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
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!

Mahalo 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 implore you to please vote today to approve our application.

My name is JoAnne Kaona and I am a fourth generation Native Hawaiian kalo farmer in Wai'oli. I was born and raised on Kaua'i, grew up in Wai'oli, and I have been helping my Dad, Clarence "Shorty" Kaona, farm our family kuleana and a handful of other small parcels for about 14 years. My father filed a Declaration of Water Use with the Water Commission back in 1989, and he has also submitted his own testimony today.

My brother and I grew up playing on our small family farm, running around the banks, foraging for fruit, and swimming and fishing in the 'auwai. But, it wasn't until after high school when I came home from college here on O'ahu that I truly recognized the value of my upbringing. I realized that I love the feeling of working hard, getting muddy, being able to grow and eat our own food, and being able to share that with friends and family.

For me, kalo farming defines our 'ohana. My Dad is pure Hawaiian in every sense. He took over kalo farming from his Dad, and his Dad took over from his Dad. Today, I help him every weekend. Some days, we catch up on what's new with each other; and other days, we work in total silence. Either way, for me, this is something special that we share, and so much more than just a job. At 83 years old, my Dad is still farming fulltime and I want to be able to 'auamo this important kuleana when he's ready for me to take over. I want to be able to pass down this piece of who we are to future generations. This is my kuleana for both my 'ohana and as a Native Hawaiian whose family has helped to steward Wai'oli since time immemorial.

I currently work at the Waipā Foundation, a nonprofit in the neighboring ahupua'a. There, we educate the community about aloha 'āina, sustainability, natural resource management, and traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices. One of Waipā's biggest missions is to

create a healthier community by educating our people about an indigenous diet while also keeping it affordable. One of the ways that we do this is by ensuring our community has local kalo and poi to eat. The Waipā Foundation gets 90% of our kalo from the Wai'oli farmers, including my Dad. The Foundation processes that kalo into poi at our certified kitchen with volunteer labor and provides that poi for our community, at or below cost. For example, Waipā's kūpuna price for pa'i'ai is $1 per pound.

Some things I learned in school; some things I learned through various jobs; but most of what I know, I credit to my family and growing up in our Hanalei and Wai'oli communities with so many excellent examples of all of these core values, and just some of the hardest working people that you will ever meet. Today, a lot of people talk about sustainability and feeding ourselves. In Wai'oli and Waipā, we are walking our talk. But, we need your kōkua to continue to do so.

After the 2018 floods, our mānowai, po'owai, and entire 'auwai system were completely devastated. Our river changed course and some believe we experienced a thousand year flood event. My 'ohana stewards 3.5 acres in kalo, but now we are able to farm only 2 acres. One year later, and for the first time in my Dad's 75 years of farming, he ran out of kalo. This was caused by many factors, including a shortage of water due to damage to our mānowai and 'auwai, equipment ruined by the floods, and debris and silt clogs in our lo'i kalo. But through all of these challenges, we continue to persevere as the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui.

I am here today with my fellow farmers because we need your kōkua. After the floods, we were informed that that the māno, po'owai, and 'auwai that my 'ohana and so many others have stewarded since time immemorial are on state conservation land. We have worked diligently over the last year to complete all of the necessary paperwork and are here today to humbly request this easement so that we can continue to do what our ancestors have always done and perpetuate our traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practice of cultivating wetland kalo so that we can continue to feed ourselves.

Please vote today to approve our easement today.

Mahalo,

JoAnne Kaona

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,

I'm Bobby Watari and I am a 3rd generation taro farmer who has been farming for the past 39 years for a living. I learned to farm from my father, who came to Hanalei for this purpose in the 1950s. My father started farming on 15 acres, and I have since taken over that land and added to it. I cultivate some kuleana land that my family owns and I lease other lo'i from Wai'oli Corporation.

Farming has been my life, and I am now grooming my step-son Kaisen to take over our operations. I am not sure if my daughter Lily is interested in farming, but it feels like I am working constantly to ensure that our farm is operational and healthy so that my kids even have the option of continuing this important family tradition.

It's a constant struggle though. Farming is so much more than planting and harvesting. I work hard to preserve the land for taro cultivation, and to steward our traditional Native Hawaiian water system that has been in place long before I started farming. We use the same mānowai and 'auwai that has fed taro patches on this land for many, many years. Based on my discussions with kūpuna who farmed in Wai'oli before me, I believe that our mānowai, po'owai, and 'auwai were created by Native Hawaiians. Years later, Chinese farmers took over the system for rice, and taro farmers later reclaimed it once rice cultivation ended in Wai'oli. After the 2018 floods, we found out that our māno and 'auwai were on state conservation land and we have been working hard to get all of the various permits to simply do what we have always done: mālama these resources. Our network of farms is also under threat from people who want to use the land differently. Wai'oli is so beautiful and we have so many who bought land in our community and are now trying to build illegally. It's dangerous when they are building illegally upstream from our lo'i because they contaminate the water that feeds our fields and the larger community.

Restoring our existing water system is so critical – not only for my family's livelihood and the livelihood of the other farmers, but also to maintain our way of life and the community here in Wai'oli that we are all a part of. We face so many other challenges just to farm the land and

being able to access our traditional water system is a critical first step in helping us to recover after the devastating 2018 floods.

Mahalo for considering my testimony. Please approve our application today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mahalo,

Robert "Bobby" Watari

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter. As a taro farmer in Wai'oli Valley, Kaua'i and a member of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui, I am in strong support of the Land Division's staff recommendations on this agenda item.

My name is Wayne Tanji and I have been farming in Wai'oli Valley for over 30 years. Prior to becoming a farmer, I worked retail in Hanalei. My friends were taro farmers and so I eased into farming by slowly acquiring patches from them. Eventually, I decided to farm full-time. I currently lease 1.8 acres of land and, prior to the flood, maintained 7 patches in wetland kalo cultivation.

Last year's flooding completely devastated my farming operation. Because of the location of my patches, the damage to our 'auwai system has hit me particularly hard. My patches are not receiving enough water to ensure a consistent level of through-flow and, as a result, my taro does not receive the necessary water to grow properly. Additionally, without the water to act as a weed suppressant, I cannot keep up with the weeds.

Currently, I am barely able to maintain only 2 patches. Although sometimes friends come over to give me a hand, I mostly farm alone. Even if the water flow returned to pre-flood levels today, it would still take me about a year to get back to normal production. To say that this situation is causing me a lot of stress is an understatement. Water is so vital for us to continue farming. It is the lifeblood. Without it, we cannot survive.

The taro farmers of Wai'oli have organized to pool together our resources and energy so that we can better address the problems caused by 2018's historic floods. Even if we are granted this easement, it only allows us to access and maintain the 'auwai system in compliance with the state's laws. We must still fix the damage as well as continue to maintain the system. In other words, this easement is a necessary first step, but we still have a long way to go until we can return to some type of normalcy.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Land Division staff recommendations. Please act on this submittal today.

Mahalo,

Wayne Tanji

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 this opportunity to testify on this important matter. As a kalo farmer in Wai'oli Valley, Kaua'i and a member of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui, I am in strong support of the Land Division's staff recommendations and urge you to vote to approve this easement.

My name is Chris Kobayashi and my family has been living and farming in Wai'oli Valley for three generations and one hundred years. My grandfather moved here from Japan and chose to begin farming in Wai'oli. Initially, my family farmed rice, but by the early 1940s we expanded to wetland kalo and other crops.

My father was born in 1920, the fifth of six siblings, on the same land where I was born and raised and continue to farm today in Wai'oli. My father lived here and farmed throughout his life. As he and his one worker got older, he spoke to me one day – wondering and realizing that there may be no one left to carry on and maintain our kalo farm. Though I never told him, in that very moment, that was when I made the decision and commitment to take over the farm and carry on his legacy. I knew how much he and my mom had struggled to raise 5 children while farming, and I thought of all of his blood, sweat, and tears that had gone into clearing, preparing, planting, maintaining, and taking care of the kalo and the land. I thought: I can't let all that he put into our farm be for nothing.

Over 20 years ago, we started growing various vegetables and fruits using organic methods and inputs. With that knowledge, we applied it to the entire kalo farmland and started implementing sustainable practices like fallowing, crop rotations, and planting cover crops. These practices help the land and microbes revitalize after each crop, enhancing their quality and nutrition.

This chapter in our lives taught us how to balance between growing food for ourselves and supplying good kalo to small poi millers who make poi or pa'i'ai for their communities; to 'āina-based knowledge programs and organizations on different islands who teach and bring together many young children; to students and families who do traditional ku'i with their traditional food. It has been a heartfelt honor to have been a part of this and we hope to continue to be a source for these friends and others.

Since last year's flood, we have not planted a new field yet. Currently, we have only one patch of wetland kalo in the ground that was planted before the flood and finished planting after the flood. Though we continued to harvest kalo till November of last year, we were unable to plant any new fields because all of our equipment, small tools, and our truck were all ruined in the flood. Our tractor finally got repaired in late March, and we started working again – mowing, tilling, field preparation, etc.

We have the potential to plant 26 fields of various sizes. As we reopen these traditional lo'i, we will need more water. At this point in time, with only 1 active lo'i using water, we are not taking what our farm traditionally did in the days of my dad and grandpa, when they pretty much always had at least 25 of 28 fields planted all the time.

Since the devastating flood in April 2018, our māno and 'auwai are in need of significant repair. The amount of water coming down through the temporary māno now, is probably just enough for us to open 2 to maybe 3 more small fields. It would be difficult to open any more without the repairs.

As more acreage opens, we have to consider a balance of water needed for active lo'i now and those that will be reopened, as well as knowing that drought and low rainfall periods occur. Sometimes, during the summer months, depending on the amount of water flow, I have felt the water temperature be warm to hot just 20 feet away from the inlet. With warm water, we get rotting, diseases, and poor quality kalo. Lots of cold, fresh water is critical for healthy kalo for poi in particular.

Our farm, and the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui as a whole, needs this easement to continue to protect and take care of our land and our traditional 'auwai system so that we and generations long into the future, can continue farming wetland kalo to feed ourselves, our 'ohana, and community.

As the tides ebb and flow, farmers working with the land and water and kalo are so intertwined with nature and their own lives, that we too ebb and flow.

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

Mahalo,

Chris Kobayashi

Chris Kobayashi

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 taking time to consider my concerns regarding access to the water and maintenance of the traditional Native Hawaiian systems that sustain our taro farmers in Wai'oli Valley.

My name is Kaisen Carillo. I come from multiple generations of taro farmers on both sides of my family. My mother's side of the family, the Haradas, started farming with my great grandfather Genichi Harada. My great grandfather's daughter [Lily] married Ahfook Tai Hook, both are my grandparents and still farm in Wai'oli even at 82 years old. Finally, my mom Lillian, daughter of Ahfook, married Bobby Watari, who also farms in Wai'oli Valley.

That leaves me, a 26-year-old 4th generation Native Hawaiian taro farmer in Wai'oli and Lumaha'i Valleys. I am one of only three farmers in Wai'oli younger than 35 years old. I have just started my own family and I am raising my 2-year-old daughter to farm this land as well. I spent some time outside of Kaua'i, going to school, earning my associate's degree in hospitality and my bachelor's degree in business. I'm grateful to have gotten these degrees and have been putting them to good use since I moved back to Kaua'i from O'ahu about 2 years ago.

I've been in farming since I was a small boy, starting off with picking apple snails to eventually helping with the harvest. Now, as an adult, I am able to use my formal education to expand my own farming efforts to experiment with different products like taro chips and lū'au leaves in addition to my staple harvest of taro. I am currently, and have been for some time now, being groomed to run our family operated farm.

Since the 2018 floods, though, things have really been hard. Our mānowai and 'auwai in particular were severely damaged and one year later we still do not have enough water for our taro. As a full-time farmer with a young family, it's been stressful trying to figure out how to provide for my family. I need to not only repair the damage to my farm, but also provide for my family's needs. It's been a difficult year for my family and many others.

This easement is a necessary first step, not just for me, but our whole farming community in Wai'oli Valley to get back on our feet. We will still have a long way to go, but your support is crucial for us to return, as best as we can, to our way of life. A way of life that has provided for my family for over 4 generations directly, but really for Native Hawaiian families like ours since time immemorial.

Mahalo for the opportunity to explain why this issue is so incredibly important to supporting our way of life in Wai'oli. Please vote to approve our easement today.

Mahalo,

Kaisen Carillo

Kaisen Carillo

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

My name is Clarence "Shorty" Kaona. I am a 3rd generation kalo farmer in Wai'oli Valley, 100% Native Hawaiian, and a member of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui. I have been farming the same kuleana land since I was 6 years old. My grandpa started farming kalo in Hanalei Valley in the 1930s. When he passed away, my Dad took over. In the 40s, my Dad acquired land in Wai'oli Valley. This is the same kuleana that I continue to farm and that will be passed down to my daughter, JoAnne Kaona, and to the generations yet to come.

When we were kids, we would walk down to the kalo patch to work every day. We were tasked with weeding, tilling, fertilizing, planting, and any other work my Mom and Dad needed. We would make poi every week with a model A Ford engine that my Dad hooked up to our grinder. We would share this with our 'ohana and friends in the community. As long as I remember, we always had a bowl of poi on the table. From grade school and through high school, my brothers, sisters, and I spent countless hours in this lo'i. This was our routine and cultural practice as an 'ohana. I'm very grateful for this because it taught me many lessons and values. I learned how to work hard, to work diligently, and to be conscious of everything that affects kalo; especially paying attention to nature. This upbringing also taught me the importance of 'ohana. When my Dad passed away, I knew he wanted me to continue his legacy; so, I moved back to Kaua'i in 1986 and have been a full-time kalo farmer in Wai'oli Valley ever since.

While my family has been here in Wai'oli for generations, I have continued to work with the State to continue my traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practice of wetland kalo cultivation. In 1989, I submitted multiple Declarations for our use of water. In 1994, we submitted a "Verification of Water Sources and Uses" to the Water Commission.

I own a little less than 3 acres of land and lease approximately 1.5 acres from the State of Hawai'i and Wai'oli Corporation. Of that, we farm about 3.5 acres in kalo. Since the flood in April 2018, I have only been able to farm about half of our normal acreage. In all of my

years, I have never seen a flood like that. The repercussions were devastating. It ruined my equipment and tools, most of the banks that border my patches, and the ʻauwai. The ʻauwai still needs to be repaired and unclogged further up ma uka. The mānowai and other key parts of our system that feed the ʻauwai were completely destroyed. Far more damage than we have ever seen before. This left a lot of us Waiʻoli farmers with not enough water necessary to grow our kalo.

If we could fix this problem ourselves, we would, but we can't. This is why we are asking for your kōkua to support us by approving our easement. All we want to do is continue farming so that our traditional and customary knowledge, lessons, and values can be passed down to future generations. Like my ʻohana has practiced for multiple generations on this land, these are lessons and relationships that can only be gained through countless hours in the loʻi.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this issue of vital importance for my ʻohana and our larger community. Please vote today to approve our easement.

Mahalo,

Clarence "Shorty" Kaona

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 provide testimony on this important matter. As a kalo farmer in Wai'oli Valley, Kaua'i and a member of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui, I am in strong support of the Land Division's staff recommendations on this agenda item.

My name is Dwight Morishige and I am a 2nd generation kalo farmer. I have been farming in Wai'oli Valley for over 40 years. From before I can remember, my father and his family farmed kalo. I grew up in a community that dedicated itself to farming kalo. I also learned how to farm kalo from my father-in-law and other older farmers in this area.

My family has been here in Wai'oli for decades, and I have continued our traditional and customary practice of wetland kalo cultivation. I currently lease 10 acres of land for kalo cultivation. This is the first time in my lifetime that I have ever seen the flooding this bad. As you may know, there was damage to all of the kalo farmers individually and collectively. The damage was mostly caused by flooding, landslides, and resulting silt and erosion.

This community has always been close and centered around kalo cultivation. Kalo is a very nutritional food that we can grow right in our own town. Culturally, it is important for our younger generation to continue farming. Even though our community has always been tight knit, this is the first time we received so much help and have since organized collectively after the flood. While we work together to manage our resources on a regular basis, our community has really worked hard to make sure we can continue the practice of kalo farming in Wai'oli. Without help, kalo farming would be impossible!

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Land Division's staff recommendations. Please vote to approve our easement today.

Mahalo,

Dwight Morishige

Dwight Morishige

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 this opportunity to testify on this important matter. As a kalo farmer and a member of the Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui, I strongly support the Land Division's staff recommendations and urge you to approve our easement.

My name is Sierra-Lynn Boro-Harada and my family has been farming kalo for generations. The legacy my family has created is what inspired me to begin farming and what drives me to continue. I find farming kalo to be a very passionate and purposeful way of life. The dedication I have for farming is genuine, and I come before you with the hope that your Board can help to ensure a future in farming for me, my family, and the families of all of the other kalo farmers in Wai'oli Valley.

My love for farming began at an early age. I was raised in the fields where I learned and grew to enjoy the culture of farming, the aspects of hard work, and how to have fun while working. My dream is to carry on this tradition and lifestyle and to teach future generations of my family to love it as I do.

Initially, my career pathway was very different. After I graduated from high school, I went off to Washington State University to become a registered nurse. While there, my grandfather's health took a turn for the worse. I had the option of continuing schooling in Washington, but instead I chose to return home to run the family farm. Since 2010, I have been legally running the farm business and steadily trying to grow my operations as a farmer. Challenges have arisen for us, but I always work to persevere and overcome them. That is why I ask for the Board's help in this matter.

I am a young Native Hawaiian woman and a kalo farmer. Our farm consists of ten acres, six of which are currently in production. Since the flooding in 2018, we have struggled to get enough water to maintain our normal operations. This dilemma has affected our entire community. It is important to us all as a Hui to have stability with the water and its delivery infrastructure. With the Board's help, we can better ensure that our 'auwai is in full functioning condition and is able to deliver enough water for us all to continue doing what we love.

Last year's floods created a challenge to our farm as well as all of the other farms in Wai'oli Valley. Our families and our community rely on us to face challenges as they come; and to do this, it is imperative that we acquire this easement so that we can maintain our 'auwai system in compliance with state law. My love for farming is limitless. The opportunity to love what you do and do what you love is an experience that I hold dear. It is priceless and I plan to continue my family's tradition of farming here on the North Shore of Kaua'i. With the Board's help, I can do just that.

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

Mahalo,

Sierra-Lynn Boro-Harada

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 submit testimony in strong support of the Land Division's staff recommendations. Please vote today to approve our easement.

My name is Demetri Rivera. I am a kalo farmer and a member of Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui. I farm with Chris Kobayashi in Wai'oli. Together, we maintain and farm about 10 acres of lo'i, banks, and roads.

I have been farming kalo fulltime for the last 25 years.

I know that you cannot farm wetland kalo without good, fresh, flowing water from the mountains. If there is a lack of water or inconsistent water, you will get lots of weeds growing and your kalo quality can be so bad, that sometimes, you just gotta plow under. If water flow is low in summer and the other hot months, the water is warm and the kalo will rot due to diseases and poor environment. No sense plant.

We farmers have been maintaining the mānowai and 'auwai on a regular basis and during times of emergencies, which happen every time there is a big rainfall.

Right now, we have only 1 field planted, which we could potentially harvest this summer. But due to all the silt that came down with the April 2018 flood, the quality is not what it can and should be.

The flood covered all of our equipment and all our fertilizers and cover crop seeds. After working on repairing the tractor for months, as one repair led to another part needing repair, I finally have it running pretty good, so now, we can start cleaning up and prepping fields for planting kalo and cover crop seeds.

We need to restore the māno and fix the 'auwai quick, so that we will have enough water to start planting again. Other farmers in our Hui are also not getting as much water as they currently need. And summer is just about here. Having low water flow will limit the amount farmers can plant and produce.

Mahalo nui for this opportunity to voice my concerns and to ask you to please vote to approve our application.

Aloha,

Demetri Rivera

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