

APT Committee

From: Tasha A. Kama
Sent: Tuesday, January 18, 2022 1:17 PM
To: APT Committee
Subject: APT-1 (4) Department of Agriculture
Attachments: 2022-01-18 Letter-Chair_Sinenci-Comments_on_APT-1-4-Dept_of_Agriculture.pdf

Aloha Chair Sinenci,

On behalf of Councilmember Kama, please find attached her letter to the APT Committee regarding your agenda item APT-1(4). Could you please place her letter into the record for this committee meeting.

Thank you.

Senior Executive Assistant Evan Dust for
Tasha Kama, Councilmember (Kahului Residency)

COUNTY OF MAUI

NOTE: We are following Chair Lee's directive to work remotely during the current COVID-19 emergency. My County office is temporarily closed. The office phone is answered by voice mail. Email is monitored and responded to as quickly as possible. When possible, to facilitate no-contact communication, written communication will be by Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file attachments to email and no hard copy will follow in the mail; the cover email will advise when that is not the case. I thank you for your patience.

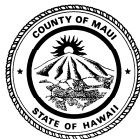
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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
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January 18, 2022

Chair Shane Sinenci
APT Committee
County of Maui Council

Dear APT Chair Sinenci:

**SUBJECT: COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
(APT-1(4))**

I am writing to you to provide my thoughts regarding the establishment of a county Department of Agriculture as included in the 2020 amendments of the Maui County Charter. Unfortunately, my schedule does not permit my attendance at the January 18, 2022 meeting of APT where this subject will be discussed. In lieu of attending and providing my thoughts, I am submitting this letter to your attention for the consideration of the APT Committee.

While I was not convinced of the need for this department at a county-level, the voters see a need and through the amendment of the charter have charged the County of Maui with establishing this new department. I have come to believe that the expectations of the voters for the County Department of Agriculture are as diverse as the agricultural sector of our economy. As such, I urge great care in defining the goals, roles and responsibilities of this new department.

I believe a judicious, incremental approach should be used to develop this new department. That approach should be guided by a realistic assessment of the current role of agriculture in our county. Large efforts of the department should not be targeted to areas of agriculture with little potential of economic gain. If we want to have agriculture be a significant part of the economic diversification of Maui, we need the new department to focus its efforts on commercially-viable agricultural operations that have the potential of providing attractive employment opportunities. While supporting small-scale "backyard"

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agricultural operations may seem popular, allocating scarce resources on operations that have little potential to produce measurable economic benefits is, in my opinion, an unwise allocation of county resources.

It is clear that one major issue that has had large negative impact on our agricultural sector is the challenge of managing feral animals, in particular ungulates (i.e., axis deer, pigs). I believe that the County of Maui would benefit from a unified approach to addressing all feral animal issues. As such, I would recommend that the management of all county efforts for the management of feral animals be consolidated within this new department. The management of contracts for the control of stray and feral domestic animals (i.e., dogs and cats) is currently performed within the Department of Housing and Human Concerns, which is not really a good fit for that department. In my opinion, consolidating these services within the new department will result in more effective contract management as the contract managers would be dealing with similar scope and budget issues.

Thank you for the opportunity for me to provide my comments on this subject.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tasha Kama', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

TASHA KAMA
Councilmember