

**From:** [M. Mitsumori](#)  
**To:** [Sur, Peter](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Agenda Item VI.1 - Presentation by Douglass Adams on Yummet biochar process  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 21, 2023 10:37:21 PM

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Aloha, Members of the Environmental Management Commission,

My name is Michele Mitsumori, and I am a resident of Hilo.

I am writing to express concerns regarding Hawaii County's pursuit of a plan to divert "all municipal solid waste" to an unspecified on-island facility to convert it into things like carbon-negative cement and biochar by 2026.

The option of Yummet Earth Solutions seems problematic for two reasons:

- Their website declares that they transform "**Hawaiian agricultural waste** into high-quality biochar."  
So it seems Yummet Earth Solutions will not divert "all" municipal solid waste, but only agricultural waste?
- Their sister organization, Yummet, **is "establishing"** a production facility.  
Does this mean a working facility with a track record of success and safety does not yet exist? *West Hawaii Today* reported on March 12th that Yummet has a pilot site in Minnesota -- that is, Yummet appears to be still piloting its "proven and patented" technology, while Yummet Earth Solutions appears to have no experience. I am concerned that Yummet Earth Solutions's Founder/CEO's online bio lists impressive accomplishments as an astronaut and space professional, but apparently none related to biochar production or production facilities management. The "About Us" page features no other bios.  
Is it in our best interests to be **the first** to host an **inexperienced** company, whose sister company is still in the **pilot** phase? If converting agricultural waste into biochar is the way to go, let's partner with a company with an established business model that has made its pilot mistakes somewhere else.

There are many opportunities to improve and expand materials management methods that follow the zero waste hierarchy which prioritizes reduction, reuse and recycling, not to mention investing in education and the hard work of behavioral change.

I urge the Commission to request that the County Council, DEM and R&D abandon this plan and invest in zero waste strategies instead.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns.

Sincerely yours,  
Michele Mitsumori