

## **PSLU Committee**

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**From:** John and Christel Blumer-Buell <blubu@hawaii.rr.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 06, 2020 3:09 PM  
**To:** PSLU Committee  
**Subject:** ADDITIONAL PUBLIC TESTIMONY RE (PSLU-32). "COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT, DISTRICT BOUNDARY AMENDMENT, AND CHANGE IN ZONING FOR THE NAHIKU COMMUNITY CENTER (HANA)". PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT.  
**Attachments:** Maui Newa Viewpoint October 17, 2014.pdf

*Aloha Council Services,*

Please confirm receipt.

Please send me link where all testimony will be posted.

Mahalo,

John

**Additional testimony for 1-8-2020 PSLU Committee Meeting**

**EXHIBIT 3**

**"Closed bridge an example of misplaced priorities and irresponsible spending"**

**Viewpoint**

**October 17, 2014**

## **Closed bridge an example of misplaced priorities and irresponsible spending Viewpoint**

October 17, 2014

JOHN BLUMER-BUELL , The Maui News

The Lower Nahiku Bridge and road to the Nahiku Landing were blocked with barriers by the County of Maui on Sept. 26. The sign says: "Bridge Closed. Due to Hazardous Conditions the Lower Nahiku Bridge is Closed Indefinitely."

The closure exposes another glaring example of misplaced priorities and spending by irresponsible government officials. Instead of addressing the long-standing and serious health, safety and legal issues concerning the road and bridge, the county contracted to spend more than a million dollars of taxpayer money to build a controversial community center many residents do not support as proposed. Further complicating the overlapping bridge, road and center issues are existing disputes over legal title to the former Nahiku School lot (the proposed site of center) and legal jurisdiction for the bridge and road. Why would the county administration and Maui County Council approve and release funds for a community center on property in which the state or county may not have an ownership interest?

The very real community problems and conflicts have been compounded because elected government representatives and appointed officials failed to follow and enforce the law, failed to be transparent in their dealings, and ignored legal due process entitled to the community and taxpayers.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie, state Sen. J. Kalani English, state Rep. Mele Carroll, the Arakawa administration and all nine members of the current County Council share responsibility for the misplaced priorities, wasted taxpayer money and denial of due process. Council Member Bob Carroll is properly credited with leading the aggressive push for spending without due process and accountability. The other eight council members followed without question, unthinkingly joining the rush to conflict and waste.

The Nahiku community asked for repair or replacement of the bridge for decades. Instead, the community gets complete road closure to public and private property without public notification or clear legal jurisdiction.

The bridge, road and former Nahiku School lot issues were addressed in the state Legislature in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2014.

In the case of the bridge and road, little has been done to factually address jurisdiction, health, safety, infrastructure, access to private property, access to public property, access to the Lower Nahiku Landing, access to public resources and related cost issues. County and state officials failed to take action to factually resolve jurisdiction and liability issues as requested by the state Legislature in 2007.

In the case of the proposed community center, the Legislative Reference Bureau found no records of a "consultation with the Hana Community," "estimates and development time lines" and "findings and recommendations" submitted to the Legislature as requested in 2006, before the regular session of the 2007 Legislature.

Unfortunately and unlawfully, the Arakawa administration deceptively declared an exemption to Hawaii Revised Statute 343, the legally required environmental assessment process. The allegations and assumptions made in the exemption are not factual, honest or in alignment with the intent of the law.

The County Council and Arakawa administration have facilitated \$1,254,273.18 in contracts toward the center without producing the legally required draft environmental assessment, processing the required change of community plan designation and processing the required change of zoning.

An environmental assessment provides the opportunity for full disclosure and public discussion of the issues. Alternative actions to a proposed project are also an option. This is part of transparency and lawful due process.

With the recently documented invasion of fire ants in Nahiku (The Maui News, Oct. 4) and the upcoming 2015 contested case hearing regarding restoring stream flow in Nahiku and East Maui, there are additional vital issues affecting the quality of life in Nahiku that need to be fully examined toward a more livable future. The environmental assessment process will enable the community to prioritize needs and prudent expenditure of taxpayers' funds.

We do not have enough time or taxpayer money to continue to fund misplaced priorities by misguided politicians.

\* John Blumer-Buell, a Mu'olea resident, served as a member of the Maui General Plan Advisory Committee, currently serves a third term on the Hana Advisory Committee to the Maui Planning Commission and served as a community representative in the Nahiku Kuhuwa Well contested case in 1991.