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Department of Land and Natural Resources

Attn: Board Members
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, HI 96813

Thursday, May 23rd, 2019

Re: Agenda Item D-1, testimony in SUPPORT

Grant of Term, Non-Exclusive Easement to Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui, Inc. for Surface Water Diversion and Irrigation Purposes, Wai'oli, Hanalei, Kauai, Tax Map Key: (4) 5-6-002:001 (portion).

Aloha Chair and Land Board Members,

On behalf of the Hawaii Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) I would like to request that the Land Board SUPPORT the staff recommendations in submittal D-1 to authorize the issuance of an easement to the Waiʻoli Valley Taro Hui, Inc and to exempt the Hui from the Chapter 343 requirement for the preparation of an EA related to the issuance of the easement.

We commend the DLNR staff for their efforts to help the Waiʻoli taro famers navigate the permitting process. As stated in the staff submittal, the applicants are generational kalo farmers whose families stewardship of the manōwai, poʻowai, ʻauwai and loʻi kalo dates back to pre-contact Hawaii. Since the April 2018 floods this system has been devastated and these taro farming families are still struggling with restoration efforts. However, although it has been slow and their kalo production is a fraction of what it was prior to the floods, these farmers have sought to work through the appropriate channels, seek the required permits and approvals to be able to fully restore kalo production in Waiʻoli.

As is also stated in the submittal the environmental impact of this taro farming community is minimal, as all the water from the loʻi return directly into the stream. They are an instream, in-watershed, public trust use. 100% of the diverted water (which is less than half of the total stream flow) is used for throughflow through kalo loʻi and 100% of the return flow goes back to either Waiʻoli Steam or Hanalei River.

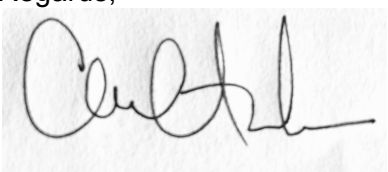
The adjacent Waipā Foundation provides the invaluable service of making high quality poi that is free or affordable to kupuna that otherwise might not be able to afford it. Much of the kalo for that poi comes from

the Waiʻoli farmers. They have been providing a culturally appropriate, affordable, staple food to our Kauaiʻi community for generations. In addition our organization has benefitted from the generosity of these farmers who regularly donate kalo, poi and kulolo to community events and gatherings.

Please support the issuance of an easement and the related 343 exemptions which will help the taro farmers of Waiʻoli restore their taro production and continue to feed their ʻohana and our community.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Regards,



Anne Frederick
Executive Director