



## Sewage Sludge Policy

### Policy Statement

It shall be the policy of the Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, to seek an end to the disposal of toxic substances into sewage systems. Until that time, we oppose sewage sludge composting and the use of sewage sludge products as fertilizers and soil amendments.

### *Position Statements*

1. Support education regarding pollution prevention and source reduction. A wide variety of unregulated organic synthetic compounds, pathogenic organisms, and other potentially hazardous substances enter Hawai'i's sewage system through household and commercial sources.
2. Support actions which prevent the use of sewage sludge products in areas of high public exposure, particularly where children may be exposed, such as public parks and schools.
3. Support actions to require signage in public areas where sewage sludge products have been applied.
4. Support actions which prevent the use of sewage sludge products on food crops. The use of sewage sludge as an agricultural supplement is likely to have long term detrimental effects on soil health and agricultural sustainability.
5. Support legislation to require labeling of agricultural products that contain sewage sludge.
6. Support the source separated composting of clean "green waste" without contamination by sewage sludge.
7. Support exploration of alternative methods to safely and economically process or dispose of sewage sludge. Composting of sewage sludge does not address the presence of the many unregulated contaminants that may be present in sludge.

Composting only reduces (but does not destroy) populations of pathogenic organisms, which may regrow after composted sludge is tested.

8. Support and explore new treatment processes being developed which significantly reduce or eliminate sludge production. The purpose of sewage treatment processes is to eliminate hazardous substances from the water, thereby concentrating them in the sludge.

9. Support national efforts to strengthen sewage sludge regulations. The federal regulations (40 CFR Part 503 ) governing the reuse of sewage sludge (a.k.a. "biosolids") are the weakest of any industrialized country, regulating only 9 heavy metals and either one of two pathogenic organisms, and have been strongly criticized by credible scientific sources within and outside of the Environmental Protection Agency as unprotective of public health, agriculture and the environment.

*This Sewage Sludge Policy was approved by the Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter Executive Committee at its quarterly meetings held November 14, 1999.*