

IEM Committee

From: Adrian Hong <adrianhong@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 13, 2017 9:18 AM
To: IEM Committee
Cc: David Hong
Subject: Testimony on IEM - 12
Attachments: IEM12AmendmentTestimony_05132017.pdf

Dear Committee Members,

Attached is my testimony on behalf of Island Plastic Bags, Inc. on IEM - 12. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your service.

Sincerely,

--

Adrian K. Hong, CPA*

President

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COMMENTS ON IEM-12

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE MAUI INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 15th, 2017

RE: IEM-12, A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 20.18 MAUI COUNTY CODE, RELATING TO PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION

POSITION: OPPOSE

Chair Cochran, Vice Chair Guzman, Members of the Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of IEM-12. My name is Adrian Hong and I am president of Island Plastic Bags Inc., a second-generation, family business in Halawa Valley. I am writing to you to provide my comments on IEM-12.

I strongly oppose this amendment to the bag ban as it will have a very negative impact on retail and grocery businesses on Hawaii, especially those that cater to tourists. This amendment would immediately will ban plastic reusable bags. This is especially troubling as the cost of 40% post-consumer paper bags is so expensive and the use of paper bags have a detrimental impact on the environment.

California recently enacted a statewide ban on single use plastic bags. Their ban does allow for 40% post-consumer paper bags just like our ban does. The problem is California is a huge jurisdiction with over 38 million people. There is only so much post-consumer paper stock out there as paper has to be used by the consumer first and then recycled. This means that the cost of 40% post-consumer paper bags will remain incredibly expensive well into the future. It will take a long time for recycling efforts to increase enough to provide enough supply for the price of post-consumer paper stock to drop.

The effect of the amendment of the bag ban in concert with the California ban would make providing bags at checkout exorbitantly expensive by reducing options for retailers. Environmentalists claim that businesses can just stop providing checkout bags but that won't happen. Tourists don't read up on local ordinances before vacationing here. They aren't going to pack a reusable bag with their swim trunks. They are going to want a bag when they purchase \$400 worth of goods from a retailer and that retailer had better provide a bag or risk losing business. Grocery stores and retail store are terrified of not providing a bag as they may lose tourists and local customers so businesses will be forced to purchase very expensive bags.

In addition, many people incorrectly assume that paper bags are more environmentally friendly. The truth is that paper bags use more energy in production, create more municipal waste, create more greenhouse gas, and use significantly more fresh water than plastic bags. For an impact summary on the use of paper bags versus single use, plastic bags, please see the attached article.

Thank you for your time and for your service.

Sincerely,

Adrian Hong



Do we really need to ban plastic bags?

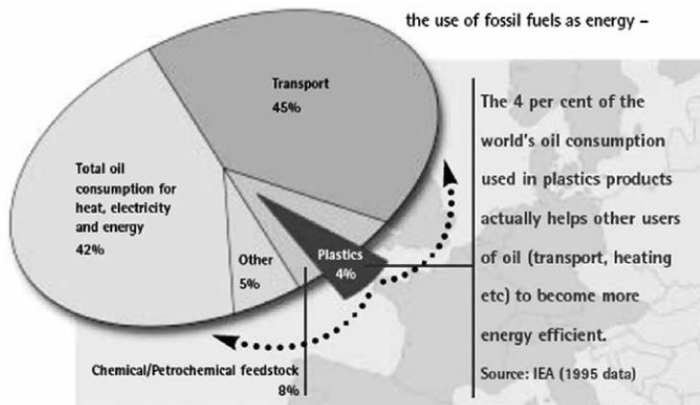
Excerpts taken from *Malaysian Plastic Digest* - 2010

The Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) calculation in the table below shows that paper uses more energy, fossil fuel and water as compared to plastics. Paper also results in more greenhouse emissions than Plastics and Compostable Plastics.

	Impact Summary		
	(Carrying Capacity equivalent to 1,000 paper bags)		
	Paper	Compostable Plastics	Polyethylene (Plastics)
Total Energy Usage (MJ)	2,622	2,070	763
Fossil Fuel Use (Kg)	23.2	41.5	14.9
Municipal Waste (Kg)	33.9	19.2	7.0
Greenhouse gas (CO ₂ equivalent Tons)	0.08	0.18	0.04
Fresh Water Usage (gal)	1,004	1,017	58

Source: *Boustead Report by Boustead Consulting & Associates Ltd for Progressive Bag Alliance*

In terms of manufacturing, only 4% of the world's crude oil is used to manufacture all forms of plastic products, including plastics bags. While a huge amount of crude oil is used as fuel for transportation (45%) and energy, heating and electricity (42%), there is still the misconception that the production of lightweight polymer-based products causes the depletion of oil reserves. (see chart below)



In fact, being lightweight, plastic bags are much more energy-efficient and have, therefore, contributed towards sustaining limited energy resources.

Plastic bags -- whether in terms of the total energy used, fossil fuel used, waste disposal volume/weight or greenhouse gas emissions -- have the lowest environmental impact compared with any other packaging material.

Myth: Plastic Bags contribute to Littering

Any material, whether plastics or paper, does not litter on its own. Littering is a behavioral problem that is not caused by a bag being made out of plastics. If authorities would like to do something for the environment, stronger mechanisms to punish litterbugs should be in place to prohibit littering altogether.

Proponents of a plastic bag ban ignore the FACTS, stir fears and causes hardship to manufacturers, brands and ultimately the consumer. Any solution to this issue must be grounded in reality and deal with the fact that a ban on plastic bags will negatively affect the environment. "Ban the bag" is a sound bite, not a solution.

The proper solution is to encourage technologies which accelerate the biodegradation of plastic through a natural microbial process, while providing sustainable energy resources. See: <http://www.epa.gov/lmop/>

ENSO Plastics offers these solutions. We encourage you to visit our website and become educated.

www.ensoplastics.com