

Resolution

No. 24-118

URGING THE SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO INCORPORATE COUNTY FOOD-WASTE COMPOSTING INTO THE INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

WHEREAS, the County is updating its Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan, which describes current and proposed solid-waste programs and will guide the County's solid-waste management for the next 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the County is receiving public comments on the draft Plan through August 3, 2024, before submitting the final Plan to the State of Hawai'i Department of Health for review and approval; and

WHEREAS, as of 2019, nearly 33 percent of the material disposed of at Maui's near-capacity landfill was green waste (32,000 tons) and food waste (41,000 tons); and

WHEREAS, recycling food waste into compost has multiple environmental benefits, including diverting tons of material from landfills daily; improving soil health; remediating contaminated soils; helping to revegetate disturbed lands; managing stormwater runoff; increasing drought resistance; reducing the need for supplemental water, fertilizers, and pesticides; sequestering carbon and decreasing methane, a powerful greenhouse-gas emission responsible for climate change; and reducing the risk of invasive species introduced through contaminated compost and mulch importation, such as coconut rhinoceros beetles, found on Maui last year; and

WHEREAS, enabling County compost facilities through implementing a strategy in the Plan would also provide farmers with an excellent, local source of compost; increase crop yields; increase food security; create jobs to collect food waste and produce compost; and contribute to attaining County sustainability, resilience, and fiscal goals; and

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WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency touts the economic and other benefits of composting on its website, citing the need for supportive rules and policies, and providing resources, and

WHEREAS, many municipalities recognize composting's benefits and are implementing programs to recycle food waste; and

WHEREAS, the Maui Island Plan includes an implementing action to "increase the number of composting centers;" and the Countywide Policy Plan includes an objective to "improve waste-disposal practices and systems to be efficient, safe, and as environmentally sound as possible;" and

WHEREAS, on July 24, 2020, the Council adopted Resolution 20-108, "Supporting 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures Initiative and Transition to a Circular Economy;" resolving to support 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures Initiative principles and transition to a circular economy; and

WHEREAS, the resolution described a circular economy as fostering a regenerative and equitable economic system; decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation; performing meaningful work while rejuvenating the environment; keeping materials and resources in the economy for as long as possible while preserving their value; and minimizing waste; and

WHEREAS, increasing food-waste composting through developing County facilities supports the transition to a circular economy; and

WHEREAS, the current version of the draft Plan does not include a strategy for addressing food-waste composting at County facilities, and all suggested options in the Plan would have only limited impacts on the volume of food waste received at landfills every day;

WHEREAS, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee will hold a public hearing on the draft Plan on July 17, 2024; and

WHEREAS, information on how to testify at the public hearing and a link to the draft Plan are at <https://tinyurl.com/SolidWasteManagementPlan>; now, therefore,

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BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it urges the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to incorporate developing County food-waste composting facilities into the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan; and
2. That is urges the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to advocate for State legislation to permit and facilitate development of County composting facilities; and
3. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, c/o Department of Environmental Management, County of Maui; Gerald M. Ross, Kupa'a Farms, LLC; the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i; Rogerene "Kali" Arce, Director of Agriculture, County of Maui; Shayne R. Agawa, P.E., Director of Environmental Management, County of Maui; and the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui.

INTRODUCED BY:

Tamara A.M. Paltin

TAMARA PALTIN