

EACP Committee

From: Jazmyne M.K. Geis <jaz@JazmyneGeis.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2020 1:12 PM
To: EACP Committee
Subject: Written Testimony: RESTRICTING THE USE AND SALE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC DISPOSABLE FOODWARE (EACP- 16)

Dear members of the council,

Thank you for gathering today to discuss the restriction of the use and sale of single-use plastic disposable food ware. This is an important topic to the future health of our island's landscape and community, so much so that I woke myself up to write you all this written testimony from Germany.

I am a sustainable designer and artist, 29 years old, and a Maui girl. What drives my life's work is Maui and protecting her beauty and resources she gifts us everyday. It was passing the landfill mountains on Pūlehu Rd. everyday to town that got me fired up to pursue my postgraduate degree in sustainability. I am not alone. There are many in my generation and younger ones following that give a darn, and also have the skills to back that passion. We are here to be of service. I chose design as a working field as designers hold one of the most influential positions for change (in my perspective) as they have a hand in creating the world in which we live in — city planners, home designs, apparel, consumer product makers, packaging, app makers, community developers etc. Though I view us ALL as designers of our world, not just those holding those titles. We are ALL active players in shaping the world in which we wish to see.

From my design perspective, plastic itself is not “evil”, but IS harmful and dangerous due to our human disrespect, disvalue and addiction to the material. We've created a design failure. These polymers come from finite resources, that are mixed with unregulated chemicals, from places with unregulated working conditions, and created into products not *designed* for recycling or reuse in the first place! They are designed to be thrown away, and so that is their destiny. Plus their affordable “visible” price does not take into account the hidden price we (past, present, future) all have to pay to clean up the trail it leaves behind. The hugest disrespect to the material and all of the resources- both earth extracted and human related— is single-use plastic disposable products. It's as if you spent two years designing and building a home to then sleep in it once and then tear it down. It seems ridiculous doesn't it? Tools meant to help us eat for 15 minutes, for example, last longer than our lifetime!

This “throw-away” culture comes from the trajectory of human history: challenging human design to trump nature; the socio-cultural drive towards the American Dream; the belief that natural resources were limitless, high consumption equals being a good citizen, and the idea that the luxury of comfort and convenience — to not wash dishes, to have a new outfit everyday, to simply throw ‘away’ — was the best thing life could offer.

It's 2020 and we know better now. We've known that we could do better for years now. We now know there is no ‘away’. We've been faced with the backlash of our consumption of plastic and other species in our ecosystem have already suffered for it. I think we all know in our bones that the right direction is to take action to help our communities make better decisions. We don't need single-use plastic, and yes we have alternatives. We do have options. Please feel free to contact me or even others from our grassroots coalition— Zero Waste Maui. You will find my details below.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

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