EACP Committee

From: Joy Gold <joy@joygoldunlimited.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2020 12:35 PM
To: EACP Committee
Cc: Glenn Muranaka; Mia_Inoshita
Subject: Testimony for EACP-16, Tuesday, Feb 18 EACP Committee Hearing
Attachments: MG_Maui_EACP_16_Feb_18_2020.pdf

Aloha,
On behalf of Glenn Muranaka, President and General Manager of Meadow Gold Dairies, please accept the attached testimony for:
EACP-16, Restricting the Use and Sale of Single-Use Plastic Disposable Foodware
EACP Committee Hearing
Tuesday, Feb 18, 2020 – 1:30 pm
Council Chamber

Please call me at 808-368-1146 if you have any question about the testimony submittal.
Thank you,
Joy Gold

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"Working with you to achieve your organization's mission and public policy goals"

Meadow Gold
Hawaii's Dairy

Meadow Gold Dairies

Viva

Testimony by: Glenn Muranaka
EACP-16, Restricting the Use and Sale of Single-Use Plastic Disposable Foodware
Tuesday, February 18, 2020
Position: Request Deferral Until Further Information Obtained

Chair Senenci and Members of the EACP Committee:

My name is Glenn Muranaka, President and General Manager of Meadow Gold Dairies, with operations on Maui, Hawaii Island, Kauai and Oahu. Our company has been in Hawaii since 1897—122 years, providing Hawaii consumers with a variety of milk products and juices. Meadow Gold's long history has not come without effort. We continually adapt to our customers' and consumers' ever-changing needs, and we constantly evolve along with our industry, our community and our market. Over the years, this has required that we struggle, tighten our belts, innovate and work extremely hard, making us a better company in the process. The foundation of this work rests with the 305 employees that are committed to providing superior quality products.

Bans on single use plastic disposable food ware will harm small businesses, many of whom are not represented in this discussion and yet will be the most impacted. Caution is expressed about harm to small businesses that are a vital segment of our state's economic engine that if not supported, excise taxes; income taxes; property taxes - taxes in general would increase which would hurt all businesses and the community.

We ask that this bill be deferred until more information is obtained for further discussion:

1. We note that Maui County instituted a foam food service ware ban bill effective January 1, 2019. Ordinance 4457 requires Council review in 2021. While that does not specify the details of the review, it is suggested that it include an economic and environmental analysis to determine its impact on Maui small businesses and consumers and goal achievement of promoting public health, reducing litter and limit harmful materials from entering the environment.

2. This opportunity to analyze the foam ban on business and community gives better understanding and guidance for reducing single-use plastic disposable foodware.

3. Alternative packaging is limited in availability, costs more and are not environmentally friendly as some might suggest. The City of Portland (Oregon) Bureau of Planning and Sustainability 2019 report, Food Service Ware LCA Harmonization indicates that the type of material for single-use service ware is not a predictor of reduced environmental impacts. Bioplastics are the most common alternative to replace plastic food service ware, however it is expensive, is not biodegradable and cannot be composted.

The seriousness of the proposed policies requires thorough and systemic overview and discussion with suppliers, local manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors, convenience stores, grocery stores, the different types of food operators—food trucks, schools, dine-in restaurants, mom/pop eateries, and ultimately the consumer.

This deeper discussion process began on November 14th, via the State Work Group on Single-Use Plastic Source Reduction facilitated by Peter Adler. It provides environmental groups, business, manufacturers and state and county representatives—which includes Maui County's Environmental Protection and Sustainability Division Manager, a forum for developing practical solutions for plastic reductions. We urge the committee to support that effort and defer this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions, please contact me at 944-5911.

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A Message from Composters Serving Oregon:

Why We Don’t Want Compostable Packaging and Serviceware

Every year, the Pacific Northwest’s compost industry turns hundreds of thousands of tons of yard and food wastes into nutrient-rich compost for agriculture, nurseries, landscaping businesses and home gardens.The quality compost products that we create develop healthier and more resilient soil, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, recycle nutrients, conserve water, and may reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

“Compostable” packaging and serviceware items have been on the rise for the past decade and they are increasingly ending up in our facilities. These materials compromise our composting programs and limit many of the environmental benefits of successful composting.

Here are nine reasons why we don’t want “compostable” packaging or serviceware delivered to our facilities:

1. **They don’t always compost:** Not all ‘certified’ compostable items will actually compost (break down) as fully or quickly as we need them to. This is because certification standards test compostability based on laboratory conditions. Those conditions are not always replicated in the real world (our facilities) which means that some “compostable” items don’t fully compost. The result is a finished compost that is contaminated with bits of partially degraded “compostable” material.

2. **Contamination happens:** As a consumer, you may sort properly – but your neighbor might not. When collection programs accept compostable products, non-compostable look-alike items inevitably end up in the mix. These materials then must be removed, either at the start (when we receive them) or at the end (as pieces of garbage mixed in with finished compost). Either way, this contamination increases our operating costs and degrades the quality of our product, which makes the compost industry less economically viable.

3. **They hurt resale quality:** We don’t want to produce finished compost that is contaminated with fragments of packaging and serviceware, and our consumers won’t purchase contaminated material. Contamination lowers the value of our product, making it difficult and sometimes impossible to sell. When fewer people use compost, its environmental benefits aren’t realized.

4. **We can’t sell to organic farmers:** Farmers often use compost in the production of certified organic foods. National standards prohibit the use of many different packaging materials when making compost used to grow crops certified as “USDA Organic”. Accepting packaging and serviceware at our facilities hinders our ability to provide finished compost to organic farmers.

5. **They may threaten human and environmental health:** Compostable packaging can contain chemicals that can transfer into finished compost. For example, some paper items have commonly been treated with a class of chemicals called perfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) to provide water and grease resistance. PFAS is persistent in the environment, can transfer from compost to ground and surface waters, can be taken up by plants from compost, and may have negative health impacts – affecting child development, reducing fertility, disrupting hormones, affecting the immune system, and increasing risks of cancer. While PFAS is being voluntarily phased out by some producers, it has not been outlawed, and may continue to be used in products that end up at our facilities. Separately, non-degraded fragments of plastic packaging can contaminate finished compost, intensifying environmental health concerns when it is used by buyers. We want to keep our compost clean and safe for all.

6 **It increases our costs and makes our job harder:** Some of us have accepted compostable packaging in the past, and found that loads of compostable packaging require us to change our processes, adding water, using more energy and spending additional resources to produce finished compost. Some types of compostable packaging mostly degrade into carbon dioxide and water and leave behind little of value for all of the extra effort required.

7 **Just because something is compostable doesn't mean it's better for the environment.** Oregon DEQ has found that compostable serviceware often has a larger (life time) environmental footprint than non-compostable items*. For example, compostable materials may require more fossil energy use, release more greenhouse gases, or result in more ecological toxins than their non-compostable counterparts, mostly due to how they're made. The research confirms what scientists already know: that *what materials are made of, and how they're made, may be more significant than whether they're composted vs. landfilled*. "Composting" and "compostable" are not the same idea. Composting is a beneficial treatment option for organic wastes, but "compostable" is not a guarantee of low impact.

8 **In some cases, the benefits of recycling surpass those of composting.** Some items, like paper bags, can be either composted or recycled. Generally speaking, the recycling of manufactured materials (such as packaging) back into new products or packaging can provide greater overall environmental benefits than composting does.

9 **Good intentions aren't being realized.** Compostable items often cost more – sometimes up to five times as much as non-compostable alternatives. That's a lot of money spent on products that might not actually help the environment – money that could be spent in more productive and beneficial ways.

Not only do compostable products often cost more to purchase, they also drive up the costs to operate our facilities and impede our ability to sell finished compost. Compostable packaging is promoted as a means of achieving "zero waste" goals but it burdens composters (and recyclers) with materials that harm our ability to efficiently process recovered materials. Reusable dishware is almost always a better choice for the environment. If you must use single-use items, please don't put them in your compost bin.

We need to focus on recycling organic wastes, such as food and yard trimmings, into high-quality compost products that can be used with confidence to restore soils and conserve resources. Compostable packaging doesn't help us to achieve these goals. We need clean feedstocks in order to produce quality compost.

Please help us protect the environment and create high quality compost products by keeping "compostable" packaging and serviceware out of the compost bin.

Thanks for your cooperation!

REXIUS COMPOST & ORGANICS

Dirt Hugger ORGANIC COMPOST CO. - OR / WA

Recology ORGANICS OREGON

REPUBLIC SERVICES Pacific Region Compost

LANE FOREST PRODUCTS The company to grow with

DESCHUTES RECYCLING Compost Facility

Pendleton Sanitary Service, Inc. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Compost!

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WASTE PRO

*See https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/compostable.pdf