

I would like to comment on Bill 140 introduced by Council Member Ashley Kierkiewicz.

I can understand its purpose and intent. If the need is there in Kalapana to increase waste disposal service an additional day a week for "public health and environmental preservation" that "this ordinance aims to ensure," then efforts to address this should be made.

As was reported by Acting Solid Waste Division Chief Michael Kaha, about 47 trips from the Kalapana transfer station are done annually. This would indicate that the container from Kalapana is not being hauled every Saturday. Would that also mean that the container is not always full? Is staffing the issue? This information would be good to know in order to better determine what action to take for the Kalapana transfer station at this time.

I have visited eight (Hilo, Kea'au, Pahoa, Pu'uanahulu, Puako, Hawi, Waimea, Honoka'a) of our 21 transfer stations thanks to the DEM, Nadine Pola and Acting Deputy Solid Waste Division Chief Gene Quiamas. I plan on completing tours for the rest of our transfer stations.

It would be prudent on our part as commissioners 'to see to understand' just how the day to day operations of our Solid Waste facilities really work and the logistics that govern them. Borrowing an attendant or closing another location to provide already compromised operations would be even more crippling.

Of our 21 transfer stations, 12 are open 3 days a week, 8 are open daily. 19 of the 21 open at 6:00 a.m. Hilo opens at 6:30 a.m. \*My understanding is that employees report to work at 7:15 a.m. meaning that 19 of the 6:00 a.m. transfer stations do not have attendants there at 6:00 a.m. I have a concern with this. Delays in waste collection, especially during peak times, can and do affect public sentiment and the perception of our waste management department. If trash piles up, it creates an eyesore, leads to unpleasant odors, and poses health and environmental hazards.

From an employee morale perspective, consistently dealing with a backlog of waste due to delays in starting shifts can be demoralizing. Employees may feel overwhelmed by the increased workload, frustrated by negative feedback from the public, and stressed by the need to catch up on missed collections. This could lead to decreased job satisfaction, higher turnover rates, increased call outs, and difficulty in maintaining a motivated workforce.

We are often reminded of budget restrictions. We need to prioritize the issues. It is frustrating to the point of distrust when funds are being spent on less critical or less transparent initiatives and redundant consultant studies. Budget decisions can sometimes be influenced by political considerations or pressures, leading to the allocation of funds for certain projects or studies that may not align with the MOST URGENT needs of the community, or our County. I think that we need to recognize the inefficiencies in our budget processes and spend the time, monies and resources on the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT issues that face our County's overall health.