VIA EMAIL TRANSMITTAL

May 21, 2019

Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources
Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 132
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, Kaua'i, Tax Map Key: (4) 5-6-002:001 (portion)

Aloha Chair Case and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this important matter. As a kalo farmer in Wai'oli Valley, Kaua'i and a member of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui, I urge you to please vote today to approve our easement.

My name is Nathaniel Temanu Tin-Wong. I was born and raised on Kaua'i and grew up with a deep appreciation for the land. My dad is a fisherman, and I have so many memories of my grandfather growing food in our yard. My wife, Dominique, and I, and our two beautiful daughters recently moved back to Wai'oli Valley where our families have farmed for generations. My daughters are fourth generation from Hanalei, and as a young Hawaiian family, it is so important to us that we raise our family with the values and tradition of living with the land, and farming kalo as our ancestors have always done.

I am relatively new to farming, but knew I wanted to farm kalo after I had the opportunity to go to Kaho'olawe in 2011. Being on Kaho'olawe, I gained a sense of the importance of what it really means to be a steward of the land. Seeing the pain of that island, and what it's been through shifted something in me, and I knew from then on, that taking care the land, and protecting it for myself and for future generations is what I wanted to do with my life.

At the end of 2015 I had the opportunity to farm a lo'i with Aunty Chris Kobayashi and Uncle Deme Rivera. They noticed that I was really interested in kalo, and ku'i kalo, and they offered my 'ohana the chance to start farming one of their lo'i. We were so lucky to be in the right place at the right time, and we said of course! We learned how to farm kalo organically, using practices like cover cropping and using organic fertilizers.

It wasn't until the summer of 2018 that my crop was finally ready. It had been such an intense process building up to this point! Finally, we got to harvest the field. I felt such an appreciation for all the work we had done during the whole journey leading up to the harvest, including maintaining the lo'i and the mānowai and 'auwai.

After feeling the impacts of the damage caused by the April 2018 flooding, and then again from Hurricane Lane, we now have to start over from the beginning. It feels as if we have to restore an entire ahupua'a just to grow our kalo again. But this way of farming is so important to myself and my family, and I know that we will continue to rebuild.

As a young father of two, I feel that it is so important for my generation to learn from the older generation that has been farming all of these years. We need to keep the kalo alive, and start stepping into that role. Having the opportunity to raise my children in this way of life, learning about kalo, and invasive species, getting them up to see how to care for the mānowai, and having them around as I work is the biggest blessing. I want to give them this lifestyle, and I feel that it's part of my duty to keep kalo farming alive for my children.

Everything is connected. It feels good to grow healthy food, and know that I can provide sustenance for my community while earning a living and raising my family. It is a wonderful feeling, and helps me be grounded and connected in my stewardship practices.

Our mānowai and water system has been used this way since time immemorial. There is no other way to cultivate lo'i kalo, and when you understand this cultural landscape, that's the only way that makes sense. This easement is essential for us to continue our Native Hawaiian cultural practices, and to pass along this knowledge for future generations. We need your kōkua.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. Please vote today to approve our easement.

Mahalo,

Nathaniel Tin-Wong

cc: Ian Hirokawa (ian.c.hirokawa@hawaii.gov)

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Aloha Chair Case and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this important matter. As a member of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui, I implore you to please vote today to approve our easement.

My name is Dominique Leu Cordy, and I am third generation from Hanalei, Kaua'i. I currently work as a free-lance researcher specializing in archival research and GIS mapping. In my work, I am especially interested in the ways that lands have changed hands, value, and use since the overthrow, and how understanding the mo'okū'āuhau (genealogy) of 'āina can help families retain their lands today.

My family has deep ancestral ties to Hanalei. My great grandmother and great-great grandparents cultivated kalo here, and although we no longer have family land in Wai'oli, these connections have inspired my husband and I to return to the land to farm, feed, and educate our two young daughters. Obtaining this easement is central to our ability to continue traditional lo'i kalo farming, and to pass along this knowledge to our daughters.

In 2015 we moved back to Wai'oli, and our 'ohana was lucky to be able to farm some of Auntie Chris' lo'i. Through her, we have learned how to grow kalo sustainably, organically, and traditionally using practices such planting cover crops, letting fields lie fallow, and using organic fertilizers.

Growing kalo is hard work. In 2018, three years after planting, we were finally ready to harvest. The April 2018 Flood and Hurricane Lane destroyed most of our crop, and now we are starting over from the beginning. To truly begin, we must restore the mānowai and 'auwai system, so that we have access to fresh water that sustains our lo'i kalo system.

Restoring the mānowai and 'auwai system is vital to continue the way of life that we have sought out for our family, and the entire community in Wai'oli. As a young Hawaiian family, it is so meaningful to be able to continue cultivating kalo, and to ensure that we can continue to provide

for the land, and the land for us, and our family's future. To do that, we need to be able to access our traditional water system. This will be the first crucial step in moving forward to recover.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. Please vote to approve our easement today.

Mahalo,

Dominique Leu Cordy

cc: Ian Hirokawa (ian.c.hirokawa@hawaii.gov)