RES26-007
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 180

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: May 13, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 9

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
PIkachu Shelby Billionaire	presidentbillionaire@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ohana Unity Party	Support	May 9, 2026 @ 06:25 PM

Testimony:

Testimony in Support of the Resolution Establishing an End Landfills Task Force

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing in **strong support** of the resolution establishing an **End Landfills Task Force** to evaluate the feasibility, costs, risks, and implementation pathways for reducing or eliminating landfill dependency in the City and County of Honolulu.

Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill, our primary municipal waste landfill, is scheduled to close by **March 2, 2028**. This deadline is fast approaching, and continued reliance on landfills presents serious long-term challenges:

- Finite landfill capacity on O‘ahu
- Environmental and public health risks
- Climate impacts from methane emissions
- High long-term fiscal costs

While H-POWER (waste-to-energy) and recycling programs handle a significant portion of our waste, we still send a large volume to landfills. It is fiscally and environmentally irresponsible to keep kicking this can down the road without a comprehensive plan.

This Task Force is a smart and responsible step forward. It will:
- Bring together experts from government, industry (including H-POWER), recycling sectors, labor unions, and the community
- Evaluate advanced technologies such as pyrolysis, plasma arc gasification, and other conversion methods
- Analyze real costs, environmental impacts, workforce effects, and practical timelines
- Develop a phased transition plan with clear milestones

Importantly, the resolution emphasizes transparency, coordination with the State, and no compensation for members — showing fiscal prudence.

Honolulu must move beyond short-term thinking. Creating this Task Force demonstrates proactive leadership and gives us the data-driven roadmap we need before the 2028 deadline creates a crisis.

I urge you to **pass this resolution** and move quickly to appoint qualified, independent members who will prioritize practical solutions, environmental protection, and taxpayer interests.

Mahalo for your leadership on this critical issue.

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM
Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.
Ohana Unity Party, Chairman
Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com

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Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mike Rivera	tigernick98@gmail.com	96720
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	May 11, 2026 @ 02:33 PM

Testimony:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Councilmembers — thank you for the opportunity to testify on Resolution 26-7. We strongly support the goal of reducing landfill dependence, and we appreciate the Council's amendments to expand coordination, stakeholder involvement, and evaluation of emerging technologies.

However, it is essential to be clear: no modern solid waste system can operate without some engineered landfill capacity. Even with maximum diversion, O'ahu will always require secure disposal for WTE ash, special wastes, contaminated soils, and disaster debris. Technologies such as pyrolysis, gasification, and anaerobic digestion can reduce tonnage, but none eliminate disposal needs.

For an island system, redundancy is not optional — it is a public safety requirement. Eliminating landfill capacity without a proven, permitted alternative would expose O'ahu to regulatory, operational, and emergency-response risks.

We support the Task Force's work but urge the Council to ground its expectations in technical reality: O'ahu can pursue a minimal landfill future, but not a no-landfill future. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Carmen Guzman Simpliciano	kingdompathways.info@gmail.com	96792
Representing: Kingdom Pathways	Position: Support	Submitted: May 11, 2026 @ 04:36 PM
Name: Will Giese	Email: wgiese@solaraycorp.com	Zip: 96819
Representing: Solaray Corp	Position: Support	Submitted: May 12, 2026 @ 10:35 AM
Name: Gail Gomes	Email: wss@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96792-2916
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 12, 2026 @ 01:33 PM
Name: Naomi Kukac	Email: nkukac@simonpietri.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Simonpietri Enterprises LLC	Position: Support	Submitted: May 12, 2026 @ 04:53 PM
Name: Umida Stelovska	Email: umida@carbotura.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Carbotura Inc.	Position: Support	Submitted: May 12, 2026 @ 06:25 PM
Name: Shauna Kahiapo	Email: president@pkhcc.org	Zip: 96734
Representing: Prince Kuhio Hawaiian Civic Club	Position: Support	Submitted: May 12, 2026 @ 10:43 PM
Name: Kamuela Werner	Email: kamuelaw@gmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 12, 2026 @ 11:01 PM
Name: Kiara Louise Bacasen	Email: louisedangwa2@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Sierra Club Hawai‘i - O‘ahu Group	Position: Support	Submitted: May 13, 2026 @ 07:46 AM
Testimony: Aloha,		

I'm writing on behalf of Sierra Club Hawai'i O'ahu group in strong support for the creation of a task force focused on eliminating landfill dependency in the city and county of Honolulu.

Landfills as a waste management solution stands as a mere band aid solution to what can and should be dealt with systemically through coordinated effort to ensure the needs of the present do not overshadow the needs of the future. Already their presence threatens efforts to re-establish aquaculture initiatives on North Shore. Landfills are often imposed on already underserved and overlooked communities, greatly exacerbating wealth and health inequalities that is deeply unacceptable. On an island with such limited land, with aquifers as critical as they are, and with such large populations of people who presently produce massive volumes of waste, landfills are simply not the appropriate solution to depend on. In pursuing proper solutions, we must recognize our duty to mālama 'āina and hold 'āina as a stakeholder in this conversation, as the health and wellbeing of the land is foundational to the health and well being of the people who live with it.

This task force will be able to take the time to consider a sustainable path out of this landfill dependency. That concerted focus and cross departmental conversation is appropriate for a problem as persistent and complex as sustainable waste management is, especially in a context as unique and challenging as what we find for ourselves on O'ahu. As such, we at Sierra Club O'ahu Group strongly urge the creation of this task force as a means to dedicate real attention, creativity, and sustainable solution making to this glaring issue.

Mahalo for your time,
Kiara Louise Bacasen
Sierra Club Hawai'i O'ahu Group Representative

KINGDOM PATHWAYS
ALOHA ʻĀINA

Testimony in SUPPORT of Resolution 26-7, CD1.
Relating to establishing an end landfills task force to evaluate the feasibility, costs, risks, and implementation pathways for eliminating landfill dependency in the city and county of honolulu.

Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano, Co-Founder of Kingdom Pathways, a Native Hawaiian nonprofit organization based in Waiʻanae focused on environmental health, cultural stewardship, and community engagement. I am writing in ***strong support of Resolution 26-7, CD1***, establishing an End Landfills Task Force to evaluate pathways toward eliminating landfill dependency on Oʻahu.

For decades, West Oʻahu communities have carried the burden of landfill impacts, environmental contamination concerns, flooding, air quality issues, and the cumulative effects of industrial infrastructure placed near our homes, coastlines, and families. Landfill dependency is not just a waste management issue it is a public health and environmental justice issue.

We support this resolution because it acknowledges the long-term environmental, public health, climate, and fiscal challenges tied to continued landfill reliance. With the pending closure timeline of Waimānalo Gulch, now is the time for transparent, long-term planning focused on reducing harm and exploring sustainable alternatives.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Resolution 26-7, CD1.

With Aloha,
Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano
Co-Founder, Kingdom Pathways

SOLARAY

May 12, 2026

Honolulu City Council

City and County of Honolulu

Honolulu, Hawai‘i

RE:	Resolution 26-7, CD1
Hearing:	Honolulu City Council, Wednesday May 13, 2026
Position:	**STRONG SUPPORT**

Chair and Members of the Council,

My name is Will Giese. I am the Senior Director of Government Affairs of The Solaray Corporation. Solaray was founded in 1975 and does business in Hawai‘i as Inter-Island Solar Supply. Solaray also wholly owns Pacific Panel Cleaners (“PPC”), Generator & Power Systems (“GPS”), and Island Resource Recovery (“IRR”), all Hawai‘i Corporations, as well as SunEarth, Inc., a California Corporation, and Alternate Energy Technologies (AET), a Florida Corporation. SunEarth & AET are domestic manufacturing companies producing American-made clean energy products, much of which has been installed and operated throughout Hawai‘i for 50 years. GPS is the Generac Industrial generator distributor for Hawai‘i. Island Resource Recovery is in the final stages of building out what will be the only solar module and clean energy recycling facility in the State of Hawai‘i, located in Kapolei, with full operations set to begin on or before December 2027. Solaray Corp. and its wholly owned subsidiaries are proudly 100% employee owned.

I am testifying **IN STRONG SUPPORT of Resolution 26-7, CD1**, establishing an End Landfills Task Force to evaluate the feasibility, costs, and implementation pathways for eliminating landfill dependency in the City and County of Honolulu.

COMMENTS

With the Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill slated to cease operations by no later than March 2, 2028, the City and County of Honolulu faces a critical near-term inflection point in how it manages its solid waste stream. The work proposed in this resolution is essential to ensuring that Honolulu meets this challenge responsibly, transparently, and on a realistic timeline.

Hawai‘i’s accelerating renewable energy buildout has, over the last two decades, created a new and rapidly growing waste stream that has had no in-state solution: end-of-life solar modules, batteries, inverters, and other clean energy equipment. Today, this material is either shipped off-island at significant cost and emissions impact, landfilled, or stockpiled, none of which serves Hawai‘i’s environmental, economic, or sustainability goals, and none of which is consistent with the direction this resolution sets for the City.

Island Resource Recovery was created specifically to solve this problem. It is the only Hawaii based company to receive a Section 48C tax credit explicitly for this purpose. Once full operations commence, IRR will be the only solar module and clean energy recycling facility in the State of Hawai‘i. Our Kapolei facility will divert significant tonnage of clean energy material away from local landfills, recover valuable materials for reintroduction into the supply chain, create local clean-economy jobs, and provide a homegrown, regulated, and accountable end-of-life pathway for the very products that power Hawai‘i’s energy transition. Put plainly, IRR is exactly the kind of in-state infrastructure the End Landfills Task Force is being created to identify, evaluate, and support.

We strongly support the formation of the End Landfills Task Force and its mandate to study and recommend pathways toward eliminating landfill dependency in the City and County of Honolulu. The Task Force’s success will depend in significant part on the technical expertise and operational knowledge brought to the table by Hawai‘i-based recycling and conversion facilities that understand the realities of doing this work in our island environment, from logistics and feedstock variability to permitting, workforce development, and the unique cost structures of operating in Hawai‘i.

REQUEST

Resolution 26-7, CD1 provides for the appointment of “a representative from the energy recycling or conversion sector” to serve on the Task Force. As the only solar module and clean energy recycling facility in the State of Hawai‘i, Island Resource Recovery is uniquely positioned to provide subject-matter expertise on the recovery, processing, and re-circulation of clean energy materials; the infrastructure required to support a circular clean-energy economy in Hawai‘i; and the workforce, regulatory, and operational considerations of standing up this category of facility locally. **We respectfully request that Island Resource Recovery be considered to fill the energy recycling representative slot on the End Landfills Task Force.**

As a local, employee-owned business that has been owned and operated in Hawai‘i for over 40 years, and as the company building Hawai‘i’s first and only solar module and clean energy recycling facility, we are **IN STRONG SUPPORT of Resolution 26-7, CD1** and look forward to contributing to the Task Force’s work.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Will Giese

Senior Director, Government Affairs

The Solaray Corporation / Island Resource Recovery

Gail Gomes
86-232 Alamihi St.
Wai‘anae, HI 96792
808.554.4558
wss@hawaii.rr.com

To: Honolulu City Council

RE: Resolution 26-7 - Establishing an “End Landfills” Task Force

Aloha Chair Waters and members of the City Council,

I am in **strong support** of Resolution 26-7, introduced by Councilmember Andria Tupola, which is scheduled for final reading and adoption on Wednesday, May 13, 2026. It is my understanding that the resolution would formally establish an End Landfills Task Force to evaluate pathways for reducing and eliminating landfill dependency. In addition, it would study long-term solid waste strategies including recycling, diversion, conversion technologies, infrastructure needs, workforce impacts, permitting requirements, and implementation challenges which we need here on O’ahu.

As a child, my grandparents were country people and farmers. Nothing on the farms was ever wasted and things were either recycled, reused or fixed. Sad to say, we have become a “disposable society” where it’s easier to buy a new item and throw the old one away instead of fixing it.

In my years of travel to the continent and visiting many states, I am amazed at what so many states are doing with recycling and waste reduction which we don’t implement here. Europe and Asia are years ahead of us with their various techniques and we here on our island are woefully behind the times.

As a resident of the “Westside” of O‘ahu, and of course the home of Waimanalo Gulch, we see the amount of trash that is dumped on a daily basis which many items could have been recycled and used for other uses such as road repairs, barriers, etc. In addition, I don’t want any other community to have to put up with what we have and continue to have to endure.

PLEASE support Resolution 26-7 and allow us to begin the process of living in a clean environment and leave our island in a better place for our children and grandchildren.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify!

Gail Gomes

TESTIMONY ON **RESOLUTION 26-007** RELATING TO
ESTABLISH AN END LANDFILLS TASK FORCE
Position: **Support**

To Scott Nishimoto, Chair; Andria Tupola, Vice Chair; and the members of the committee on International & Legal Affairs:

Simonpietri Enterprises LLC (SEL) **SUPPORTS** the intention of the resolution to establish a task force that would explore other pathways for solid waste management, as well as the feasibility and costs to implement such solutions.

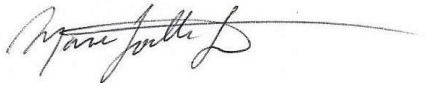
SEL is an O'ahu-based small business developing innovative ways to recycle some of Hawai'i's most challenging wastes into renewable fuels and other beneficial recycled-material products for use in Hawai`i. For the better of the last 6 years, we have been designing the Aloha Carbon integrated plant in Campbell Industrial Park to divert over 2000 tons per day of construction & demolition (C&D) debris from landfilling to be converted into renewable natural gas starting with a small manufacturing plant – the Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (Aloha SMRFF).

The Aloha SMRFF – which will serve as the pilot plant for Aloha Carbon - will divert 200+ tons per day of C&D waste from landfilling and convert that waste, along with invasive and pest infested biomass, to displace over 10,000 tons per year of imported fossil fuels and create recycled building materials. Moreover, with this same facility we can produce a variety of soil amendments including organic and potash fertilizers for agricultural and landscaping uses by combining additional waste streams - each which present their own challenges. This facility is the first step to demonstrating our Aloha Carbon manufacturing process to manufacture pipeline-quality renewable fuel from solid wastes – 100% of which are generated in Honolulu. Even with modest fuel production, we anticipate this initial project to have sizable benefits that will support the state's emission reduction and energy resilience goals while simultaneously supporting local agriculture and landscape restoration efforts and creating other economic opportunities.

This resolution calls for the exploration of new alternative solutions to more effectively manage waste and foster better environmental stewardship. SEL feels this aligns with our mission as a company whose technical expertise and innovation are focused in the areas of waste management, energy and nutrient recovery, and the circular economy. We urge the committee to adopt **Resolution 26-007** and would even appreciate the opportunity to participate as part of the task force.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony, and hope to see the measure advance.

Sincerely,



Marie-Joelle Simonpietri
President

About Simonpietri Enterprises LLC

Simonpietri Enterprises is a Kailua, Hawaii-based woman- and veteran-owned small business with ten employees, focused on technical innovation and first-of-kind project development of emerging clean and renewable technologies. Since founding in 2006, we have helped dozens of small and large industrial companies in Hawaii, the continental U.S., Australia, and Canada improve the environmental and economic sustainability of their operations through technical and business advice in renewable energy conversion, waste reduction and re-use, and greenhouse gas lifecycle impact reduction. Simonpietri Enterprises' founder and employees have participated in the strategy, planning, design, financing, development, construction, and energy efficiency/greenhouse gas reduction/sustainability renovation for over $400 million in new renewable and first-of-kind sustainable fuel projects over the past 15 years. Since launching the Aloha Carbon waste-to-fuel technical development process in August 2020, Simonpietri Enterprises is now developing renewable fuel production facilities in its own right, starting with the Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (SMRFF) in Kapolei, Hawaii to divert wastes generated in Honolulu from landfilling and transform it to renewable fuel, organic fertilizer, and recycled-material building products.

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Umida Stelovska. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Carbotura, Inc., a company that has prepared a detailed commercial proposal for the City and County of Honolulu addressing the transition beyond landfill dependency. We respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Resolution 26-007.

Carbotura supports the creation of an End Landfills Task Force, and we do so on the basis of work we have already done in this community.

THE TIMELINE IS MORE URGENT THAN IT MAY APPEAR

Oahu's Waimānalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill is not merely approaching the end of its useful life it is subject to a binding Hawaii Land Use Commission Decision and Order requiring full operational cessation by March 2, 2028. That order is final. Approximately 880 tons per day of material currently flows to WGSL with no contracted destination after that date.

The Makaiwa Hills site identified as a last available option as a new landfill location requires contested amendments to Act 73, a full environmental impact statement, land acquisition, and facility construction. That process cannot realistically be completed before March 2028.

Oahu is approaching a regulated hard deadline with no contracted backstop. A task force that takes eighteen months to form and twelve months to report will not be able to act in time to close that gap. We respectfully urge the Committee to structure this task force with urgency commensurate with the actual timeline - and to ensure its mandate includes evaluating transition solutions that can be operational before 2028.

WHAT WE HAVE PREPARED FOR THE CITY'S CONSIDERATION

Carbotura has developed a comprehensive site-specific proposal for Oahu, including:

— A full infrastructure and feedstock assessment mapping all IMMEDIATE and CONDITIONAL material streams across the island
— A commercial proposal outlining a 30-year Advanced Circular Manufacturing agreement at zero City capital, with royalty income to the City commencing in Year 2
— An economic impact analysis comparing current-state landfill dependency against an ACM deployment scenario across 30 years
— A site candidate analysis identifying Campbell Industrial Park, Kapolei - adjacent to both WGSL and H-POWER - as the Priority 1 candidate for Phase Initial operations

All of this material is publicly available at oahu.carbotura.com, and we would welcome the opportunity to present it directly to the task force as one of the alternatives it is charged with evaluating.

We make no request for selection or preference at this stage. We ask only that the task force be constituted with a timeline that matches the urgency of the WGSL closure, and that modern manufacturing-based alternatives be included in its scope alongside other emerging technologies.

WHY THIS MATTERS BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE DEADLINE

Oahu's geographic constraints make landfill dependency structurally different here than anywhere on the mainland. Every acre committed to waste disposal is an acre that cannot serve housing, agriculture, conservation, or community use - and the cost of that tradeoff compounds with each new landfill cycle. The End Landfills Task Force, properly resourced and properly timed, represents an opportunity to break that cycle permanently.

Carbotura's Advanced Circular Manufacturing process converts residual material streams into manufactured products such as synthetic graphite, graphene compounds, and recovered minerals - under manufacturing sector classification, not solid waste. It is not incineration. It is not a landfill. It is a 30-year supply agreement that returns a royalty to the City from Year 2, at no capital cost to the City and County of Honolulu.

We urge the Committee to move this resolution forward, and we stand ready to support the task force's work in any capacity that is useful.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.
Respectfully submitted,

Umida Stelovska
On behalf of Carbotura, Inc.
E. umida@carbotura.com
M. 808-673-0034
oahu.carbotura.com

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On a personal note, as someone who calls these beautiful Hawaiian Islands home, I believe city and county officials and policymakers must begin seriously planning for a future beyond landfill dependency. Not just on Oahu, we are running out of land to bury waste on every county in our State, while the environmental, financial, and community impacts continue to grow. Every new landfill proposal place additional burden on our land, nearby communities, and the future generations.

As a resident of Oahu, I respectfully ask the Committee to support this measure and ensure the task force evaluates innovative and long-term alternatives that reduce landfill dependency, protect our environment, and create a more sustainable future for our communities and our children. It can be done. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration. Sincerely.
– Umida.

Mai 13, 2026
10:00 AM

Honolulu City Council
City Council Chamber

Re: RES26-007 - ESTABLISHING AN END LANDFILLS TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY, COSTS, AND IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS FOR ELIMINATING LANDFILL DEPENDENCY IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU.

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and honorable members of the council:

The Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club strongly **SUPPORTS** RES26-007 and urges the City to prioritize a just and urgent transition away from landfilling on Oʻahu.

He Aliʻi Ka ʻĀina; He Kauwā ke Kanaka (The land is Chief; Humanity is its steward)

West Oʻahu—home to the island's highest per-capita concentrations of Native Hawaiians and keiki—has disproportionately carried Oʻahu's waste and industrial burdens. These land uses impose harms that extend well beyond budgets: measurable human health impacts, diminished community well-being, and degradation of the ʻāina. Land-use policy and zoning are not neutral. West Oʻahu already includes Makua Military Reservation, Lualualei Naval Magazine, Kalaeloa military lands, the Kahe power plant and Kalaeloa power facilities, multiple utility-scale solar fields, Waimānalo Gulch sanitary landfill, the PVT construction and demolition landfill, H-Power, and substantial heavy industry. The Governor and the Hawaii State Energy Office plans on implementing Liquid Natural Gas as a "bridge fuel" and most related infrastructure would be sited in West Oʻahu, further concentrating environmental and social costs in an area that has long borne them.

These cumulative facilities correlate with reduced life expectancy, higher rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses, lower median household income, greater exposure to hazards and heavy traffic, and other indicators of environmental injustice. Given this concentrated burden, the City must eliminate landfilling and adopt a 100% circular economy target. Honolulu can lead by adapting proven international best practices and piloting innovative strategies—accepting upfront costs where necessary—because the current system already exacts severe human and environmental harms.

The City should accelerate non-landfill solutions, including aggressive waste diversion and reuse programs, expanded recycling and composting with comprehensive food-waste diversion, and deployment of proven conversion technologies. Interim landfill use, if any, should be narrowly limited, strictly time-bounded, and conditional on measurable performance milestones. The City should support the safe, health-based reuse of H-Power ash in appropriate construction applications, advance compostable alternatives to single-use plastics, facilitate manufacturer take-back programs, and reduce barriers across the waste stream so residents, businesses, and government can more easily reduce, reuse, recycle, and repair through targeted funding, infrastructure, incentives, and clear regulatory frameworks.

Honolulu should draw from successful models elsewhere: Amsterdam's municipal circular strategy, producer responsibility mechanisms, and reuse hubs; Copenhagen's food-waste prevention, city-scale composting and biogas systems, and binding municipal targets; Ljubljana's source separation and pay-as-you-throw approach that has achieved near-zero waste; San Francisco's mandatory composting, pay-as-you-throw policies, and high diversion targets; and Seoul's producer take-back programs, refill/reuse initiatives, and public-private innovation labs. The City should set bold targets, fund pilots, evaluate outcomes rigorously, and scale effective solutions rather than dismiss them on short-term cost grounds.

While landfills remain, impacted communities must receive equitable treatment through enforceable monitoring, transparent public data, remediation funding, and a legally binding host-community benefits package modeled on the Kekaha Host Community Benefits program. Transitioning decisively away from landfills will protect public health, uphold cultural and environmental responsibilities reflected in the ʻōlelo noʻeau, and advance Hawaiʻi's climate and equity objectives. For these reasons, the PKHCC supports the resolution.

Founded in 1964, the Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club was established to promote the education and social welfare of people of Hawaiian ancestry. Its objectives include supporting high ethical standards in business, industry, and professional fields.

Mahalo for your consideration of our position.

Me ke aloha,

Shauna Kahiapo, Esq.
Pelekikena

president@pkhcc.org

Honolulu City Council
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
Honolulu Hale

Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 10:00 A.M.

Re - Resolution 26-7 - Establishing a City End Landfill Task Force

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and fellow members of the City Council:

I strongly **support** Resolution 26-7 to establish an End Landfills Task Force to evaluate feasibility, costs, risks, and implementation pathways for eliminating landfill dependency in the City and County of Honolulu. I support the City establishing a task force that explores how to make landfills obsolete on our island so no community has to suffer the ills of landfills in the future.

My name is Kamuela Werner. I live in Kapolei, am from Māʻili, and graduated from Nānākuli High School. I hold a B.S. in Natural Resources Management and an M.P.H. from the University of Hawaiʻi. My work has included public-health research at the Department of Native Hawaiian Health, service as a Native Hawaiian Congressional Fellow, and teaching and farming at Nānākuli High and Intermediate School. I speak for my ʻohana and neighbors who live, work, and attend school near existing landfill operations. Landfills should not be in anyone's backyard.

Why the Task Force is needed

- Landfills are not neutral, they negatively impact the ʻāina and the communities around them for generations.
- The proposed New Oʻahu Landfill at Makaiwa Hills would replace Waimānalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill (WGSL) with a roughly 150-acre disposal footprint and up to 350 additional acres of support infrastructure, with land acquisition planned to begin in March 2026 and a $55M allocation in FY27–28 — this matters because it represents a long-term commitment of land, budget, and emissions that could lock communities into continued exposure.
- That plan reverses previous commitments to close WGSL and to avoid siting a landfill in West Oʻahu — an action the Task Force should scrutinize because breaking prior promises undermines public trust and warrants independent review.
- West Oʻahu already hosts a disproportionate share of Oʻahu's waste infrastructure while containing the island's highest concentration of Native Hawaiians and Hawaiian homesteads — this is an environmental-justice concern because it concentrates health, economic, and cultural harms on communities least able to absorb them.

- Scientific and epidemiologic evidence links residential proximity to landfills and waste emissions (including hydrogen sulfide from construction and demolition debris) with adverse pregnancy outcomes, respiratory illnesses, neurological symptoms, psychological distress, and elevated risks of certain cancers and mortality — the Task Force should assess these health risks to inform protective policy and monitoring.
- Local monitoring and oversight are limited; approving another large landfill would lock in more exposure without reliable, independent health protections — the Task Force can recommend strengthened, independent monitoring and enforceable safeguards.

What the Task Force could evaluate

- Technical and economic feasibility of phasing out landfilling across O‘ahu, including diversion targets, required recycling/composting/processing capacities, timelines, capital and operating costs, and financing mechanisms — to determine whether and how a landfill-free system can be built and sustained.
- Public-health and environmental risk assessments for existing and proposed landfill sites, with independent air, water, and soil monitoring plans and community health safeguards — so risks are quantified and mitigated before any new approvals.
- Equity and environmental-justice impacts, centering affected Native Hawaiian and working-class communities in West O‘ahu; recommend compensatory Host Benefits and mitigation where impacts are unavoidable — to ensure policy decisions do not perpetuate disproportionate burdens.
- Alternatives analysis and implementation pathways: expanded reuse/repair programs, mandatory source reduction, organics diversion and commercial composting, material recovery facilities, toxics-out programs, advanced processing technologies, and waste-to-product strategies — to identify realistic substitutions for landfilling and the investments required.
- Land use and siting transparency: require the City to publish full siting analyses, scoring matrices, and reasons for excluding or prioritizing sites (including federal lands at Waipio and West Loch, Hawaii Prince Golf Club, parcels under 100 acres, and HC&D quarries) — so the public can verify that siting decisions are evidence-based and equitable.
- Legal, permitting, and timeline implications for any condemnation, rezoning, or land acquisition; consistent application of condemnation/reuse standards across site classes — to ensure legal actions are justified, transparent, and applied consistently.
- Community engagement and governance: meaningful public review, independent technical and environmental-justice audits, and delay of any acquisition, rezoning, or condemnation until independent review and robust consultation are complete — to center affected communities in decision making and prevent premature irreversible actions.

Requested actions and accountability

- Commission an independent technical and environmental‑justice review concurrent with Task Force work — so findings are validated by impartial experts and community advocates.
- Publish all prior and current siting documents, scoring tables, and the City's rationale for site exclusions or prioritization — to provide transparency and allow independent scrutiny.
- Require a public Host Benefits Program for communities already burdened by waste facilities (WGSL, PVT, H-Power) — to secure tangible, enforceable compensation and community investments where impacts persist.
- Delay Makaiwa Hills acquisition or condemnation until the Task Force and independent reviews conclude and community consultation is complete to avoid irreversible land transfers or construction before thorough evaluation and consent.

In conclusion, support for Resolution 26‑7 is support for an equitable, health‑centered transition away from landfill dependence. The Task Force can map realistic, priced out pathways to eliminate reliance on landfills while protecting frontline communities and ensuring transparent, accountable decision making. I urge the council to pass Resolution 26‑7 and charge the Task Force to prioritize public health, equity, and open review as the City moves toward a landfill‑free future.

Mahalo.

Ke aloha ʻāina

Kamuela Werner, MPH
Kapolei, Oʻahu