

EACP Committee

From: Aubrie Morrell <aubrie.morrell@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2019 1:12 PM
To: EACP Committee
Subject: Testimony: Prohibition of Commercial Activity at Hanakao'o Beach

Aloha,

I am emailing a testimony in agreement with the bill being proposed to prohibit commercial activity at Hanakao'o beach park.

I moved to Maui in November 2016, relocating from mainland to become a full-time speech language pathologist in the public school district, providing support to students with special needs at Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School. Not long after I began work, about March 2017, a special education teacher who I'd become close to invited me to "come paddle" and gave me direction to the beach, which was Hanakao'o. It was so incredible and positively overwhelming, seeing many of the students from the school and their families, at the beach that I was invited to come paddle at. Children of all abilities and strengths safely playing and running around, multiple generations talking story, laughing, and sharing in life, while the sun finds it's settlement between Lana'i and Moloka'i. Full of life, safety, and happiness. Hanakao'o is a beautiful, peaceful place.

I had no idea what I was getting myself into when it came to the relocation to Maui or joining a canoe club, which is what many people new to the island experience, given our background of naivety to the Hawaiian culture. Canoe paddling is more than just a sport though. To me, it's a historical, cultural ohana of people unifying together for a shared purpose. For the beach, there's a short period of time in the year, when it is not as active with families and canoe club members practicing for an upcoming race. During these times you'll find the busy work on the land, at all hours of the day, caring for the canoes and having beach clean-up days, taking a brief rest from the work on the water. The beach, while it is not producing monetary business, it is affording community and health to those who live in Lahaina and especially for the west Maui canoe club members. I am the youngest of experienced paddlers to be speaking to the health and wisdom of outrigger canoe paddling. However, the lenses I am viewing this issue at hand from is far bigger than my own experience. I am reaching out in agreement with this bill because, no matter if I come or go, there is a multigenerational ohana that will be without a recreational home, if there is not a stand against the take over of commercialism at Hanakao'o beach. The pattern is historical. The cry for security comes from the children who seek the refuge of safety in development. I might not be standing tomorrow, but the youth will. They are the ones who deserve the continued, uninterrupted or overcrowded, and safe place to learn the values taught through the tradition of outrigger canoe paddling, such as persistence, commitment, integrity, attitude, teamwork, trust, accountability, patience, passion, and fun. This sport, where for all west Maui canoe clubs is now housed at Hanakao'o beach, is a place I've learned or been reminded of these lessons, and I observe these lessons being internalized each time I am at the "hale", observing the socializing and learning engaged in by the keiki.

Again, I could be gone, my voice as a "transplant" isn't so stable or grounded in the history of Maui, but I know these children and young people, who I get to see grow in learning at school and who I also see commit to multiple weekly paddle practices at canoe beach, their roots are grounded. They don't deserve consequential uprooting. The keiki deserve uninterrupted growth, life as is the usual for them, which would be facilitated in the case of this bill being passed.

Mahalo nui for your time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,

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Speech Language Pathologist