

PEA Committee

From: Barbara Barry <begoniabarry@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 20, 2018 9:56 AM
To: PEA Committee
Subject: Fwd: PEA 71

Aloha Chair and Council Members,

As I look into the sale by A&B to the State of Hawaii and the County of Maui for 262 acres for the expansion of the Kula Ag park, it raises many concerns.

1st the asking price for Ag land that is not considered to be important Ag land with an asking price of 5 million, 9 hundred and 29 thousand dollars to me is an astounding asking price. The 2017 appraised value of this land is 27, 300.00 with a property tax of 200. per year. Are the comparables important Ag land?

What will be the tax burden for the County if this sale goes through? Who will pay it?

This sets a terrible precedent for ag land to be put out of the financial reach of many small farmers.

There should be a law that A&B cannot inflate the cost of these lands that Hawaiians and many others say is Not actually theirs to sell to such astronomical heights because of greed.

This property is being sold AS IS and is littered with past agricultural irrigation plastic and for organic farmers, makes it very difficult to become a certified organic farm.

I believe that the soil should be tested for all past pesticides used for whatever crops have been farmed there in the past. Food Farmers, especially organic food farmers need to know if there are any Pesticide residue in the soil.

There has been no archeological investigation into this parcel that I could locate and that should be required by the State and County. Does anyone know if that has occurred?

This park is suppose to be made available for Farmers to afford to make a living selling the products they grow. Will there be high water costs due to the electric expense of pumping the water uphill like at the current Ag Park? Does this property make the best fiscal sense for the State, County and the Farmers who have to compete with imported, less costly produce?

It is raw land full of rocks and plastic irrigation pipe. It is not farming ready.

Why is the County moving forward with funding the water infrastructure before the sale is approved?

If this project rolls ahead, will there be a provision that the ditch water for the farms will have a higher priority than A&B's other lands? If not, the farmers would be in jeopardy when water levels are low and A&B want to water their own leases.

Does anyone know who will be responsible for maintaining the East Maui Ditch now the A&B is not growing sugar?

How are the plots of the current Ag park being managed?

Since there is no waiting list for farmers at the current Ag Park, maybe the County should be looking into an Audit to assure that the land is being used properly considering a new administration will be in place soon and Ms. Rasmussen is retiring. Why is invasive glycine allowed to take over some plots?

Are all farmers in compliance with their leases?

Why isn't the public notified to get on the waiting list?

Lastly, since the current Ag Park is full of chemical farmers, I propose in any future Ag parks that equal number of the total combined acres be offered to organic and regenerative farming production. This means that a new Ag park would consist of organic/regenerative farmers only to avoid contamination issues and to level the farming field equally. There are many important reasons to put this expansion on hold for a few months and let the new administration take this from the start rather than have to inherit someone else plan to expand the Kula Ag Park, especially since this administration hold a dim view on organic/regenerative agriculture.

Does anyone know how much was spent on the current Ag park and what investment from the County and State could be used to reduce the high cost of water due to the electric?

Possibly solar panels installed or Mr Yamamura had an idea about a Hydrolic ramp pump that sounded efficient, and affordable.

A&B have thousands of acres of prime farmlands, let's not rush to accept something that isn't right for Maui Farmers. Let them offer a fair price to support Farming on Maui, or a extremely long term lease. What are they offering other farmers to lease theses Ag lands?

Why does the county need to own this lands?

Mahalo,
Barbara Barry