



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 1, 2019

Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources

Department of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: MA'O Farms Palikea Expansion – Support of Amendment to Legacy Land Conservation Program Grant Application Submitted by the Wai'anae Community Re-Development Corporation

Aloha Chair Case and Board Members:

I am the Hawai'i State Senator from District 21, representing Kalaeloa, Honokai Hale, Ko'Olina, Nānākuli, Mā'ili, Wai'anae, Mākaha, Mākua, and Lualualei. I write to express my strongest support for BLNR's approval of the request by the Wai'anae Community Re-Development Corporation, better known as MA'O Organic Farms, to amend its grant application to the Legacy Land Conservation Program to permit a license for a solar installation on the 21.1 acre property that MA'O will be acquiring.

Having worked with Legal Aid and other Leeward Community organizations when MA'O first started on a few acres of land that it leased, I have seen how the opportunities for youth that MA'O has brought have deeply impacted the community and brought hope to many youth who never thought a college education was a possibility. Young men and women, some of them from families deeply impacted by economic and social challenges, have taken advantage of MA'O's programs that instill leadership skills, camaraderie, business know-how, and a paid college education for two years (with a new, four-year college program growing). Many graduates of MA'O's program are now becoming upcoming leaders in our community and the State. I cannot emphasize enough how many lives MA'O has radically changed and how those graduates in turn benefit the broader community.

Office of State Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro - Hawaii Senate District 21
Wai'anae Coast ❖ Ko 'Olina ❖ Honokai Hale ❖ Kalaeloa
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 222, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

(808) 586-7793 ❖ (808) 586-7797 FAX ❖ senshimabukuro@capitol.hawaii.gov ❖ 21maile.com

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The Lualualei property that is the subject of the Amendment was once farmland. Then the farmer was evicted so a golf course could be built. Then it was slated to be part of an industrial park. The community fought that. The community wants MA'O to farm that property – to grow food and to grow young minds. A solar installation on a few acres, which will ultimately terminate with the land returning to MA'O, is certainly acceptable in light of the larger mission and I would respectfully ask that this amendment be approved so MA'O can expand its programs for youth and provision of healthy food to the community.

Thank you for your time and please let me know if you have any questions.



Senator Maile Shimabukuro