



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII
MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the Earth.*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Thursday, March 30, 2017 1:40 PM Room 211

In SUPPORT HB 523 Relating to Recycling

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Aloha Chairwoman Tokuda, and members of the Ways & Means Committee,

The Sierra Club of Hawai‘i strongly supports HB 523, which seeks to require state agencies to provide and maintain onsite recycling collection methods for plastics, paper, and beverage containers at all state buildings and facilities.

We have 20,000 members and supporters throughout the Hawaiian Islands. Since 1968, the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i has been working to protect the unique natural and cultural resources of our islands. Thanks to our advocacy Hawai‘i implemented the Bottle Bill in January 2005, and as a result recycling rates nearly doubled. Today, recycling rates remain well above 68% statewide.¹

Yet, significant challenges remain. Currently, about half of the state’s recyclables end up in trash bins rather than recycling bins, which unnecessarily contributes extra waste to over-flowing landfills.² O‘ahu alone currently produces 1.74 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) per year;³ meanwhile, the island’s only MSW landfill, Waimanalo Gulch, lacks capacity to meet even a small fraction of the island’s needs. Likewise, Kaua‘i also face similar problems with its landfill, and attempts to create a new landfill are fraught with challenges for the local community.⁴

The Club supports HB 523 because recycling reduces waste, saves energy, conserves landfill space, and creates jobs in the waste management sector. A recent study estimates there are 3,000 full-time jobs in recycling. Not only are these jobs on the rise, they also appear to be recession-resistant. “[O]ne big benefit of the recycling programs is they encourage local

¹ Bottle Bill Resource Guide, <http://www.bottlebill.org/legislation/usa/hawaii.htm>

² *The Economics of Recycling in Hawaii*, Hawaii Business Magazine. August 2012.
<http://www.hawaiibusiness.com/the-economics-of-recycling-in-hawaii/>

³ *Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill Expansion Fact Sheet*, Department of Environmental Services.
http://www.opala.org/pdfs/solid_waste/WGSL_Factsheet.pdf

⁴ *Trash Problems Not Only Impacting Oahu*, Hawaii News Now.

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/9077420/trash-problems-not-only-impacting-oahu>

economic development, create jobs, and recycle money in our community,” noted one report on the study.⁵

As an island community, Hawai‘i faces unique challenges in managing its waste. It is imperative that we adopt all reasonable measures to reduce the stream of waste into our landfills. Requiring that all state buildings and facilities make recycling bins available will help ease the burden on those landfills by reducing the amount of unnecessary waste entering those landfills.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

Mahalo,

Marti Townsend
Director

⁵ *The Economics of Recycling in Hawaii*, Hawaii Business Magazine. August 2012.
<http://www.hawaiibusiness.com/the-economics-of-recycling-in-hawaii/>