

Testimony of Courtlandt Gates to
Economic Development, Energy, Agriculture, and Recreation Committee
October 18, 2016

Re: "Use of County Properties in the Haiku Sugar East Subdivision at Hamakualoa
(EAR-67)

Dear Councilmembers and Committee Members:

My name is Courty Gates and my wife and I own Lot 2 in the middle of the land that was purchased by the County which is comprised of Lots 1, 3, 4, and 5.

We are going to build a home and will live there. We are going to put livestock on the land to remove non-native cane grass and to restore the soil. We are going to gradually restore native species. We have removed tons of garbage.

We applaud your vision in the purchase of the land but we caution you that the earth is littered with abandoned projects that were started with the best of intentions. Councilmember Baisa eloquently described the \$9.5 million purchase price as a down payment. Now the hard work begins.

It is not rainbows and unicorns on the North Shore. We see breaching of security gates, squatting, dumping, hunting, theft, vandalism and damage to the environment and cultural sites by motorcycles, ATVs and trucks in the gulches. We are trying to work with the State Historic Preservation Department to prevent damage to sites we know to be on our property. We have fenced areas to stop damage to the environment. No Trespassing Signs don't seem to work. Parts of Konanui Gulch which is contained by Lots 1 and 2 look like a Martian landscape due to damage by off road vehicles and may not be able to be restored. Many of the cultural sites are bisected by motorcycle, ATV and equestrian trails. There is a Youtube video called Maui Trenchers shot in 2011. The first 1 minute and 15 seconds was shot on what is

now our property. We fenced that area off about two years ago and it is gradually repairing itself.

It is imperative that the County act immediately to make the area safe for the public including farmers and their property and to preserve the cultural and environmental resources. With respect, I have two simple recommendations:

Communicate and Enforce.

Communication should include very clear media messaging and signage about where, when and how the public will be allowed to access the land and what uses will be permitted. My wife and I feel very strongly that no vehicles including motorcycles and ATVs should be allowed in the gulches so that the cultural sites can be protected and the land can heal.

Enforcement should include replacing and locking when appropriate the gates at Nahele Road, on Lot 4 and on Lot 1. Every gate in this area has been breached over the past year. I believe that a regular police presence is required with multiple patrols at random times per day. I also believe that the County should consider installing a caretaker at the south end of Lot 1.

Mahalo for your time and for giving this remarkable land your thoughtful consideration and care.