



Protecting our oceans through science and advocacy

Attn: Don Guzman
Chair
Economic Development, Energy, Agriculture and Recreation Committee
Maui County Council

RE: Testimony supporting EAR-36 “Prohibiting Tobacco Use and Tobacco Products in County Parks”

Oral Testimony given 3/14/2014

Good afternoon County Council, my name is Lauren Campbell. I am a marine biologist and the Conservation Manager at Pacific Whale Foundation, and I am here today to formally register Pacific Whale Foundation’s support of the tobacco free parks bill.

For nearly a decade, Pacific Whale Foundation has been raising public awareness regarding the environmental impact of cigarette butt litter. We conduct quarterly Adopt-A-Highway cleanups, participate in the annual International Coastal Cleanup and sponsor over 100 individual cleanups each year through our Volunteering on Vacation program.

As part of Pacific Whale Foundation’s marine debris program, last May (2013), I launched an island-wide marine debris monitoring study. This study attempts to answer a number of questions about the issue of trash on Maui beaches, including the most common types of debris, the rate at which debris is deposited and the total amount of debris on our beaches.

I have four survey sites: Po’olenalena Beach Park in Wailea, Pu’unoa (Baby Beach) in Lahaina, Waihe’e Beach Park and Lower Waiehu Beach Road near the surf spot “Sand Piles”.

I survey each site once a month at low tide, and I survey a specific 100m section within that beach. I survey this same 100m shoreline each time. It is important to note that the 100m section is located between the water line and the dune line – so it is basically the part of the beach that is in most constant interaction with the ocean.

In ten months, I have collected a total of 864 cigarette butts, which averages to about 22 butts/cleanup. Doing a little math, that equates to about 1 butt for every 14 feet of sandy beach. To think of what this means on an island-wide scale, consider that the island of Maui is made up of 30 miles of sandy coastline. One butt every 14 feet equates to an estimated average of 12,000 cigarette butts sitting on Maui beaches at any given time. Extrapolating that to the next level, and consider that our island consists of 120 miles of *coastline*. By the same calculations, that is an estimated 48,000 cigarette butts that are on Maui coastlines at any given time.

While this is preliminary data, and the first time that I have actually shared this data, there are 4 main points that can be taken away from these findings:

1. The issue of cigarette butt litter is chronic: cigarette butts have been found consistently every single month of the study;
2. The issue of cigarette butt litter is widespread: cigarette butts have been found at every survey site, no matter the survey site’s location or demographic;
- 3.
4. We are dealing with a very large volume of cigarette butt debris: rough estimate of 12,000 butts on Maui sandy beaches and 48,000 along Maui’s entire coastline;



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5. Cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item on our beaches.

Again, although this data is preliminary, and in reality, likely underestimates the actual number of cigarette butts on Maui coastlines/beaches, I hope that it helps paint a clear and objective picture of the reality of the cigarette butt issue on Maui.

As we learned with the plastic bag ban, just one, single bill that addresses the issue of cigarette butt litter could have incredibly positive and far-reaching impacts for Maui's ocean environment, coastal environment and community. Please support the tobacco free parks bill.

Thank you.

Lauren Campbell
Conservation Manager
Pacific Whale Foundation