RELATING TO RECYCLING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Statement for Senate Committee on Education
Public Hearing - February 13, 1991

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SB 1805 would appropriate the sum of $76,120 to implement a one year pilot program for recycling at the University of Hawaii.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The University of Hawaii, like many large institutions, generates a large amount of solid waste which is usually disposed of in land fills. Much of the material discarded, especially paper, can be recycled. In fact many departments have voluntarily begun to recycle the paper waste they generate. We are happy to report that the Environmental Center is among those departments.

The Hawaii Earth Day 1990 celebration, in which the University of Hawaii was a participant, heightened awareness of environmental problems including solid waste disposal. This heightened awareness has led many people to advocate the initiation of environmental action programs, including recycling. However, a great deal of thought needs to be given as to what sort of effort should be initiated. Not only should care be taken so to assure that state funds are spent wisely, but also that the programs will continue beyond the first year.

The figure allocated for the University wide recycling pilot program leads us to believe that some plan has already been prepared for its initiation. Without seeing what is proposed, we
find it difficult to present substantive testimony. However, that any campus-wide recycling project must consider the amounts and types of materials to be collected for recycling, the cost of collection, and most importantly the income that can be derived from recycling. Research by the Garbage Project of the University of Arizona has pointed out that the only reliable predictor of the success of a recycling effort is "the price that was paid out for various commodities." (Rathje, William L., 1990. "History of Garbage," GARBAGE. Vol 2 #5 page 38). When income generated from recycling is high, interest in continuing the effort is correspondingly high. A sustainable recycling program must be based on the recognition that it will produce enough income to offset costs incurred in carrying it out.

We would like to call attention to the program recently initiated at Kapiolani Community College. Through the efforts of Ms. Toni Nelson, and with the support of Mr. Les Tanahi, Director of Administrative Services at KCC, the custodians at KCC have been put in charge of collecting the recyclable items on a regular basis as part of their usual solid waste collection responsibility.