

IEM Committee

From: Jane Emanuel <janeemanuel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2017 9:21 AM
To: IEM Committee
Subject: Fwd: Infrastructure committee testimony

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From: Ty Emanuel <tyemanuel@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 19, 2017 at 6:47 PM
Subject: Infrastructure committee testimony
To: Jane Emanuel <janeemanuel@gmail.com>, Frank Emanuel <Frank@relaxinmaui.net>

Aloha,

We are offering the following as our testimony to the Infrastructure and Environmental Management Committee on the topic of beach erosion, sea level rise, storms, and flooding impacts on county infrastructure.

We have been property owners and visitors to Maui over 30 years and residents for the last ten years. During that time we have seen profound changes to the built and natural environment. One of the most stark changes has been the erosion and loss of beaches in all areas of the island. When we first started coming to Maui, it was possible to walk along the beach from Pohaku Park to Napili. Since then beaches have narrowed and some have disappeared completely. Both visitors and residents are affected, losing access and use of the public beach resource. Over the last two years the erosion in some areas has accelerated due to sea level rise, increased episodic erosion caused by last year's El Nino, and the cumulative effects of shoreline hardening. In the Kahana area of West Maui it was common to see people fishing from the beach, turtles hauling out to rest, and many people enjoying their vacation or day off with a trip to the beach. That is currently no longer possible, as the amount of sandy beach left is as little as we've ever seen.

This problem is not limited to Kahana, or West Maui. Beaches are affected island-wide. The loss of beaches due to sea level rise and erosion threatens wildlife, the local economy, and recreational opportunity. Erosion can lead to siltification of the reefs. Healthy reefs support local fishermen, the tourism economy, and help protect the shoreline from storm events. Loss of sandy beaches reduces the opportunity for turtles and seals to rest, accelerates erosion, and will have a negative impact on tourism. The remaining beaches become more crowded, parking becomes more difficult, and there is less opportunity for locals to take advantage of the public trust resource.

It is important that the county recognize the speed at which erosion and beach loss is happening and the necessity of a plan to address these changes. This is a problem which will have profound effects on our economy and way of life. The county should establish a coastal management fund for public shoreline access, dune, and beach restoration projects, and research and monitoring of changes to the environment. It should be the county's policy that it encourage and actively participate in private beach restoration projects with logistic, administrative, and financial aid through the creation of a liaison position and matching funding for eligible projects. While this problem is acute in Ka'anapali and Kahana in West Maui, it is a problem that is happening or will happen island-wide, and requires island-wide solutions that are informed by our history, acknowledge the importance of tourism to our economy, and preserve the island way of life for those of us that live here.

Mahalo,

Jane and Frank Emanuel
Royal Kahana, Lahaina