

WAI Committee

From: Michele Lincoln <lincolnmichele@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2024 2:37 PM
To: WAI Committee
Subject: follow up testimony for Resolution 24-161 Increase and expansion of R1 water

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Unfortunately, I had to leave the council meeting before you finished, but the discussion I heard on this issue was very encouraging. I would like to address a few of the comments.

Robin Knox is right about nitrates. Using recycled water near the ocean at the resorts for irrigation is less ideal than on the upper slopes located away from the shoreline. Irrigating agricultural land, forests, schools, and parks, located away from the ocean would allow more time and space for natural filtration. Another way to mitigate higher nitrates in reclaimed water is for fresh water to dilute it. Reservoirs make that possible with additional stream water or rainfall to mix in with the R1 water.

Others good ideas were presented regarding desalination of ocean water and a public testifier encouraging the resorts to contribute financially for infrastructure costs. Considering the resorts have premier shoreline locations and their proximity to the ocean, why not make them responsible for financing the studies, permitting, and development of desalination for their irrigation and other water needs. Use R1 water for public and private properties away from the shoreline with preference to users that benefit the public overall for safety and wellbeing.

As far as water tanks verses reservoirs are concerned, time, costs, maintenance, and regulations must be taken into consideration. However, please consider reservoir's benefits of providing wildlife and bird habitats, aesthetic beauty, and possible public uses for hiking etc. The Kapalua reservoir has hiking trails that access their reservoir. It would be nice for Lahaina to offer such a beautiful recreational opportunity as well.

Again, thank you so much for all your efforts to use reclaimed water for all of Maui County's benefit. I will close with a copy of another letter I sent in the past. I have a lot more letters in my archives but appreciate you reading a few of the ones I have submitted for this agenda item.

In April 2018, I sent this letter to the governor and fed/state senators and reps. and other contacts. It read as follows:

Aloha, I am writing regarding the capital improvement project listed as the "West Maui Recycled Water System Expansion".

Rather than utilizing existing pipelines, ditches and reservoirs, it appears the Department of Environmental Management is still moving forward with their plans for the recycled water tank

on Pu'ukoli'i at Pu'u Hale in Ka'anapali Hillside.

There is a line item in the budget for \$500k for land acquisition. According to details from the department: "The \$500k is designated for land acquisition of the recycled water tank along Pu'ukoli'i Road. The current plan is to use the recycled water tank to distribute recycled water to the adjacent commercial properties. As the future plans or elimination of the use of injection wells as the primary disposal method is uncertain, this project will increase the use of recycled water."

Besides land acquisition, the tank expenses and maintenance are factors to consider with limited people that benefit from that water usage. Impurities in the recycled water may contaminate near-shore waters causing irreparable harm. Usage of treated wastewater in close proximity to the ocean is less than ideal for natural filtration. Another factor is the visual aesthetics. As the By-pass continues north, scenic view planes must be considered from various positions.

Please consider the alternative that would be more beneficial for sustainability and hope for the future. Recommissioning the reservoirs above Lahaina would allow for agriculture to be realized.

State controlled agriculture land and reservoirs are adjacent to the Lahaina-luna High School. Agriculture programs are advancing in elementary, middle, and high school education. The University of Hawaii has an annex in Lahaina that could offer agriculture and environmental studies with access to state ag-land.

Polynesians have higher propensity for diabetes and heart disease. Eating more fresh vegetables would improve health issues related to diets. Children are having fun growing and preparing food in the new school programs. The next generation can learn to eat healthier and reduce expenses related to wellness. Providing farm produce for school cafeterias would be achievable within the district.

State funding to facilitate the development of agricultural land for educational purposes and food security is a reasonable expenditure.

Recommission reservoirs and the ditch system to irrigate large parcels of land for agriculture uses. Cultivated crops and pastures for livestock make use of the treated reclaimed water to provide food, jobs, and another source of taxable commodities. Complete dependence on tourism is putting all the eggs in one basket. Diversifying into agriculture makes sense considering the ideal climate, soil, topography and ability to grow crops all year long for taxable revenues.

Federally protected waters are at risk, seeking funding and assistance to mitigate waste-water issues are viable.

Irrigated ground cover can prevent fires and erosion along with natural filtration for a healthy eco-system. Irrigated agriculture land above Lahaina allows water to filter back into the

aquifer to be recycled into the system. Percolating through natural filtration helps to remove impurities that can cause harm to the federally protected humpback whale marine sanctuary and coral reefs.

Due to sea level rise and shoreline erosion, protecting near-shore waters to preserve the coral reef is imperative to prevent coastal hazards. Resorts in West Maui may be able to delay their inevitable demise with sea walls and sandbagging but overall protecting the coral reefs will be the best defense. Prevention of undermining the shoreline, saturating the ecosystem will help to prevent saltwater intrusion into fresh water sources.

Irrigated hillsides provide beautiful scenic landscapes. Offering farm fresh exotic produce on the menu is a draw for many travelers. Resort rates for mountain-views can reflect either concrete and construction views or luscious tropical scenic vistas. Ag/eco-tourism is another source of taxable revenue for the county and state. Providing natural habitat for fish, birds and wildlife will be another blessing and an attraction for tourism.

For public well-being, utilizing reservoirs and promoting agriculture for the Lahaina Wastewater Reclamation Facility's reclaimed water is better stewardship. Considering the expensive monthly water and sewage charges for residents and the impact of tourism to the area, reclaimed water should benefit the community.

Food sustainability, employment opportunities, and preserving this beautiful paradise we call home are possible. Providing public access to the ponds will be appreciated. They are restorative, walking on paths through green pastures and resting by still waters is good for the soul.

Water is the source of life. Please consider the best stewardship of our resources to protect and preserve the land and ocean for those that live here, visitors, and future generations.

Thank you,

Michele Lincoln

Lahaina

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