

AH Committee

From: Renee Vachow <rvachow@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 03, 2019 4:59 PM
To: AH Committee
Subject: Written Testimony for Makila Farms

September 3, 2019

Re: Makila Farms Agenda Item AH-1 (3)

Dear Affordable Housing Committee, I ask for your support of the Makila Farms project in Lahaina where currently we have the least affordable housing on Maui.

I have been rooted in the Westside community for 20 years, all the while serving many that live here. I am a certified Special Education Teacher and now for the last 11 years I am the Student Services Coordinator at King Kamehameha III Elementary. I LOVE MY JOB and I LOVE THIS COMMUNITY! I service all the students and families of King Kamehameha III Elementary as well as all of the private elementary schools, preschools, and early intervention students (IMUA Family Services), that reside in KKIII's district. I am so proud of our school and what we have accomplished over the years and desire to remain here and continue to build strong schools that our keiki deserve.

I am a single mother and have three children of my own. I have struggled in the last 7 years to obtain affordable housing for my family. My first apartment following my divorce was more than 50% of my take home salary, 75% to be exact. It was then that a fellow teacher had informed me of this amazing program that could possibly benefit someone like myself. He had acquired a home through Na Hale O Maui a year prior. I immediately applied for the program and completed all 4 steps. I am currently renting a home on the westside and am very concerned that soon this will be unaffordable too. The landlord has continually raised the rent over the last two years as many landlords who used to rent to locals have now realized that Airbnb and Home Away to name a few have taken over the highly popular location of the westside and have turned to housing short term for tourists, where much of the money goes out of state from owners that live outside of Maui.

I hope and pray Makila Farms will be able to receive the additional funding needed to move forward with this project. I truly believe that in order to keep our community strong we need to keep our people here; those who service the communities they live in and selflessly give back on a daily basis.

Thank you for your consideration,

Renee Vachow
Single Mother of 3
Special Education Teacher
Student Services Coordinator
King Kamehameha III Elementary School