

BERNARD P. CARVALHO, JR.
Mayor



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COUNTY OF KAUAI

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 10, 2010

Mayor announces plans for siting a new landfill

LĪHU'E – Mayor Bernard Carvalho announced this afternoon that the County will no longer pursue the Umi site in Kalāheo as the location of a new landfill.

The announcement came after nine months of due diligence following two public meetings that were held in Kalāheo last year to discuss the Umi site. During a news briefing at the Līhu'e Civic Center, the mayor outlined the county's plans for a new landfill in a more central location.

The full text of the mayor's remarks follows:

Aloha!

Mahalo to the news media for being here today, and to all of you out there for tuning in. I am very happy to have with me today several members from my administration - the Department of Public Works, the County Attorney's Office, and my administrative staff.

We are also joined by some individuals who have been instrumental in our most recent attempts to site a new landfill for the island of Kaua'i. Those individuals are Jerry Ornellas, local agricultural leader and member of the state Board of Agriculture, Roy Oyama, president of the Kaua'i Farm Bureau. Mahalo for being here.

A little over a year ago, I made a decision to move forward on the process to site a new landfill for Kaua'i.

Siting a new landfill is one of the most difficult decisions any elected official can make.

And yet, we were then, and we are now, at a point where we can no longer wait. That decision must be made, and it must be made now.

Having a landfill is not optional. Even though we are working toward diverting as much material as we can from our landfill, there will always be a need for a landfill – especially on an island where we must ship recycled materials to other markets, and where we are prone to natural disasters.

When I ran for office two years ago, I pledged to move forward with the landfill siting process. I set a deadline for that promise to be fulfilled, and in August of last year, I announced that we

would honor the work of a citizen's advisory committee that was appointed by Mayor Bryan Baptiste to rank seven potential landfill sites.

Through the work of that committee, a site in Kalāheo, the "Umi" site, was the top ranked location for our new landfill.

Following that announcement, we held two public meetings in Kalāheo...considered the written and verbal comments of hundreds of individuals, businesses and agencies...worked with our consultants to review questions that were raised...considered information that was new to us since the citizens advisory committee completed its work...met with dozens of stakeholders on a number of issues...and revisited every site on the list with the individual landowners.

After consideration of all of this information, I am here to tell you today that we will no longer be pursuing the Umi site as the location of the county's new sanitary landfill.

Five major factors have entered into this decision. The first two were fairly straightforward and technical in nature:

1. Attempting to site a landfill with an unwilling landowner is a costly, lengthy and extremely risky process. This is the situation we faced at Umi, and given that we currently have less than seven years of life at the Kekaha landfill, it forced us to look at other options.
2. The designation of the Umi site as "Important Agricultural Lands" by the owner A&B appears, upon further investigation, to present an insurmountable regulatory barrier to use of this property as a landfill.

The three other factors were more subjective, but were recurring themes in the feedback we received from the community and others on the Umi site:

3. The location of the landfill should be more central if at all possible – to cut down on transportation costs and in doing so reduce our carbon footprint.
4. The landfill siting process should proceed in lock-step with our efforts to divert as much material as possible from that landfill.
5. Wherever we site the landfill, we must ensure that we mitigate the impacts to agriculture to the highest degree possible.

So, if not Umi...then where?

Shortly after our Kalāheo outreach meetings, we began talking to other landowners and quickly discovered that finding a willing landowner was a next-to-impossible task.

However, through months of discussions we have settled on a site – THE ONLY SITE - that we feel has the potential to be accepted by the landowners...provides the opportunity to move forward in a major way on diversion efforts...and could actually benefit agriculture in the long run.

And that site is the Ma,alo site.

For those of you not familiar with this site...Ma,alo is roughly 120 acres in size and is located about 2.5 miles north of Līhu'e, just makai of Ma'alo Road. It is owned by the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, and is currently leased to ranchers as pasture land.

Like all of the sites under consideration, the Ma'alo lands are zoned agricultural. The prospect of taking agricultural lands out of production for the purpose of a landfill is not a preferred alternative, but unfortunately it is our only alternative.

However, at Ma'alo, we believe that we can work with the State and with the adjacent landowner, Grove Farm, to not only mitigate the impacts on agriculture, but to actually expand agriculture eight-fold or more, with the siting of the landfill there.

Grove Farm was the only private landowner who indicated to us that they'd be willing to work with us on the siting of a new landfill. And I would like to publicly acknowledge Grove Farm for stepping up to the plate in this regard.

The plan, as we see it now, is to develop the landfill at the Ma'alo site or somewhere in that general vicinity on state-owned lands, and to relocate any displaced farmers or ranchers to nearby Grove Farm lands at no additional expense to the farmer or rancher.

We will also be working with Grove Farm to create a resource recovery park on their lands in close proximity to the landfill where we will build out our diversion programs to the maximum extent possible. A materials recovery facility, greenwaste processing, composting, and other diversion strategies can and will be pursued in connection with this siting process. As I envision it, this resource park is so innovative that it may even include a visitor and/or educational center.

Additionally, we have spoken with several stakeholders about working in partnership to restore what is known as the stable storm irrigation system on those lands. The restoration of this resource could open up as much as 1,000 additional acres for agriculture.

In fact, I must credit one of Kaua'i's most respected agricultural leaders Jerry Ornellas for identifying the stable storm ditch opportunity and for being open enough to talk with us along with Farm Bureau President Roy Oyama, and look for ways to make the siting of a new landfill a win-win for all involved.

Over the past several months we have been engaged in preliminary discussions with state agencies about the importance and need to site a new landfill. We will continue to engage in those discussions as we proceed through this process. To be sure, there are many approvals yet to be obtained; however, we are hopeful – based on discussions to date – that these partnerships and the benefits that could accrue to the people of Kaua'i and to agriculture on Kaua'i can be realized.

Another major benefit of this location is that it is central, and will provide the opportunity to develop an interior roadway that will not only service the landfill, but can also serve as an interior connector between Kūhi,ō Hwy. and Kaumuali,ā Hwy.

Our initial focus will be to provide access to the landfill so as to avoid high traffic areas in Līhu'e, Hanamā'ulu and Puhi. However, the long-term benefits of a bypass between Wailua and Puhi are tremendous. Grove Farm has indicated a willingness to dedicate the land for such a roadway, and I've already spoken to Senator Inouye and enlisted his support in obtaining federal funds for the necessary studies and infrastructure.

I know that nearly 10 years ago a site very close to Ma'alo was proposed, and the community of Hanamā'ulu was so strongly opposed that the effort was dropped.

I am certain that those same concerns will surface again, and I am prepared to work with the community of Hanamā'ulu to ensure that hosting this facility will be a benefit to them, and not a detriment. As presently conceived, this project will create jobs and could be an economic stimulus for the neighboring community.

We will also be working with Hanamā'ulu to set up a Host Community Benefits program, which will provide financial compensation over the life of the landfill that will be utilized by the people of Hanamā'ulu, according to their wishes.

So what happens now?

First, I will schedule a public meeting in Hanamā'ulu, which will take place within 30 days...to come together with the community...discuss our plans in more detail...and begin the process of addressing any and all concerns they may have.

We will also be reaching out to other important stakeholders, such as the current leaseholders on the state land at Ma'alo and other leaders in business and agriculture...to begin the very important discussions on how this project can actually benefit the people of Kaua'i from a social, economic, and environmental standpoint.

We will proceed with an Environmental Impact Statement led by our consultant AECOM, and invite each and every one of you to participate and provide your feedback during this process.

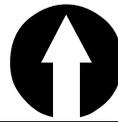
Getting to this point has been a long, arduous, sometimes frustrating and challenging process. However, I feel confident that this course of action is the best avenue for us to take, and that the opportunities presented in this partnership between government, business and the community will put Kaua'i "on the map" as a place that knows how to come together to find solutions to tough issues that are sustainable and beneficial to all.

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For more information, please contact:

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Map Showing Proposed Landfill Sites: Kalepa & Maalo Project Areas



0 1,250 2,500 5,000 Feet

