

IEM Committee

From: David Arakawa <darakawa@lurf.org>
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2017 4:55 PM
To: IEM Committee
Cc: Wynde Yamamoto
Subject: MAUI - IEM-33 Sand Mining Moratorium (IEM Mtg 8.14.17)
Attachments: 170809 Maui - Sand Mining Moratorium - LURF Testimony finalrev_08.14.17 mtg (wmy).pdf

Aloha IEM Committee,

Please accept and distribute to the IEM Committee members the attached LURF testimony regarding IEM-33, which is on the IEM Committee Agenda for Monday, August 14, 2017.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Mahalo, Dave

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Via E-Mail

August 9, 2017

Honorable Elle Cochran, Chair
Honorable Don S. Guzman, Vice-Chair,
and Members of the Infrastructure and
Environmental Management Committee
Council of the County of Maui
County of Maui
200 South High Street, 8th Floor
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Comments Regarding Proposed Bill Entitled “A Bill for an Ordinance Establishing a New Chapter 20.40, Maui County Code, Declaring a Moratorium on Sand Mining” (Item IEM-33 on the Committee’s Agenda).

Monday, August 14, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Kalana O Maui Building, 8th Floor, 200 South High Street, Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. LURF’s mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii’s significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

For consideration before this Committee, is a proposed bill, the purpose of which is to declare a year moratorium on mining of Central Maui inland sand.

Background. LURF understands that this proposed bill was initially prompted by concerns relating to the excavation, movement and exportation of inland sand, allegedly without proper permits. Contentions also exist regarding the possible mishandling of ancient ‘oiwi encountered during the movement of inland sand.

This bill was initially proposed as a measure to amend the comprehensive zoning ordinance (Title 19, Maui County Code [MCC]) to establish a moratorium on the exporting of sand off-island. Such a zoning measure would be procedurally subject to

review by the County's three Planning Commissions, and final approval by the Council, as is proper for all land use-related matters. Decisions, however, were subsequently made by introducers to instead propose other iterations of the bill as measures intended to protect the environment under Title 20, MCC - "Environmental Protection," reportedly so that the newly drafted versions of the ordinance will move quicker through the review process.

LURF's Position. LURF is not in any way opposed to measures intended to protect Maui's environment and natural resources, or efforts made to respect and preserve native Hawaiian cultural, archeological or burial sites. LURF must, however, strongly caution against the improper circumvention of procedures for the enactment of land use laws and ordinances, including moratoria, particularly in cases where the deprivation of constitutional and vested rights of private landowners may be at stake.

With respect to the subject bill proposing to declare a moratorium on mining Central Maui inland sand, LURF has both procedural and substantive concerns with the measure and respectfully requests this Committee's consideration of the following issues:

A. Procedural Concerns

1. This Moratorium Bill Should Be Properly Introduced as an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance (Title 19, MCC), and not as an Environmental Protection Measure (Under Title 20, MCC).

A moratorium is a local law that takes immediate effect to temporarily prohibit a particular activity or process so the locality may study the potential effects of the activity and establish new, permanent regulations of that activity. There are different types of moratoria, review and passage of which are subject to different legal authority and criteria, depending on the balance of interests between the municipality and the other parties involved.

LURF believes the proposed moratorium on mining Central Maui inland sand, despite now being characterized and labeled as an environmental protection measure, is in fact, a **land use moratorium**, the proper authority for which is "**zoning**" and not the general "**police power.**"

Due to its interplay with, and potential effect on existing zoning ordinance provisions,¹ as well as the proposed imposition of restrictions upon land use and landowners, the proposed bill involving the mining of sand must be considered a **land use moratorium** which must be appropriately vetted via the process in place for the establishment of zoning laws and regulations.

This proposal should therefore be introduced as an amendment to the zoning ordinance (Title 19, MCC) instead of a measure intended to protect the environment under Title 20,

¹ See, e.g., definition of "resource extraction" contained in Section 19.04.040, MCC.

MCC.² Amendments to the zoning ordinance properly require review and consideration by the three County Planning Commissions prior to presentation to the full Council.³ As will be discussed below, LURF believes comprehensive review of the proposed measure is especially vital and mandatory in this case due to the potential violation of landowners' constitutional and vested rights as a result of the imposition of such moratorium.

2. Imposition of Moratoria May Not be the Appropriate Mechanism in this Case Since Question Exists as to Whether the Proposed Moratorium is Legally Justified.

General Police Power Moratoria vs. Land Use Moratoria

The enactment of temporary restrictions or moratoria on certain activity, including land use, has been held by courts throughout the country to be a valid exercise of local police power only where the restrictions are **reasonable and related to public health, safety or general welfare**.

General Police Power Moratoria

Introducers of this bill propose to have this Committee believe that this measure is suitable for passage as a **general police power moratorium** (the authority for which is the county's general "police power" pursuant to other forms of county laws or ordinances [in this case, environmental protection/preservation of historical, cultural, archaeological and burial sites], and **not** zoning), which are introduced to address situations wherein **immediate health and safety problems** are at issue.⁴

In such case, to justify a municipality's attempt to impose a **police power moratorium to temporarily interfere with the beneficial use of private property**, courts have held that the municipality must establish that:

1. It is acting in response to a **dire necessity**;
2. Its action is reasonably calculated to **alleviate or prevent a crisis condition**; and
3. It is **presently taking steps to rectify the problem**.

As far as LURF is presently aware, proponents of this bill have not produced sufficient (if any) evidence to meet the **emergency/crisis elements** of the above three-prong test

² As acknowledged by the drafters of Section 20.40.070 of the proposed Chapter 20.40, Title 20, MCC, administrative enforcement of said new Chapter already comes within the purview of Title 19, MCC – Zoning.

³ It should be noted that characterization of the proposed moratorium alternately as a "land use" bill rather than a "zoning" bill would still subject the measure to review by the three County Planning Commissions pursuant to Charter, County of Maui, Section 8-8.6, as is proper for the adoption of any land use ordinance.

⁴ The asserted purpose of the draft bill is "...to conduct further analysis; establish regulations for mining inland sand to protect Maui's environment, and prevent the disturbance of Hawaiian historical, cultural, or archeological sites, and unmarked human burial sites."

which is required to justify the passage of the subject moratorium as a **legitimate general police power moratorium based on threats to health and safety.**

Land Use Moratoria

With respect to **land use moratoria**, this Committee should be aware that courts have held that interference with the use of private property must be scrutinized through hearing procedures as prescribed by **zoning** laws, and must contain the following key elements in order to be considered legally defensible:

1. a **reasonable time frame** as measured by the action to be accomplished during the term;
2. a **valid public purpose** justifying the moratorium;
3. address a situation where the **burden imposed by the moratorium is being shared substantially by the public at large;**
4. **strict adherence to the procedure for passage/adoption;** and
5. a **time certain when the moratorium will expire.**

Of particular concern in this instance is the requirement that the burden imposed by the moratorium be shared by the public at large, as opposed to being placed upon a minority of landowners, as it would in this case. LURF believes that when the cost of a benefit is placed entirely upon particular landowners rather than spread throughout the jurisdiction, serious consideration must be given to review and discretion of the moratorium to avoid unconstitutional confiscation of private property.

LURF must also question the legitimacy and seriousness of the stated purposes of the proposed measure including the reported need to “preserve, and avoid the disturbance of Hawaiian historical, cultural, or archaeological sites and unmarked human burial sites,” since such historical, cultural, archaeological and burial sites do not only exist in sand, and should more properly be protected by measures relevant to and inclusive of other sites and areas. The County’s Director of Planning has in fact responded to inquiries by this Committee regarding inland sand regulation and the monitoring and enforcement of resource extraction, reporting that the County’s Cultural Resources Commission has not designated any archaeological, historical, cultural or burial preservation sites in Central Maui.⁵ The Director’s response also appeared to confirm that no exigency currently exists with respect to the number of permits processed or pending for resource extraction.

In the present case, it is also questionable whether the proposed two-year duration would be sufficient to allow the County time needed to review the anticipated update to the Maui Inland Sand Resource Quantification Study (2006) especially since no deadline has been set for the completion of the update or for obtaining the necessary funding therefor; as well as pass an ordinance permanently regulating the mining of inland sand. The stated need in the bill to possibly reenact the moratorium at the end of the two-year period also adds to the uncertainty as to the expiration date.

⁵ See correspondence dated June 30, 2017 from Mr. William Spence, Director, Department of Planning, to Mayor Alan M. Arakawa, For Transmittal to this Committee.

In view of these concerns, LURF believes the validity of the subject bill and the proposed moratorium as drafted, even when scrutinized utilizing processes as appropriately prescribed and authorized under zoning laws, would be considered questionable and subject to legal challenge.

B. Substantive Concerns

1. Constitutional Concerns – The “Takings” Issue.

The law and the courts have established strict rules, both as to the procedural (as discussed above) and the substantive requisites of moratoria. The substantive rules are based upon and embody the general principle **that any enactment affecting private property rights must bear a substantial relation to the public health, safety, or general welfare.**

In the event a land use regulation operates to deprive the owner of beneficial economic use of the property, there exists an issue as to whether that owner may be entitled to monetary compensation under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. And most significantly, as applied to the proposed moratorium, U.S. courts have recently even considered temporary land use controls such as moratoria, to amount to a deprivation of beneficial use in the property (i.e., a “taking”), potentially entitling landowners to compensation.⁶

Importantly, what is at stake here is the constitutional and vested rights of private property owners, large and small, which should not be improperly manipulated unless the County can prove a proportionality between the effects of the activity sought to be prohibited and the County’s proposed uncompensated taking.⁷ In the absence of such proof, the County may be subject to legal challenge and liability for “just compensation.” Such litigation is foreseeable and will likely cost the County substantial sums to defend.

2. The Proposed Moratorium Fails to Clearly Define the Activity Affected and the Manner in Which it is Affected.

Despite the specification of the geographic area to which this revised version of the moratorium is intended to apply, the provisions of the proposed ordinance remain unclear and overly broad, and fail to provide clear direction with respect to the activity sought to be prohibited and the manner in which such activity would be prohibited as is required for any lawful moratorium.

The subject moratorium is being proposed to be included into the MCC as a newly added Chapter (20.40) under Title 20. The new Chapter 20.40 is still sparsely drafted, containing language which provides minimal direction (contra to what is required to

⁶ See, e.g., *Agins v. Tiburon*, 24 Cal.3d 266 (Sup. Ct. of Calif., 1979), aff’d on oth. grds., 447 U.S. 255 (1980).

⁷ At issue specifically, is the constitutionally protected private property rights of landowners as well as the vested rights of property owners and permittees who have heretofore lawfully complied with necessary statutory and regulatory requirements relating to resource extraction.

support moratoria), and potentially conflicts with existing ordinance provisions in other titles and chapters of the MCC, thereby easily lending itself to confusion and misinterpretation.

The moratorium still could, for example, be reasonably interpreted to preclude movement of inland sand, including innocuous activity such as planting and gardening within private property. Without any attending provisions, there is a void of detail and direction in Chapter 20.40 required to support this type of unreasonable regulation which may yet have the potential of violating landowners' constitutional and vested rights and confiscating their property.

3. The Proposed Moratorium Would Likely Cause Unintended Negative Consequences.

The local community will likely suffer hardships due to the imposition of the proposed measure. The proposed moratorium and the inability of individuals or entities to extract or move sand in any amount, for any purpose, may cause hardships for residents, companies, schools, plant nurseries, farms, golf courses and other organizations which rely on such activity and/or inland sand for household, business, playground and agricultural use, as well as for other needs and programs or purposes, many of which serve the community.

Public use and enjoyment of parks, beaches and other recreational and community facilities may also be significantly affected due to the proposed moratorium.

The proposed sand mining moratorium may negatively impact valid grading permits issued by the County. LURF understands that as presently drafted, this proposed measure may impact grading permits already issued by the County of Maui, thereby potentially prohibiting otherwise lawful construction grading activity during the term of the moratorium.

The proposed measure may create disincentive for construction and have other negative economic impact in Maui/Hawaii. At a time when the County and the State are attempting to encourage business expansion in, and attract business operations to Hawaii, the proposed measure would increase construction costs and create a disincentive, having a negative impact on construction and development. Increased construction costs will be passed on to home buyers and will thus increase the price of homes and exacerbate the affordable housing problem in Maui and the State.

4. Additional Exemptions and/or Variances Should be Considered by Drafters of the Measure to Avoid Unintended Hardships and Consequences.

While some exceptions to the proposed moratorium have now been included in the draft ordinance, some are insufficient to dispel the concerns of land owners. Other, additional exemptions should also be considered and added to allow, for example, activity which may benefit the public, and activity that when completely precluded by the measure, may result in unintended negative consequences (as discussed above), or severe hardship.

Moratoria laws routinely contain such mechanisms that allow automatic exception, or application for relief from the moratorium. Drafters of the proposed ordinance must in said case, identify these exemptions as well as establish terms and procedures, and create standards and criteria for the application and issuance of variances.

C. Conclusion

Based on the procedural and substantive concerns articulated above, LURF believes it would be unwarranted and unreasonable for this Committee to support this proposal as presently drafted without thorough review and analysis of currently available facts and information relating to the legality and appropriateness of the imposition of a moratorium for effectuating the alleged purposes of this bill⁸; legitimacy of the bill's true purpose; clearer articulation of the affected activity and contemplated regulation thereof; and further consideration of the potential unintended consequences of such a moratorium, and must therefore recommend deferral of this proposed measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding this matter.

⁸ While LURF understands that the alleged purpose of the proposed moratorium is, in part, to allow the conducting of further analysis of the sand mining issue, including an update to the 2006 Maui Inland Sand Resource Quantification Study, sufficient facts and information must **presently exist** to legally support the imposition of a moratorium, particularly in this type of situation where the potential deprivation of constitutional and vested rights is at stake.