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Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
E-mail: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Līhuʻe, Kauaʻi, Hawaiʻi 96766

May 21, 2019

TESTIMONY OF MASON K. CHOCK
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAʻI COUNTY COUNCIL
BEFORE THE
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
(VIA E-MAIL ONLY: BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV)
MAY 24, 2019

Dear Chairperson Case and Board Members:

RE: ITEM D.1. GRANT OF TERM, NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT TO WAIʻOLI VALLEY TARO HUI, INC. FOR SURFACE WATER DIVERSION AND IRRIGATION PURPOSES, WAIʻOLI, HANALEI, KAUAI, TAX MAP KEY: (4) 5-6-002:001 (PORTION)

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of the Grant of Term, Non-Exclusive Easement to Waiʻoli Valley Taro Hui, Inc. for Surface Water Diversion and Irrigation System purposes in Waiʻoli. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a Member of the Kauaʻi County Council.

Taro farming has existed in Waiʻoli Valley since time immemorial. Waiʻoli Valley Taro Hui, Inc. ("Waiʻoli Hui") is a nonprofit group of taro farmers who have perpetuated ancient Hawaiian farming techniques, have cultivated taro in Waiʻoli Valley, and have provided opportunities for interested persons to participate and learn about sustainable farming the ancient way.

I urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources ("BLNR") to approve this non-exclusive easement to Waiʻoli Hui and allow the organization to continue its efforts towards building the foundation for cultural preservation of Waioli Valley, as well as fostering traditional Hawaiian practices and activities that nurture the natural environment of Waiʻoli Valley. Waiʻoli Hui was devastated by the April 2018 flooding event on Kauaʻi's north shore, and the County of Kauaʻi has supported the organization's efforts to recover its agricultural operations. A formal process for the BLNR to award water leases to viable organizations such as Waiʻoli Hui is vital to the continuation of the agriculture economy in the surrounding Hanalei area, and I humbly urge the BLNR to work aggressively towards establishing this much-needed process for the benefit of the entire State of Hawaiʻi.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony on this matter. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188.

Sincerely,

MASON K. CHOCK
Councilmember, Kauaʻi County Council

AMK:lc
cc: Ian Hirokawa, DLNR Special Project Coordinator,
Via E-Mail Only: ian.c.hirokawa@hawaii.gov
Professor D. Kapua Sproat, Via Email Only: kapuas@hawaii.edu