

AH Committee

From: ryan monico <ryanmonico@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 02, 2019 1:04 PM
To: AH Committee
Subject: Affordable Housing Project (Chapter 201H, Hawaii Revised Statutes) (Independent Development of Makila Farms; Lahaina) AH-1(3) Sub(3)
Attachments: Makila Farms Testimony_Ryan Monico.docx

Aloha Maui County Council,

Please find attached my written testimony **in favor** of Makila Farms.

Mahalo,

Ryan Monico

Aloha Maui County Council,

My name is Ryan Monico. I was born and raised here in Hawaii. I am originally from Oahu and moved to Maui six years ago because Oahu was getting too expensive. I am so glad that I made the move because I fell in love with the island right away. I became a Maui Boy instantly and for good reason. Living here on Maui reminds me of what living in Hawaii used to feel like when I was growing up. There's hardly any traffic on the roads. I can go to the beach and easily find parking. People still have the aloha spirit, and I see people flashing the shaka sign all the time.

When I moved here six years ago rent here was much more affordable than Oahu. In fact, I thought that I could actually afford to buy a home here. But, in six years a lot has changed. Rent and housing prices are through the roof. There is a lot of development, but it feels like a lot of that is catered to tourists. The biggest change for me in those four years is the fact that I am now at a point in my life where I am ready to grow my family.

I have been teaching at Maui High for the past six years. I do my best every day to guide and help my students make choices that will help them to have a positive impact on their community. One day I had a conversation with one of my students about possible career choices. I told my student how much I loved my job because it is so rewarding to see them mature and grow as young people. The student replied that it sounded nice being a teacher, but didn't want to have to work two jobs to make ends meet.

My student's comment was, unfortunately, very true. We are constantly having conversations about being able to afford living here. I love living in paradise and make a point not to take it for granted, but it can get depressing looking for a home here because the prices seem so out of reach.

The high cost of living for us locals is why Makila Farms needs to be approved. It was created for working-class locals like me who earn 50 to 100 percent of the median income. I was so surprised to see on the website that I could find, "**Single-family homes starting as low as \$161,760* in Launiupoko.**" I had never thought about looking on that side of the island because we never thought that I could afford to live there. As I began to read more about the project I began to get more and more excited. The project was workforce ready and catered to people like me who worked and served in the community. It offered 19, two-acre lots, which made me very excited because the property would be big enough for me to grow my own organic fruits and vegetables. There would be no short-term rentals. The project wouldn't use water from the local streams. It would maintain the views by only building single-story houses. Most importantly Makila Farms would keep the houses affordable for 30 years.

Maui County Council, I humbly ask from the bottom of my heart that you approve Makila Farms. Makila Farms is the only project out there that working-class families can truly afford. Makila Farms is the only project out there where working-class families can have enough space to sustainably grow our own produce. Makila Farms is the only project out there where working-class families will have enough room to grow their family. Makila Farms is the only project out there where working-class families can afford to call home.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Ryan Monico