

6 February 2018

HHF Planners

733 Bishop Street, Suite 2590

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Ronald A. Sato, Senior Associate: rsato@hhf.com

cc: Marigold.S.Zoll@hawaii.gov

Re: Letter of support for the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Aloha kāua e Mr. Sato,

‘O Maya L. Kawailanaokeawaiki Saffery ko‘u inoa. He kupa nō au no ke ahupua‘a ‘o Kailua e ulu a‘e nei i Kamakalepo i loko lilo o ke awāwa uluwehi o Maunawili. My name is Maya L. Kawailanaokeawaiki Saffery, and I was born and raised in the Ko‘olaupoko district of O‘ahu in the ahupua‘a of Kailua on the ‘ili ‘āina of Kamakalepo in the back of the valley of Maunawili.

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). I offer my comments as a practitioner of traditional hula who received my training and continues to practice my culture within the ahupua‘a of Kailua, a Hawaiian language curriculum developer from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa whose research focuses on the importance of place to the education of Hawai‘i’s children, and as a kupa (Native) of Kailua who is calling out to those who will listen, “Mai kuhi hewa ... ola mau nā ‘ōiwi o Kailua; make no mistake ... the Natives of Kailua are still here.”

I began studying traditional hula in 1989 at the age of nine when my mother signed me up for Hālau Mōhala ‘Ilima based in Ka‘ōhāo, Kailua, Ko‘olaupoko, O‘ahu. I learn hula, oli, and mele that honor our gods, our royalty, our sacred places, and our histories. The words I continue to give voice to and the motions I continue to give life to are the same words and motions that my hula ancestors practiced for generations and that I continue to perpetuate into the future. We are taught in our hālau that researching the many-layered meanings of our mele and hula and then presenting them on the land for the purpose of honoring the place and remembering the people and events connected to that place are all part of what is required when you accept the kuleana (responsibility) to practice traditional hula. I take this kuleana very seriously. The Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan will allow hula practitioners of Kailua like myself to fulfill this kuleana because it provides for the restoration and revitalization of cultural and natural resources related to our wahi pana (sacred sites) of Kawainui and Hāmākua. This important work will in turn provide better opportunities for us to live our culture in relation to these wahi pana, from Ulupō to Wai‘auia and Mokulana, Kahanaiki to Nā Pōhaku o Hauwahine, Kapa‘a to Kalāheo, Hāmākua to Pu‘uoehu.

I am also a tenured faculty member at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. The cornerstone of

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the philosophy that guides my work as Curriculum Specialist for Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language within Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge is grounded in my belief in the importance of place to the education of our students. The powerful connection Kānaka (Native Hawaiians) have to our ‘āina (land) is beautifully articulated in this ‘ōlelo no‘eau: “Hānau ka ‘āina, hānau ke ali‘i, hānau ke kanaka. Born was the land, born were the chiefs, born were the common people” (Pukui, 1983, p. 56). This wise, poetical saying of our ancestors explains that both Kānaka and our ‘āina are alive and have been born into this world; it expresses that we are intimately tied to each other through our shared genealogy; and it reminds us that because of this familial bond, people and land belong together. I strive to engage students in curricula and pedagogies that honor and nurture this relationship and that are experiential, culturally grounded, based in our Native language, and immersed in our Native places and practices. By returning to the land, reviving our cultural and spiritual practices on the land, and speaking our Native language on the land, we can move towards a future where Kānaka flourish and our Native voices and knowledges matter.

Not only do I believe that this approach is essential for the education of Hawaiian students, but ‘āina-based/conscious education can also benefit all students. By grounding our curriculum and pedagogy in the study of place, we are able to offer our students learning experiences that connect to where they come from, who they are, and how they see the world. Students develop deeper relationships with the places they call home, thus motivating them to become more actively engaged in the protection and stewardship of their own environments and the empowerment of their own communities. I am looking forward to upcoming opportunities that the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan will offer educators like myself to develop curriculum about Kailua for Kailua students who we know will benefit greatly from engaging directly with the places being restored, managed, and cared for as part of the master plan.

The most important outcome that I want all participants in my curricula to understand and truly believe by the end is:

**Ola ka ‘āina i ke kanaka a ola ke kanaka i ka ‘āina. Pono kekahi i kekahi.**

The land lives/survives because of the people and the people live/survive because of the land. We need each other.

This same understanding inspired the participation of many Native Hawaiian organizations of Kailua in the development and vetting of the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan. We believe that the proposing agency (Division of Forestry and Wildlife, DLNR) and consultants (HHF Planners) heard our voices and have incorporated them into this plan, which reflects this core understanding.

Through the lens of Western conversation, a pristine environment is usually viewed as one that is left alone, sometimes surrounded by a fence, and separated from all human interaction. This

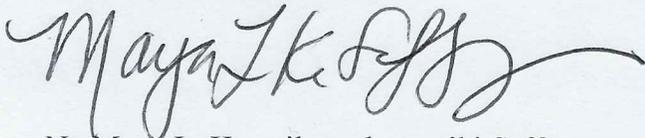
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perceptive is completely antithetical to the worldview of Native Hawaiians. We know that we come from the land itself. We believe that the land, the sea, the sky, and all creatures that exist in the universe are all our kūpuna as much as our human grandparents are. The kuleana that comes with this familial connection to our land requires us to develop and sustain meaningful, reciprocal relationships with our places, which means we must be physically present and engaged with our environment—telling and retelling mo‘olelo on the exact sites where the events took place; reciting the mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogies) of Kailua and its people in the presence of the kūpuna of Kailua, both seen and unseen; dancing hula at and about wahi pana of Kailua from Konahuanui to Mokulua; cultivating our land and feeding our people from the land; and educating the next generation of kama‘āina of Kailua about their homeland so that the practices of their kūpuna will truly be living and not just words on a sign, placard, or brochure about some past people who no longer exist.

Ultimately, the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan will allow Hawaiians a permanent, visible cultural presence in Kailua. The design of our cultural centers around the perimeter of Kawainui will honor the building practices and aesthetics of our kūpuna so that when people come into Kailua and see our kauhale, they will know right away that we are still here and have always been here. Mai kuhi hewa ... ola mau nā ‘ōiwi o Kailua; make no mistake ... the natives of Kailua are still here.

For all these reasons, I strongly support the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan and DEIS. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email ([mayakawailana@gmail.com](mailto:mayakawailana@gmail.com)) or phone (808-222-6004).

Na‘u nō me ka ‘oia‘i‘o,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maya L. Kawailanaoikeawaiki Saffery'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Na Maya L. Kawailanaoikeawaiki Saffery