

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR



July 19, 2024

State of Hawai'i
Board of Land and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, HI 96809

Re: Item C-1 Support for Kealaula Phase II Expansion

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board:

I am writing in support of the County of Kaua'i's request to provide an immediate Right-of-Entry- and subsequent transfer of approximately one-acre of the State of Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife's (DOFAW) Līhu'e property known as the Pua Loke Nursery and Arboretum. This transfer will facilitate the expansion of the County's neighboring Kealaula Supportive Housing Project for Homeless Families. In exchange, the County will fund and install sewer infrastructure to DOFAW's neighboring base yard and implement the decommissioning of the existing cesspool serving DOFAW's facilities. The Land Division estimates this sewer project will require \$.5 million expenditure.

The County's Kealaula Supportive Housing Project for Homeless Families opened to its first tenants in November of 2020. This cooperative state/county 28-unit project was developed on approximately 1.5 acres of then unused state land with shared State and County funding. Kealaula's location in the heart of Līhu'e, close to both state and county social services, medical and mental health services, schools, public transportation, and plentiful employment opportunities, provides all the resources recently homeless tenants need to thrive and rebuild their lives. All tenants receive wrap around social services customized to their individual needs to assist them in getting back on their feet.

Since opening, Kealaula has housed 71 homeless families including 96 children. Of these families served, 43 have been empowered to move from Kealaula to permanently stable housing. Only three households have exited Kealaula back to homelessness.

The planned Phase II expansion of Kealaula onto approximately one acre of currently vacant state land immediately next door to Phase I will enable the construction of an additional 24-units, almost doubling the capacity of project to serve an estimated 120 homeless individuals at a time.

We respectfully urge the Board to provide an immediate Right-Of-Entry and the subsequent transfer of the one-acre Pua Loke Nursery and Arboretum parcel so we may continue to provide more homes for one of our most vulnerable populations.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek S.K. Kawakami".

Derek S.K. Kawakami
Mayor
County of Kaua'i