

# IRON WORKERS STABILIZATION FUND

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March 23, 2023  
9:30 am

House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Re: HCR109/HR115 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S SOLID WASTE SECTION TO DEVELOP A PLAN OF INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVED WASTE DIVERSION BY WORKING WITH THE COUNTIES TO ADDRESS EACH COUNTY'S UNIQUE NEEDS ACCORDING TO ITS GEOGRAPHY, POPULATION, AND INDUSTRY MAKE-UP

Aloha Chair Nicole Lowen, Vice Chair Elle Cochran, and Members of the Committees:

We **SUPPORT** HCR109/HR115. These resolutions call for the Department of Health's Solid Waste Section to develop a plan of initiatives to increase waste diversion from landfills across the state by working with the counties and exploring the use of waste-to-energy.

The scientific consensus affirms what the communities of West O'ahu, especially Nānākuli, have been experiencing for decades, that landfills are a health hazard. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention/National Center for Health Statistics Neighborhood Life Expectancy Project (see attachment for visual map), our members and their families in the two census tracts abutting the PVT Landfill operated in Nānākuli live 10 years less than the state average of 82 years, being the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest life expectancies in the entire state. This is unacceptable. As a matter of fairness, every community in Hawaii deserves a "clean and healthful environment" (HI State Const. Art. XI, Sec. 9). No one should suffer the ill effects of landfills, so we need to decrease our reliance upon landfills and eventually stop using them altogether.

The Office of Solid Waste Management is uniquely situated in our state to assist the counties with better handling solid waste. Under HRS §342H-34, the director of the Solid Waste Management branch is already empowered to "...consult with and advise any person engaged or intending to be engaged in the management of solid waste." We believe that the state will play a much-needed facilitator role with the counties as they work together and explore how they can collectively increase diversion of waste to landfills, particularly looking at Waste-to-Energy.

Waste-to-Energy, used well, can help mitigate climate change. Hawai'i is the most isolated landmass on the face of the planet and most of our goods are shipped in powered by fossil fuels, including our fossil fuel use for current energy production. Waste-to-Energy would mitigate the methane release from diverting waste from landfills; the metals can be diverted and recycled; and electricity is produced that offset our reliance on fossil fuels as a firm and renewable energy source.

We recognize that each county is responsible for their own 'opala. However, in the spirit of laulima, we recognize that our counties may better solve their individual problems with waste



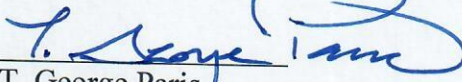
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by working together. As part of the construction industry, we recognize that industry still needs waste or disposal facilities including landfills to appropriately process the industry waste. Without those facilities, we would be unable to reach our affordable and workforce housing goals, repair our infrastructure, and do those necessary developments to address the climate crisis.

We believe that so long as we need landfills, that it would be good policy to have them in isolated areas with appropriate zoning. Such sites on O'ahu could include places like Ameron Quarry (with appropriate zone change), Kalaeloa and Campbell Industrial Park, or other lands held by the Federal government. Currently the communities in Nānākuli and Mā'ili/Lualualei are suffering from a public health crisis, with a landfill only a few feet away from homes, farms, and Ulehawa stream. This should not be. We stand in solidarity with our neighbors and all those that suffer from landfills in their communities and ask that the state facilitate inter-county initiatives to make landfills obsolete.

We urge the committee to **PASS** these resolutions. Mahalo for the opportunity testimony.

Sincerely,

  
T. George Paris  
Managing Director



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BRIDGE, STRUCTURAL, ORNAMENTAL AND REINFORCING IRON WORKERS

Affiliated with A.F.L.-C.I.O.

**LOCAL UNION NUMBER 625**

94-497 UKEE STREET • WAIPAHU, HAWAII 96797

**T.G. Paris**  
President Emeritus

March 23, 2023 - 9:30 am

House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection  
Via Videoconference  
Conference Room 325  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Re: HR115 & HCR109 –Relating to the Waste Management

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Cochran, and Honorable committee members,

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HR115 & HCR109. The resolutions request the department of Health's Solid Waste Section to develop a plan of initiatives for improved waste diversion by working with the counties to address each county's unique needs according to its geography, population, and industry make-up.

Landfills cause harm to those that live, work, and play next to them. Our members and their families in Nanakuli, Oahu have experienced this reality for decades with the start of the privately held landfill operated construction and demolition landfill that has taken almost 40% of the island's trash since the mid-eighties. No one should have to live next to trash. We believe that this resolution is a step in the right direction, where the solid waste section of the Department of Health is called upon to assist the counties to determine how they can better work together to divert more trash from going towards landfills, and hopefully find a way to make landfills no longer necessary. We support landfill diversion, we support recycling, we support reuse of materials, and we support the exploration of inter-county corroboration and the use of Waste-to-Energy, where appropriate. The Solid Waste Section of the Department of Health is in a prime position to help all our counties better manage their waste. Please consider passing resolutions HR115 and HCR109. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Joseph O'Donnell

Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer