

HLU Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 4:03 PM
To: HLU Committee
Subject: FW: Testimony in opposition to bill 9 Maui county

From: info <info@kumulani.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 4:00 PM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Testimony in opposition to bill 9 Maui county

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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL 9 (MAUI COUNTY)

Submitted by: Nathan Moore

Date: 5/20/2025

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

My name is Nathan Moore and I am writing in **strong opposition** to **Bill 9**. I urge you to vote **NO** on this bill for the reasons I outline below.

Bill 9, as currently written, poses a serious threat to the environmental, cultural, and economic integrity of Maui County.

First and foremost, **Bill 9 would weaken current zoning restrictions and expedite approvals for certain types of development projects**, many of which have not been fully vetted for their long-term impacts. According to the County's own Planning Department records and testimony from environmental organizations, similar "fast-track" development mechanisms in the past have led to **increased runoff, loss of native habitat, and degradation of coastal waters**—all issues that contradict Maui's General Plan and community-led long-range visions.

Additionally, the **bill undermines the authority of community plan advisory committees** by allowing exemptions and streamlined decision-making that bypass input from local residents. This removes an essential layer of community engagement and transparency, especially in historically underserved areas. In the 2023 community plan update workshops, more than 80% of residents voiced concern over unchecked development, requesting **stronger—not weaker—protections** for agricultural lands and open space.

From an economic perspective, Bill 9 appears to favor large-scale developers over small, local businesses and farmers. Allowing intensified land use in rural zones would displace small agricultural operations already struggling to survive. According to a 2022 report from the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), sustainable local agriculture contributes over **\$100 million annually** to the Maui economy, while also enhancing food security. This bill threatens to reverse that progress.

While I understand the need to address housing and economic challenges, this bill does not offer the right solutions. Instead of opening the door to blanket development exemptions, I encourage the Council to consider targeted amendments that:

1. Prioritize **truly affordable housing**—not luxury homes—on already urbanized lands;
2. Require **full environmental and cultural impact assessments** for any project seeking fast-track approval;
3. Strengthen **community oversight mechanisms**, rather than bypassing them;
4. Protect **agricultural and conservation lands** through clear, enforceable boundaries.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge you to **Oppose Bill 9** and stand with the residents, farmers, environmental stewards, and cultural practitioners of Maui County who want a future that respects both our people and our ‘āina.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Respectfully,
Nathan Moore**

Mahalo and Best Regards,

Nathan E. Moore

Mahalo and Best Regards,

**Nathan E. Moore
Kumulani Vacations & Realty
115E Lipoa St #205
Kihei, HI 96753**



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