

TESTIMONY

POLICY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

**APPROVING THE ACQUISITION OF APPROXIMATELY 262 ACRES
IN PULEHUNUI AND OMAOPIO (MAKAWAO) (PEA-71)**

Maui Council Chamber
October 15, 2018
9:00AM

2018 OCT 12 PM 4:47
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY CLERK

RECEIVED

Chair Sugimura, Vice Chair Crivello and Members of the PEA Committee:

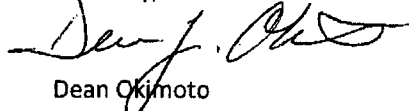
My name is Dean Okimoto, produce buyer for Tamura's operations in the State. Tamura's is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of PEA 71, approving the acquisition of approximately 262 acres of land for expansion of the ag park on Maui.

Many of you know me as the proprietor of Nalo Farms, operating in Waimanalo on Oahu. The environment in Waimanalo makes me want to impress on you what a special opportunity you have. Upcountry Maui is blessed. You have the climate and soils that can make vegetable growing very successful. Look at your history. Maui was the breadbasket of the state so we know the potential is there. I suffered severely from several rainstorms in Waimanalo that totally destroyed my operation. My soils do not drain as readily as yours and diseases after rain events cause even more damage. The dry climate in the proposed ag park is a big advantage.

Tamura's is moving into the food business. Food complements well with the Fine Wine and Liquor business we already have. At the same time, Tamura's is committed to going local. We want local farmers as our suppliers of a wide range of produce and flowers. We are already working with one of your farmers to provide us with flowers. As we expand our food section we are looking for farmers to grow with us. I also know that diversity is key to success. Having all of your farmers in one location can hurt under catastrophic events. So, even as we have Oahu growers, I look to Maui farmers to complement our supply chain so we can assure our customers a reliable supply of Hawaii's finest. The empty produce shelves after Hurricane Lane provides proof of our current lack of capacity.

Tamura's is ready to work with you to make this venture a success. Talking to your farmers I know there is interest in expansion. This is just that opportunity. Thank you for considering this acquisition and your positive vote today will be the first step towards long term expansion of diversified ag on Maui. Thank you for this opportunity to voice our opinion on this matter. If you have questions, I can be reached at 479-1797.

Sincerely,



Dean Okimoto
Tamura's Fine Wine and Liquors
Produce Buyer