

August 5, 2019

TESTIMONY OF ROB PARSONS

EACP-31 "3 Can Plan"

Aloha Chair Sinenci and Council Members,

My name is Rob Parsons and I am a long-time resident residing in Haiku. I thank you for placing this item on the agenda for discussion, and for a status update from the administration.

I was fortunate to learn a great deal about solid waste management, preferably known as resource recovery and management, when I began working with the County as Environmental Coordinator in 2003. Then-Solid Waste Director John Harder took me under his wing and provided a hands-on education on progressive management. Among other things, John helped with the massive cleanup on Kauai after Hurricane Iniki in 1992.

Many of you know that implementation of the 3 Can Plan for curbside recycling was one of the first progressive steps taken to implement recommendations of the 2009 update of the Maui County Integrated Solid waste Management Plan (ISWMP). Two neighborhoods in South Maui were chosen, under the guidance of George Correia. To me, George personified the "Can Do," attitude, and when asked to assist with an appliance amnesty collection in 2005 that resulted in 53 containers being shipped to Oahu for metal processing, George responded, "whatever it takes."

Sadly, our DEM director at the time had more of a "No Can" plan, and announced that he was going to rescind the program, due to costs. Only after an uproar from those who had curbside recycling was the decision reversed.

The South Maui neighborhoods were chosen not as a pilot program to determine the viability of curbside recycling, but to educate the department on any issues as it continued to phase in the program, similar to what was done with automated refuse trucks. A bulk purchase of many blue and green cans was initially made, and they have been stored unused since then.

Costs ran artificially high due to the bid on processing the sorted recyclables. Re-bidding the contract could have brought considerable savings. Green

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waste was hauled to the EKO compost site at the Central Maui landfill. Taking it to the Kihei regional composting site might have provided another opportunity for cost-saving efficiency.

Often people have remarked to me that they can't believe Maui doesn't have curbside recycling, especially those who have lived on or visited the West Coast, where it is widespread.

With the imminent ten-year update of the ISWMP, new opportunities will avail themselves. The challenges of recycling have been noted over the past two years, so we may strongly consider ways to utilize these resources on Maui or in Hawaii, rather than shipping them to Asian markets.

The cities of Seattle and San Francisco have implemented curbside recycling of food waste. Food-waste composting produces nutrient-rich compost that will go a long way towards soil remediation efforts of our agricultural lands. The 2012 Waste Characterization Study of the Central Maui Landfill showed that a shocking 20% of waste is food waste. These materials are the primary reason why landfills produce methane gas as they decompose.

We hope that the presentation today by the Office of Environmental Protection and Sustainability will help identify some of the challenges and opportunities of the 3 Can Plan. Again, I thank you for providing this timely agenda item to revisit the topic.

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