

TO: Chair Shane M. Sinenci and EACP Committee Members

June 18, 2019

From: Dick Mayer dickmayer@earthlink.net

RE: Visitor Impacts to County Environmental and Infrastructural Resources (EACP-6)

Tourism is a lot like eating. We need to eat in order to sustain ourselves and support our health. Youngsters need to nourish their development. However, as we mature, eating too much can cause a host of problems and eventually poor health, disabilities, pain, social and psychological problems, and possibly worse.

Similarly, tourism initially can provide a community with good jobs, a higher standard of living and a more interesting lifestyle. However, as tourism grows it can begin to threaten the very viability of a community and ultimately it can destroy itself, much like cancer damage the body in which it lives. At first, there may be only small irritations and minor pains, but then we find growing limitations on our activities, well-being, and quality of life.

After 1959 when jet planes began flying here and Hawaii became a state, Maui's business and political leaders had to make a decision as to what kind of tourism should be supported on Maui. They could have chosen small-scale tourism with visitors staying in B&B or ohanas, allowing local residents to earn a supplemental income.

However, since plantation workers' homes were usually small units that could not accommodate additional visitors and were far from beaches, the business leaders designated West Maui's Kaanapali and later South Maui's Wailea for large-scale hotel resort developments operated by off-island corporate investors.

With the steady growth of tourism in the past few decades, Maui has become bloated and many residents feel a need to moderate our tourism diet. We must eat selectively and carefully. In fact, we probably need to go on a modest diet to limit actual negative impacts that have been listed by others and are well documented.

We now recognize the symptoms and impacts of overtourism and we should selectively manage various aspects of the tourism industry.

What we need to do now is to protect our tourism industry from destroying itself, rather than allowing tourism and hotel construction and illegal vacation rentals to grow and kill both our economy and quality of life.

Maui has been traveling on a road that has taken us from an agricultural, plantation economy into one based on tourism. We have now reached a fork in that road and we must decide which branch of the path we will want to travel.

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The left fork will continue the present road of rapid population growth, increasing tourism dependence, more McMansions, gated communities, and a decreasing quality of life for Maui's long-time residents.

The right fork will mean that we will change our direction significantly by preserving and restoring a high quality of life that residents of Maui deserve, while carefully protecting our existing tourist industry from overdevelopment.

Although there are financial forces that might try to seduce County decision-makers down the left road of over-development, Maui has the legal tools that can keep us on the road to long-term stability and prosperity.

What do we need to do? We have to recognize the importance of preserving Maui's high quality tourist industry, and not let it be eroded by continued, excessive development. With our present full employment, any new development will mean more people moving here, further damaging and diminishing our quality of life.

Please note:

1. The large increase in just one year – from 2017 to 2018.
2. Kahului Airport's greater increase compared to other airports.

Scheduled Non-stop Airline Seats to Kahului Airport and to All other Hawaii Airports Upcoming 3 month period: October - December 2018:						
Airplane Departure City	KAHULUI Airport			All Other Hawaii Airports		
	2017	2018	% Change	2017	2018	% Change
TOTAL	573,444	627,717	9.5%	2,473,484	2,584,037	4.5%
US TOTAL	517,824	562,162	8.6%	1,555,549	1,660,809	6.8%
US WEST	484,228	526,672	8.8%	1,353,160	1,460,560	7.9%
US EAST	33,596	35,490	5.6%	202,389	200,249	-1.1%
INTERNATIONAL	55,620	65,555	17.9%	917,935	923,228	0.6%
JAPAN				481,591	516,025	7.2%
CANADA	55,620	65,555	17.9%	71,890	80,279	11.7%
OTHER ASIA				167,786	115,906	-30.9%
OCEANIA				122,238	132,050	8.0%
OTHER				74,430	78,968	6.1%
* HTA analysis based on scheduled seats from Diio MI flight schedules as of September 18, 2018, subject to change						
DBEDT Data Source:				Spreadsheet file:		
http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/visitor/air-seats/				October-December 2018		

Maui ISLAND Plan on page 4-14 calls for no more than one tourist for every three residents.

"4.2.3 Maximize residents' benefits from the visitor industry."

"4.2.3.a Promote a desirable island population by striving to not exceed an island-wide visitor population of roughly 33 percent of the resident population."

Maui ISLAND resident population → 158,000
33% of the ISLAND's Population → 52,600

According to the Hawaii Tourism Authority the Maui ISLAND average daily tourist population in 2018 was 64,478. It is already way over the desired number. During one 2018 month the average day tourist number reached 74,929, and that does not include visitors from Oahu.