

EACP Committee

From: Serene Gunnison <serenegunnison@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 9:23 AM
To: Shane M. Sinenci; Tasha A. Kama; Kelly King; Alice L. Lee; Mike J. Molina; Tamara A. Paltin; Yukilei Sugimura; Keani N. Rawlins; EACP Committee; County Clerk
Subject: Support for bill EACP-16
Attachments: 839BC8FB-753D-48D8-BB42-CE10089374B6.JPG

Aloha Maui County Council,

My name is Serene Gunnison. I was born and raised in Haiku. I grew up surfing and competing, and my passion for the sport of surfing has brought me all around the world. Surfing has also deepened my connection with the ocean. As a surfer, I constantly see plastic washing up on our shores. It has prompted me to organize beach clean-ups and thoroughly research where this massive amount of debris is coming from, as well as work to reduce my plastic consumption. I have found that the rhetoric surrounding plastic pollution tends to place the blame on Asian countries like China, Indonesia, and the Philippines. However, I have also discovered that the United States produces more waste per capita than ***any other country in the world***. We must work to change this. Our recycling system is broken, and we cannot keep passing the burden on to developing nations by shipping our waste there. The time has come to significantly reduce our plastic intake, and I believe this bill will be a huge step forward for not only Maui County, but the state of Hawaii, and help guide visitors from the mainland to taking the same steps in their home state.

I would also like to share that I recently visited the Philippines, which has been deemed the 3rd worst country for plastic pollution in the world. During my time there, I never once received a plastic straw, plastic utensil, plastic bag, or to-go container. There were recycling bins for plastic bottles every few meters. They heavily emphasized bringing your own coffee cups and containers for to-go items. There were signs posted everywhere encouraging people to reduce their plastic intake. There were even allocated areas where plastic bottles were prohibited. It struck me that the 3rd worst plastic polluting country in the world is making greater strides to reduce their plastic consumption than we are here in Hawaii. If provinces in the Philippines can take the necessary steps to oust single-use plastic, then it is absurd to think that we can't.

Attached is a photo taken last year at Sugar Cove in Pa'ia. We cannot be complacent with this issue. Please vote to pass EACP-16!

Thank you so much,
Serene Gunnison

