a Hawaii Island version of the regulation reasonable to comply with for major suppliers to comply with as it will be required in California.

- 2) **Focus on ways of reducing the need for Recycling Volume reduction by eliminating single use plastics.** Shift our thinking from "How we recycle" to "how we prevent from coming on to the island in the first place" will directly improve the ability of the island to materially make a difference. Education on laundry detergent sheets, vs plastic containers; Refillable shampoo, or shampoo bars; Newspaper donations to flower farms for packaging; egg containers to local egg farmers; Education can be at the proposed waste station sites such as Keaau.
- 3) **Include requests to EPA to fund study of the landfill material and identify what would be recyclable/compostable at a reasonable cost to Hawaii Island.** For items not able to be composted or recycled at a reasonable cost on island or exported for recycling, then investigate elimination from import to Hawaii. This would be part of the request for funds from the EPA.
- 4) **Focus on the 4 million+ visitor industry to reduce waste.** Work more closely with the state legislature and HTA to press hospitality industry to eliminate plastic waste and raise awareness via legislation if necessary.

I recently checked in to two Kona Hotels. One handed me a plastic bottle of water for each guest registered. The other handed us two shell lei (not pono) and had plastic water bottles in room. Alternative options could be a reusable water bottle for guests with filling stations. The Grand Canyon National Park (where visitors die of lack of water each year) have eliminated the sale of plastic water bottles and only sell reusable water bottles. The Hotels import much of their food, a walk by the loading docks and kitchens includes much packaging that should be reexported, perhaps rotatable containers from their distributors that they pick up and return and not just disposed of.

Vendors such as Costco and Target sell many cases of water a very large percentage of visitors and residents. Offer refilling stations for water, education on the good quality of water, require acceptance of returns of water bottles and 5 cent payment center at sellers of these cases of water such as grocery, Costco and Target, as a condition of being able to sell these. Perhaps take it further and require them to take back laundry POD containers, dishwasher tablet containers.

The focus of ZERO WASTE Hawaii Island is an excellent program. Perhaps a bit timid, but the big box stores and visitor industry have tremendous influence on Hawaii Island leadership. See what \$ can be raised via EPA to help identify the targets to make our island sustainable. It is possible with the will of leadership, and using models for other successful places globally.

Mahalo,

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