



COUNTY OF HAWAI'I
DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
SWD – RECYCLING SECTION
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West Hawai'i Greenwaste Diversion Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This FAQ has been prepared by the County of Hawai'i Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to clarify the County's plans for greenwaste diversion in West Hawai'i.

History of Greenwaste Diversion:

DEM's Solid Waste Division (SWD) is responsible for implementing landfill diversion programs and is extremely happy that the residents and businesses in West Hawai'i have supported the County's greenwaste diversion program and helped our island keep over 278,000 tons from both County landfills during the past seven (7) years. The County's greenwaste diversion program recycles greenwaste into valuable mulch provided at no charge to residents and our local growers, landscapers and farmers.

DEM is committed to greenwaste diversion and has goals to recycle the portion of greenwaste that is still being disposed of at County landfills. It is looking for more opportunities to divert from landfills other organic wastes in the future like food, paper and biosolids.

Legislation Relating to Greenwaste Diversion:

In 2005, County Council passed an ordinance to more fairly charge for costs incurred by the SWD in providing necessary services to divert organics from our landfills. In 2007, the Council passed a resolution to adopt Zero Waste goals. In 2009, the County Council passed a resolution for DEM to implement a plan to prohibit food, paper and compostable organics from Hawai'i County landfills by 2012. In 2009, the Council approved the Integrated Resources and Solid Waste Management Plan that included increased recycling and diversion.

West Hawai'i Greenwaste Recycling:

The current West Hawai'i greenwaste collection and processing site that accepts residential and commercial greenwaste is located at the Kealakehe Recycling and Transfer Station in Kailua-Kona. This location was intended to be temporary until the County prepared a location next to the West Hawai'i Sanitary Landfill (WHSL). In addition to Kealakehe, greenwaste recycling is provided for residents only at Puakō and Ke'ei Recycling and Transfer Stations. The collected greenwaste from these sites is transported by the SWD to the Kealakehe greenwaste site for processing.

Future Plans for West Hawai'i Greenwaste Recycling:

DEM will continue to collect greenwaste from residents at the Kealakehe Recycling and Transfer Station. However, the site is inadequate for the total volume of greenwaste collected in West Hawai'i and it lacks sufficient space to expand. Therefore DEM intends to relocate the actual "processing" of the greenwaste to the West Hawai'i Organics Facility (WHOF) located next to the WHSL. The County prepared the WHOF as a 10-acre lined site for greenwaste and organics diversion that has the capacity to include future compost operations potentially diverting as much as 50% of the total waste from the landfills.

- 1) **Who currently operates the greenwaste collection and processing site at Kealakehe Recycling & Transfer Station?**

A private contractor, Big Island EKO, has been providing the operation of this site under contract with the County since 2005 and the contract ends December 31, 2012. The current rate charged to the County is \$48.00 per ton.

2) Who is the new contractor for the new West Hawai'i Organics Facility (WHOF)?

A private contractor, Menehune Green d.b.a. Hawaiian Earth Products (HEP) was awarded the contract effective January 1, 2013 through competitive procurement at a lower rate of \$41.95 per ton. The annual savings is projected at \$145,000. HEP will be paid on the quantity of incoming greenwaste based on County scale tickets.

3) Who pays for the greenwaste collection site at Kealakehe Recycling & Transfer Station?

Residents and businesses that use the greenwaste collection site or take mulch currently do not pay any user fees for these services. However, these services are not "free." These services are mostly paid by the County General Fund from County taxpayers. The greenwaste program's annual cost last year was \$1,200,764 for Kealakehe.

4) What are the long-term plans for greenwaste collections at Kealakehe Recycling & Transfer Station?

The County is completing new construction at Kealakehe that will include a new "chute" or drop-off area for greenwaste located by the rubbish chutes. This chute will be able to handle four (4) to five (5) vehicles at the same time. Residents and commercial customers with loads of six (6) cubic yards or less will be able to recycle greenwaste at Kealakehe. The current greenwaste collection and processing site will be closed. All processing will be relocated to the WHOF.

5) What is the plan if the volume is greater than anticipated at Kealakehe Recycling & Transfer Station?

There is a contingency plan for an overflow greenwaste recycling area to accommodate increased demand. Should traffic get congested, commercial vehicles will be redirected to the overflow area.

6) How does this change benefit the County taxpayers?

In 2005, County Council passed an ordinance to fund greenwaste diversion through a fee similar to the landfill tip fee for solid waste. The current landfill tip fee is \$85.00 per ton. The greenwaste tip fee is much less, \$21.25 per ton. The purpose of this fee is to help to fund the cost of the greenwaste program operations instead of being a burden to taxpayers. Upon implementation, businesses that generate or haul the greenwaste to a County facility will be subject to the tip fee.

7) Why did the County decide to locate the greenwaste processing at the West Hawai'i Sanitary Landfill instead of Kailua-Kona?

Since the establishment of the landfill in West Hawai'i, it has been the County's plan to divert and recycle. The WHOF site offers a cost-effective location with sufficient space to develop and expand organics diversion. The site has a certified scale and scale attendant operation that provides for verifiable payment to the contractor and billing of commercial customers. In the 2008 Waste study, 18,000 tons of greenwaste or 44% is still being landfilled. Another 40,000 tons of other organics like food and paper is also being landfilled. By relocating the collection and processing, the County will be able to substantially increase diversion.

8) How does the recycling of greenwaste compare to the cost of landfilling it?

The new contractor, Hawaiian Earth Products will be paid \$41.95/ton. Waste Management is paid approximately \$60/ton for landfilled materials. By recycling greenwaste, the County will save \$18/ton or 30% plus preserve valuable landfill space for the future. By State statute, commercial greenwaste should be recycled and not landfilled.

9) Will residents still be able to take their greenwaste to Kealakehe at no charge?

Yes, self-hauled, household-generated greenwaste will still be accepted at Kealakehe for free.

10) Will businesses still be able to take their greenwaste to Kealakehe at no charge?

Small businesses with loads of less than 6 cubic yards will be able to take their greenwaste to Kealakehe. All businesses disposing of greenwaste at a designated County greenwaste facility will be subject to the greenwaste tip fee. The current fees set by the ordinance for Kealakehe are \$33.15 for up to 3 cubic yards per load and \$62.40 for up to 6 cubic yards per load. Businesses with larger loads will be directed to use the WHOF where the current fees as set by ordinance is 25% of the landfill disposal fee or of \$21.25 per ton.

11) What is the County's plan for implementing the greenwaste tip fees?

The County is currently reviewing the fees and the applicable law. An implementation date is pending. Starting January 1, 2013 and no later than April 1, 2013, all commercial customers using either Kealakehe or the WHOF must have a Solid Waste Permit which requires payment of an annual fee of \$25.

12) When will the Kealakehe site be relocated to the WHOF and will the Kealakehe site remain open until then?

The plan is for the Kealakehe greenwaste collection and processing site to remain open to accept all greenwaste until the WHOF is open. To allow the current contractor sufficient time to demobilize by December 31, 2012, the County may be handling the collection of greenwaste at a nearby alternate site so that there is no interruption of the services to the public. The opening date for the WHOF is scheduled for January 2, 2013.

13) Why will the loads of greenwaste have to be weighed at the County Scales?

It is important that the contractor is paid only for incoming greenwaste and that will be controlled and measured by the County scale. Scales are only available at the WHOF and each customer will be required to stop at the County scale. They will receive a pass authorizing them to unload at the WHOF. The customer will return to the scale to weigh out.

14) Will "free" mulch be available like it currently is?

Yes, under the terms of the new contract, free mulch will be available for self-loading at Kealakehe. However, Kealakehe will not have mechanical or assisted loading after December 31, 2012. Free mulch and free assisted loading will also be available at the new WHOF.

15) Will requiring commercial customers to pay a fee encourage illegal dumping?

Illegal dumping is always a concern. Initially, there will be some illegal dumping but it is not anticipated to be a major problem. Most of the County businesses are legitimate and will comply with the law. If a resort, business or homeowner is hiring a landscape company to provide maintenance of their grounds, they should be willing to pay the tip fees as part of their service.

16) Who can I contact if I have more questions or suggestions?

Contact the County Recycling Coordinator at 961-8942 or the West Hawai'i Recycling Specialist at 323-4413. Please visit the County Solid Waste & Recycling website at www.hawaiizerowaste.org.