DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I
DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHILIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

LYLE TABATA
DEPUTY COUNTY ENGINEER

VIA
EMAILTRANSMITTAL

May 21, 2019

Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources
Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
email: blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

RE: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF AGENDA ITEM D1
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 Case and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources:

My name is Lyle Tabata and I am the Deputy County Engineer for the County of Kauai Department of Public Works. The County strongly supports the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui's recovery efforts, including their application for a non-exclusive easement for the lo'i kalo system in Wai'oli Valley.

As we are all aware, the north shore of Kauai experienced record-breaking rainfall in April 2018, leading to heavy flooding and severe damage to the island's infrastructure. Last year's flooding prompted an emergency proclamation from the Governor as well as the County of Kauai, both of which are still in effect over a year later. Clearly, we are still working very hard to recover.

But Kauai's greatest asset is its people. We have weathered hurricanes and storms, and in the face of such hardships our communities have always come together to support one another. And, as the frequency of extreme weather events are predicted to increase in the future, it is imperative that we not only recognize the importance of building resiliency, but also act to provide our communities with the tools to become more self-sufficient.

I have seen first-hand the extensive damage to the Wai'oli Stream and the lo'i kalo systems. And, I have met with the hard-working farmers of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui. Although they are a small community, they are committed to preserving the practice of wetland kalo cultivation for future generations, a practice which they themselves

inherited from their ancestors. I commend their efforts; the legal processes that they are attempting to navigate are complicated and often times frustrating.

The County of Kauai Department of Public Works supports the Hui's efforts and as its Deputy County Engineer I have taken the lead on repairs, committing funds, and providing staff time and support from the County. We have worked together with the Environmental Law Clinic, through Professor Kapua'ala Sproat, to expedite this effort. The County of Kauai Engineering Division of Public Works has contracted with Esaki Surveying to perform the survey work necessary to document the extent of the irrigation system for this easement. The survey work is currently in the final stages of completion.

The County is also in communication with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, as we applied for the permitting necessary to restore the traditional irrigation system to the condition it was in prior to last year's flooding event. Once that permit is secured, we hope to begin the repair work in earnest.

I wish I could be present at the Land Board hearing to testify in person about this very important matter, however, I will unfortunately be travelling on that day. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of the Hui's easement.

Sincerely,

Lyle Tabata
Deputy County Engineer

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