

ECO-ROUNDTABLE 2008 CANDIDATES FORUM QUESTIONNAIRE

Derek Kawakami

Written Response Questions:

1. What is one of your top priority county issues, and *what will you do* to address this issue? Please be specific
 - a. The single most important issue depends on whom you ask. Ask someone my age or someone with children or grandchildren and they will probably say affordable housing. Ask someone who already owns a home and they may say development, energy costs, public safety, traffic, infrastructure, or solid waste. I see all of these issues as parts of a whole. They require ongoing maintenance and attention and when one of these factors is out of sync, the machine fails to run smoothly and people become frustrated. There is however, one thing that affects all of this and that is the economy. When the economy is good, tourism is booming, the county is getting the revenue it needs from property taxes, our people are working, there is money being made and spent. But as we head towards a downturn in the economy, the county will struggle to find the money it needs, people start getting their hours cut, and growth slows down. This is where government must differentiate between its wants and needs. The present state of the economy is temporary and we will get over this. But we are in a situation where finding answers to the problem is going to require us getting it done with less money available. That requires creativity, resourcefulness, the ability to prioritize our efforts, and we are going to have to bring everyone to the table, government, private sector, and community.
2. What will you do to diversify our economy to move away from our overdependence on tourism? Please be specific.
 - a. Our county government needs to further boost tourism, as it remains to be the number one economic driver for not only our island, but the state as well. However, economic diversity is also necessary as tourism is vulnerable to economic impacts both nationally and internationally. A good starting point is to focus on our Kauai Economic Development Plan CEDS report, which stands for comprehensive economic development strategy. It has identified Industry clusters such as Food and Ag, Health and Wellness, Sports and Recreation, Arts and Culture, High Technology, and renewable energy as focus points of economic diversification. In order to boost these industry clusters we need to 1. Assist new and existing businesses in targeted clusters to create new jobs, we need to groom our children through career planning, we need to train our workforce to meet the needs of employers, we need affordable housing, and we need to improve the skill level and work readiness

of students entering our work force. In order to achieve these necessities we need a partnership with the county, federal and state government, KEDB, and the private sector to implement action.

3. Mayor Baptiste proposed a package of four land use bills to address the loss of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, including (i) imposing a one-year moratorium on agricultural subdivisions; (ii) reducing density in lands zoned open (iii) requiring agricultural subdivision go through a Class IV permitting process; (iv) treating the permitting of CPRs like the permitting of subdivision. Do you support all, or any, of these bills, and *what are your top priority solutions to address the issue of loss of agricultural lands?*
 - a. I think it is important to clarify that moratoriums are not the solution. The solution comes with passing ordinance to address the problem at hand, which is the loss of our agricultural land to “gentlemen’s estates.” I do not have a problem with a farmer subdividing his land to create housing for his or her children or family members as long as he or she is actually farming. I support reducing density in lands zoned open. Agricultural subdivisions should go through a Class IV permitting process. CPRs are basically an ownership issue and there are guidelines and parameters that are set to deal with CPRs. In addition, CPRs can reduce the cost of developing land for affordable housing.
4. What will you do to promote local farming of food?
 - a. Some of the challenges that we face in regard to local farming have been identified in our Kauai Economic Development Plan “CEDS” report. Some of the priority projects include; reestablishing a treatment, handling, and packing facility for exports including produce and value-added products, building a certified, commercial kitchen for food product development, testing, and production by local farmers and new entrants into the food industry, conduct market studies to include data including worldwide demand so that farmers have information on what to grow based on market needs, produce a local farm/crop directory and distribute to buyers and retailers, build a permanent “deluxe farmers’ market with retail space for Kaua`i grown agricultural and value-added products, establish a slaughter facility for the livestock industry, and to establish business training and technical assistance programs for farmers, or enhance existing programs to reach more small producers. However, it all boils down to having farmers to farm the land. In a presentation made to the Kauai Workforce Investment Board on August 14, 2008. It was estimated the average wages earned for farm workers and laborers dealing with crop, nursery, greenhouse, and ranch animals ranged from \$20,570-\$22,080. So if one is involved in farming today it is a labor of love. However, there are children and young adults that are interested in farming despite the mountain of challenges and roadblocks that they face. They are the future and we must

support them as they represent our hope to keep agricultural land in agriculture.

5. Would you support an ordinance to limit or even ban the growing of genetically modified crops on Kaua`i, and, if not, what do you propose to do to protect crops from GMO contamination and support the public's right to know where GMOs are being grown?

- a. I would not support a ban on the growing of genetically modified crops on Kauai. I think for the most part, people are aware of where GMOs are being grown. I would not support the release of locations where confined laboratory research is being done, I would not support the release of this information because:

There are strict containment conditions that are implemented for a reason when doing laboratory research. One, they cannot afford to allow a crop that is still undergoing testing to be possibly released into the environment prior to USDA approval.

There is a risk of vandalism and theft.

Locations are released to the USDA so that they can conduct field tests and to ensure that Biotech companies are adhering to USDA guidelines. USDA makes general information publicly available but keeps specific locations confidential.

6. What will you do to protect the public and the environment from pesticide exposure?

- a. I would support an ordinance banning the application of pesticides and herbicides along county roads and parks.

7. The most recent draft of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan Update recommends adopting an aggressive Max 3-R program, including phasing in curbside recycling, before building a waste to energy facility. Would you favor the fast tract development of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHARM) and the establishment of a centralized multi-organic material composting facility *prior to taking actionable steps towards construction of an incinerator?* Please give us an overview of your solid waste management plan and proposed solution to the landfill issue.

- a. The County already has spent a lot of time and money conducting a solid waste management plan so I see no point in trying to create one of my own especially since we have very little time to implement action. I do favor the option of a MRF, CHARM, and Max 3-R. Why? Because it is a long-term solution to a problem that will never go away, it is environmentally sound, and it is the most sustainable approach to waste management.

8. What specific actions will you take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the areas of transportation, waste management, and energy use?

- a. We are faced with growing energy costs, environmental impacts of generating electricity, and a growing population base. We must consider utilizing the local resources that we have to help negate the

need for our utility company to build more generation to meet the needs of a growing population. At the heart of this is conservation and energy efficiency. We must implement the negawatt. The negawatt is the amount of energy not produced due to conservation and energy efficiency. We need to provide incentives for development to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building certification. LEED is a green building rating system that adopts sustainable green building and development practices that takes into consideration human and environmental health, sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. We need to continue the support of the Kauai Bus and its expansion plans to include increased routes, service hours, and park and ride services. My prior work with KIUC has given me insight as to the challenges that we face in pursuing renewable energy initiatives. Land use, permitting, endangered species, and a "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) attitude, are some of the challenges that face our path to energy independence. It requires collaboration with the community, the federal and state governments, the county as well as KIUC if we want something to get done.

9. How do you propose the concept of "green building" be addressed by our county?
 - a. Provide incentives for developers and homebuilders to achieve LEED building certification. Not only is it environmentally sound, but also it is becoming more economically feasible as the cost of oil goes up.
10. What immediate steps will you take to insure that our potable water system is not reliant on electricity derived from imported fossil fuels?
 - a. The first step is to conserve our water usage. The more water we use, the more water needs to be pumped, the more electricity we need to generate. Conservation of water is the first thing we can all do to address this issue. The second step is to change the way we generate electricity not only to pump water from wells, but the way in which we generate electricity for our island. We need to utilize our resources that we have been blessed with which include the sun, wind, and water. Another idea is to utilize energy from the sun by placing photovoltaic panels near our pump stations to reduce the amount of energy drawn from our fossil fuel driven generators.
11. If you are elected, would you support the bills that have been pending before the County Council for two years that would ban new gated communities and would require that developers provide lateral shoreline access to the public as conditions for resort development and subdivisions? Is there other legislation you would introduce or support to insure public shoreline and/or mountain access?

- a. I don't have a problem with gated communities as long as the people who live there don't come outside of the gates. I am just joking. My only concern with gated communities is that they do not affect our right to gain access to the mountains or the sea. For example, the gates that were put up at Menehune Bluff were done so because it was a popular hangout where a lot of underage drinking took place and as a result, property damage, fights, illegal drug use and vandalism occurred. When I was in high school, this area was known as "Strawberry Hill" and was an extremely popular place for kids to hide out at. I do support a requirement that developers provide lateral shoreline access to the public and should be designed with convenience in mind.
12. If you are elected, would you support an annual limit, consistent with the General Plan, on the number of new tourist units that can be approved by the county every year? What, if any, other solutions do you propose to address the issue of long-term, sustainable, tourist development?
 - a. I think the CZO needs to be updated to address the vision of the General Plan. I am supportive on this matter however I believe the market determines the demand for additional tourist units. The General Plan is a direction setting policy document and is not regulatory. The number projected in the General Plan is an estimate or prediction of how many units will be necessary. I don't think developers would build tourist units for the sake of it if they did not feel there is a way to fill those rooms. That being said, our existing infrastructure and natural resources must be analyzed to determine if our island can sustain market growth. Addressing long-term sustainable, tourist development is a tough issue to address. The Hawai'i department of Labor & Industrial Relations has stated that the visitor industry is expected to grow slowly compared to other sectors which is an indicator that this industry is either approaching or has attained maturity. In order to sustain tourism we must improve the condition of our parks, address the need for increased security and safety, create regional visitor and cultural centers around the island, further promote eco-tourism, and most importantly, maintain our rural character for it is that aspect which visitors are drawn to. This is the perpetual juggling act that we are faced with.
13. Are there specific amendments you would make to the current "tax reform" bill? Please describe the specific provisions in the bill that you support or oppose.
 - a. In order to support or not support any tax reform plan I would need to look further into the county's budget and evaluate it against projected income that the tax reform plan would provide. Of course, while analyzing the budget, it is important to differentiate between our wants and needs and ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards essential government services and programs.

14. What will you do to increase resident's access to affordable housing, including rentals?
- The availability of affordable housing relies on numerous conditions. One, do we have the necessary infrastructure in place like water, roads, and sewer. Two, it is dependent on the market. Bill 2202 requires developers to dedicate 30% of development to affordable units. So if developers are not developing, we don't get the housing. Three, if we as residents can't qualify for the loans, it doesn't matter.
 - As a councilmember I would work with fellow council members, the developer, the community, and various government agencies involved to collectively come to an agreement on a plan for action. We also need to continue our affordable housing fairs to help educate our people on what they need to do to ready themselves financially so that when these affordable units become available, we are ready for it. We all need to be on the same page when addressing this issue.
15. What do you propose to do about the loss of access to, and development over, sacred Hawaiian sites, including burial grounds?
- Any development that is built near or on our sandy coastline is probably built over ancient Hawaiian burial sites. I say this because that is where the Hawaiians buried their people. In the old times our people buried their bones in secrecy with the knowledge that they were sacred and you didn't want anyone finding them. Back then, if your enemies found the bones they had power over you. That is why many of the bones were buried in unmarked sand dunes. Bill No. 2226 was passed on December 20, 2007 that addresses shoreline setback and coastal erosion. I am not sure if this bill addresses burial sites or not.
16. Recognizing that enforcement is primarily the duty of the administration, what specifically would you do to address the problem of lack of enforcement of ordinances, and to achieve accountability of department heads to enforce ordinances?
- I am sorry, if you can tell me specifically what ordinances and give me some case history or examples of ordinances that have not been enforced I can answer your question more appropriately.
17. What do you feel is the most eco-friendly aspect of your lifestyle?
- I live by the motto "if it's yellow let it mellow if it's brown flush it down." I save a lot of water that way. Again, just joking. I think the most eco-friendly aspect of my lifestyle is teaching my kids about ways to take care of the environment and conservation. However, my son is actually teaching me things about saving the environment. When I was going to school, we learned about CFCs and it's effect on the ozone layer as well as the greenhouse effect right alongside reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nowadays, our children are learning about sustainable agriculture, the harmful effects of plastic

bags, recycling, and so much more than I did. So I remind them of the importance of taking care of their trash when we go to the beach, I have them in the backyard crushing cans and they get to keep the money they earn from the recycling center, we have basically eliminated 500 ml. plastic water bottles from our household by using five gallon reusable water jugs, we just got our free composter from the resource center, I constantly remind them to turn off the T.V. and lights when they are not using it, my son helps hang the cloths out on a line. So the most eco-friendly aspect of my lifestyle is how we groom our children so that they understand the importance of our environment. It is about education. **“In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.” - Babia Dioum-**

“Support”/ “Do Not Support” Phrases:

The following short phrases define current proposed measures on Kaua`i or represent issues that the county has some jurisdiction over. For each issue, please indicate with the appropriate symbol whether you “Support” (S), “Do Not Support” (NS) or have, “No Answer” (NA). You are invited to clarify your answer in writing using **no more than 25 characters** or five words, whichever is more. For example:

Curbside recycling. *Support; in high density residential areas*

We are limiting responses so they can be put in an easy-to-compare chart format for publication purposes. You are invited to explain your positions on important issues more thoroughly in the written response questions above.

1. Temporary agricultural subdivision moratorium
 - a. NA Previous attempt raised issues that must be addressed.
2. Reduced density on open land
 - a. Support
3. Ordinance to limit resort permitting
 - a. S see question 12
4. Ban on new gated communities
 - a. NS See question 11.
5. Mandated solar water heating on all new residential construction
 - a. NS. Our State Legislature has already passed this.
6. Raising AC temperatures in county buildings

- a. NA What temperature are you proposing?
- 7. Superferry return without full EIS
 - a. NS to NA. Need more info on Act 2 EA
- 8. Curbside recycling
 - a. Support
- 9. Construction of a Material Recovery Facility
 - a. Support
- 10. Construction of Waste to Energy Incinerator
 - a. NS
- 11. Ban on plastic shopping bags
 - a. NS.
- 12. 7-day extended hours Kauai Bus services
 - a. S
- 13. Living wage ordinance
 - a. NA
- 14. Regular ambient air sampling at Waimea and Kekaha schools
 - a. NA Need to be approved by State.
- 15. Ban county spraying of pesticides at parks
 - a. S
- 16. Ban on GMO growing/testing
 - a. NS
- 17. Make County Attorney opinions public
 - a. NA
- 18. Live cablecast of council meetings
 - a. NA What's the cost?
- 19. "Three to one" building-to-land tax
 - a. NA
- 20. Repeal residential 2% land tax cap
 - a. NA