

August 22, 2019

Honorable Committee Chair Keani N.W. Rawlings-Fernandez Vice Chair T. Kelly King and  
County Council Members  
200 High Street  
Wailuku, HI 96793

SUBJECT: Item NO.(EDB-76) for the Wailuku Civic Complex "A BILL FOR AN  
ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 4858, BILL NO. 54 (2018), RELATING TO  
THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI  
ISSUANCE, SALE AND DELIVERY OF SAID BONDS (DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT-  
WAILUKU CIVIC COMPLEX)"

Greetings Honorable Chair Keani N.W, Rawlings-Fernandez,  
Vice Chair Kelly T. King and Council Members  
and Members of the Maui County Council:

I am a small business owner and resident in Wailuku Town for the last 7 years. My business is Perfection Bra Fitting Salon, located on Central Avenue. I started out years ago in a tiny, hidden cottage behind the Wailuku McDonalds. Perfection has hatched and grown here in Wailuku Town. The shop is now located on Central Avenue. I have been an eager participant in many public meetings, community surveys, town hall gatherings and planning and visioning mechanisms open to the public, and there have been countless of them over the course of 7 years.

I'm grateful that after the many years in which I believed in Wailuku – and invested my every last cent here in growing a quality business that serves the community – we are finally approaching a moment of public investment to help the town with some really challenging infrastructure problems like parking.

Frankly, I was shocked and disgusted to receive news, accidentally, from a customer, on Tuesday that an eleventh hour bill to consider defunding the parking structure was coming before the Council for the second time in six months. I am here to express my strongest opposition to defunding the parking structure.

Community planning is a long-term process, and Maui County has invested thousands of hours in getting input from the community over many years. Best practices from around the country and world have been used as models and studies of what works in small town redevelopment. Community members convened as individuals and as organizations to develop and implement future visions of Wailuku as a center for arts and performance, leveraging the great depth we have here already with the Iao Theater and MAPA's significant investment in property and programs in Wailuku's downtown.

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Commissioned studies, paid for by the citizens of Maui County, have documented the need for parking. But any business owner or resident in the vicinity of the town center and municipal buildings can tell you that. Defunding the parking structure doesn't make the problem go away. The need will still be there. The longer it is put off, the more it will cost.

Already, the County has invested nearly \$11 million of tax-payers money on planning and land acquisition for this project. The project is underway! To amputate the parking structure from the sewer repairs and street renovations on Church Street, which are going forward, would nullify any public benefit from the millions already spent and already on-deck for this construction. It is cutting the nose off to spite the face!

Canceling construction of the parking structure would rightfully destroy confidence in the stability and trustworthiness of the County with regard to any future projects, of any type, in any location on the islands – and contractors will take that into account – charging more to make up for the possibility that the County might punt on a major project on a political whim.

For so many years, Wailuku has been ignored as sprawl pushes commerce further from the historical, civic heart of the island. It is a daily and incalculable threat to the small businesses and property values of home owners in Wailuku Town. Many of us want to hold on to the essence and vitality of what Wailuku once was but that opportunity is slipping through our hands as time, blight and small business turnover increase. We need your HELP now, not the introduction of instability to efforts to help us move forward.

I urge you not to take the rash step of defunding the parking structure – and making the renovated Church Street Maui's new example of an expensive road to nowhere.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Erwin  
Owner, Perfection Bra Fitting Salon