



Office of Planning and Development

Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands



Responsiveness Summary for Public Outreach Activities Related to the development of the CNMI Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (CNMI CISWMP)—

Public hearing conducted in Saipan on November 21, 2023

This responsiveness summary was prepared in accordance with [40 CFR 256.60\(a\)\(3\)](#) and [40 CFR 25.8](#).

Summary of Public Participation Activity Conducted:

This event was a one-hour public hearing at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center on Saipan to inform the community of what is proposed for Saipan and the Northern Islands within the CNMI Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (CISWMP) and to collect questions, comments, and concerns from the attendees regarding the CISWMP. The questions, comments, and concerns that were received during the public hearing will be captured here in this Responsiveness Summary and incorporated into the CISWMP.

Summary of Matters on Which the Public was Consulted:

Attendees of the public hearing were presented and consulted on:

- The results of a waste characterization study conducted on Saipan on March 2023
- Details of the proposed new facilities, programs, and activities for Saipan that are incorporated into the CISWMP

Summary of Public Outlook on the Matters Presented and Summary of Comments Received:

Public hearing attendees were receptive of the programs, facilities, and activities proposed for Saipan within the CISWMP. The comments, criticisms, suggestions, and questions received during the public hearing included call to include exploring options for generating alternative energy through incinerating or processing waste; implementing “Extended Producer Responsibility” into electronics importing and purchasing; job creation; education and outreach; and the financial sustainability of implementing and operating everything proposed for Saipan within the CISWMP.

Comments, Criticisms, Suggestions, Etc. Received:

Comments, criticisms, suggestions, questions received during Q-and-A portion of the public hearing:

- Question: Which department will be operating the multishredder?



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- Response: At this time, there is no specific designation on who will be operating the multishredder. It will be procured by the Office of Planning and Development (OPD) and received by the Department of Public Works (DPW). The equipment itself might be operated by a private contractor chosen by DPW.

- Question: What is energy recovery and what does it look like? Why is it not mentioned in the CISWMP?
 - Response: Energy recovery is not in the plan because the CNMI currently does not have any waste-to-energy incinerators. Energy recovery is where you burn garbage, have the energy generated from said burning turn turbines, and generate electricity. It is noteworthy that the Marpi Landfill Backup Power Feasibility Study is ongoing, which seeks to look further into alternative energy options for the Marpi Landfill, which is not connected to Saipan's main power grid and runs off of diesel generators.

- Question: What are your thoughts on incinerators?
 - Response: Incinerators are not currently in the plan, but they could be something that the Inter-Island Solid Waste Management Taskforce (ISWMT) could look into further.

- Question: Have you identified the sites for the two proposed new citizen convenience centers?
 - Response: Yes— one will be in As Gonno, and the other in Kagman.

- Concern: The two sites identified for the two new proposed citizen convenience centers, As Gonno and Kagman, are residential and farming/ homestead areas. For the waste that will make their way to these centers, will organics be separated? The concern is that the odors produced from the organics will attract many pests that will affect the homes and farmers of those in As Gonno and Kagman.
 - Response: At this time, separating organics from the trash that will go to these centers is planned at this time. However, this comment is duly noted and worth exploring further.

- Question: Are there plans to shred/ pelletize fiber, plastics, etc. and convert them into alternative fuel/ for recycling?
 - Response: This is not currently in the plan, but it is worth looking into. The shredding of tires towards this effort might be worth exploring as well.

- Question: Is there a possibility that any company on Saipan that imports electronics can be mandated to participate in a "cradle-to-grave" program where e-waste is sent back to manufacturers?
 - Response: Several options could be explored in regards to e-waste: an advanced disposal fee could be added when importing electronics and/or an "Extended Producer Responsibility" requirement could be implemented.



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- Question: With all things in the CISWMP implemented, what would the lifespan of Marpi Landfill Cell 2 be?
 - o Response: The lifespan of Cell 2 is hard to predict, but at this time the current estimate is ~10 years.

- Question: How much waste did Typhoon Soudelor and Super Typhoon Yutu contribute to the landfill?
 - o Response: Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of debris from Super Typhoon Yutu are staged at the back of the Marpi Landfill.

- Question: Are there any plans for a salvage/ reuse center?
 - o Response: This type of center could possibly be part of the surplus center proposed in the CISWMP.

- Question: Is converting cooking oil into biofuel being explored?
 - o Response: At this time, it has not been reviewed. There will be a need to collect data on how much cooking oil is being received at the CNMI's solid waste facilities. This idea however is worth exploring, and is duly noted.

- Question: How many jobs will be created as a result of this new solid waste infrastructure, and what are the plans for these jobs?
 - o Response: The ISWMT will work on including further details, and possibly a number estimate, on the amount of jobs created through implementing the activities, programs, and facilities found in the CISWMP. Personnel needed include staff for the Recycling and Education Center on Rota, staff for the composting centers on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, and heavy equipment operators, among others.

- Question: What is DPW doing to educate the public on the limited landfill space?
 - o Response: The need to have focused education and outreach messaging that highlights the limited permitted airspace at the landfill is duly noted, and will be incorporated into the CISWMP.

- Question: Is shipping out one container full of recyclables per month low in terms of moving the CNMI towards its ten-year goal of diverting 50% of recyclables away from the CNMI's landfills?
 - o Response: We are not meeting this ten-year goal right now, and shipping recyclables out of the CNMI is costly. Shipping more recyclables out is an option, but options to reduce recyclables at the source and keep materials within the CNMI are worth exploring as well, such as legislation for bans on certain materials and so on. Currently, the CNMI's recycling rate is between ~8%- 10%.



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- Question: Does the plan call for the establishment of a laboratory in the CNMI to perform necessary landfill sampling and assessments?
 - o Response: The plan does not mention establishing a laboratory at this time, but note that the lack of a lab in the Pacific region to assess landfill samples is a hole that impacts all territories and island countries in our region. The CNMI's landfill samples currently get shipped off to the mainland U.S., and there have been conversations regarding updating a laboratory in Guam.
- Question: Will the plan include an assessment of soil quality at the landfill?
 - o Response: Typically at landfills, methane emissions and groundwater are monitored, not soil.
- Question: How do we motivate the community to recycle?
 - o Response: There are several tools the CNMI could make use of, such as a "carrot-and-stick" approach and targeted education and outreach campaigns centered around behavior change. Looking to California and their decades of expertise in this area may be worthwhile.
- Comment: If those working in solid waste were paid more, and if the government enters into a cooperative agreement with the private sector, there would be a sense of pride in doing this important work and taking action to preserve the beauty of the islands. Keeping the islands beautiful is a community effort.
- Question: Does the plan call for further appropriations to fund the proposed solid waste activities and facilities mentioned in the plan?
 - o Response: No, the plan lists and assesses various financial tools and systems (ex. Environmental Beautification Tax, advanced disposal fees, additional fees for residential garbage and recyclables collection, etc.) and provides recommendations for courses of action.
 - o

Comments received through post-outreach evaluation forms:

- "Education is main key because easy to dump some of trash but hard to collect or separate trash based on each character. In Korea, it takes more than 20 years to follow government plan that need to separate each trash. (Now everybody doing separate trash). Then, we need to educate to start about this plan from elementary school. Also, keep on continue to educate and better put in to major subject as English + Math. Then, automatically it will be affect whole community. It will takes time but it will be sure for future."
- "I'd like to see a cost breakdown on how the federal funding for this plan will be allocated."



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- “Salvaging/ stripping of electronic devices (e-wastes); proper disposal of toxic waste.”
- “No comments”
- “Use language and verbiage to thoroughly explain plan in straightforward, audience-friendly format. Good job SW Team!”
- “Have the talk available on the OPD website so that those interested but could not attend are able to access this; look into the EPA grant funding requirements and see what info the plan needs to provide; look into the economics of these efforts (costs, benefits, opportunities)”
- “integrate plans to legislate solid waste disposal, e.g. segregation, ban plastics”
- “We the CNMI should continue improving CISWMP and the required resources & equipment to improve our living condition and business confidence.”
- “Elaborate more on Organic Processing Center; elaborate more on specific items in the characterization chart and how it is processed/ recycled/ reuse/ composted and how it extends to the surplus store? And for school/ public outreach; what happens to the used ink/ toner cartridges used in Xerox machines? And, how can we get Xerox to reuse/ recycle used cartridges?”
- “Alternate plans should be revisited for the Northern Islands as a pilot program area. It’s a good place to start.”