

Sustainability: Hawaii's Future is in Your Hands

John Muir, an American conservationist and founder of the Sierra Club once stated, "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world" (Rosaly Byrd). Over several generations, the people living in Hawaii have negatively altered our islands, which has resulted in an unsustainable environment. Most people living in Hawaii are not practicing sustainability. The things they have are taken for granted, and they usually don't think twice before acting in ways that will harm the environment, such as littering, wasting food, and hiking off trails. They do not understand that they are disrespecting the ecosystem with such actions. All of these factors determine whether or not Hawaii is a sustainable island.

According to Todd Woody, "The world's most isolated chain of islands, Hawaii imports nearly 90 percent of its food at a cost of more than \$3 billion a year." We only produce 10% of our own food. Fifty years from now if nothing is done about our reliance on imports and our lack of sustainability, I foresee that fossil fuels and other necessary goods will be rationed. The price of these fossil fuels will grow to a cost that most people can't afford, and many people will be left without electricity and vehicles. Also, if a major crisis or disaster occurred in our world, planes and ships may not be able to bring in supplies to Hawaii. This would create a scene of chaos on our islands. There could be violence, people fighting for food, people starving, and people homeless and poor.

Now think back to reality. What if you could prevent that from happening? What if **you** could be the one to make a change in Hawaii now? The good news is, by doing simple things, you can have a positive impact on this issue. My solution to this problem is to have all students in Hawaii take a mandatory interactive class about sustainability. The class material would be adapted for each grade level. Students will learn about the problems that Hawaii is facing, and then be encouraged to help in various ways. They will also develop sustainable habits. The students will have the opportunity to visit places, such as windmill farms, and local farming companies that practice sustainable agriculture. They will learn to produce their own food by planting a community garden. By experiencing this, as these students grow up, they will have knowledge about the problems that are occurring in Hawaii. With this information, they can educate other people, spread the word, and help to make Hawaii a better place.

Clarence T. C. Ching's family was a sustainable family themselves. According to *A Prophecy Fulfilled: The Story of Clarence T.C. Ching*, "The family raised their own livestock, caught fish from the streams and harvested vegetables from their gardens. Chickens were kept for both meat and eggs." His family provided for themselves, and they didn't rely on other people and places for their needs. Mr. Ching worked hard to achieve what he knew was right for Hawaii. I am confident that Mr. Ching would want to do something about this issue if knew what Hawaii was facing today.

Acting now will create a self-supporting, competent, and safe Hawaii for generations to come. It is simple to help; you just have to set your mind to it and work hard, like Clarence T. C. Ching always did. Just remember - Hawaii's future is in **your** hands.

(Word count without Bibliography 582)

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