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Jim Petersen

Aloha,

Thank you, members of the Committee, for allowing me to speak on this matter today.

My name is Jim Petersen and I own a renewable energy company that is headquartered here on Maui. I employ hundreds of Maui residents, many that were displaced when the sugar cane plantations were closed due to environmental impact. I am also a stakeholder and own a property in the vicinity of the proposed project location. I purchased my home from West Maui Land Company's real-estate division and was told by the broker working for West Maui Land Company that the property I was purchasing, and the areas surrounding it, was zoned agricultural and would not change and that the area was too dry and lacked water resources for any additional homes other than the one home per five acre designation. This was just ten months ago!

I am against a zoning change from Agricultural to Urban, against this project proposal and here is why.

- We have limited water resources and we are in a fire zone. We also live in an area zoned agricultural and we have complied with the farm plans on our land, even with limited water. Much of our current landscaping goes without water now.

- We have cut way back on our water use for this reason. If first responders were not able to get to a fire or a flood, people could die.

- Traffic: It takes between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours to get from my office in Kahului to Launiupoko and this is without road work or, God forbid, a natural disaster. To add in a very high density housing project will only make matters worse.

- Fire: Just last August we had a devastating fire, where we nearly lost our home. But for a malfunction of our sprinkler system and Maui Fire, we would have lost our home. Some of our neighbors did lose their homes.

- We have only one lane in and one lane out of West Maui and there are no bus routes into the project area. Last year, after the devastating Launiupoko fire, we had torrential rain, and the drive time from our home to the airport was well over seven hours.

- Our homeowners insurance policy will rise this year due to the amount of fires in the area over the past decade, it is estimated that it could rise but as much as 20% per annum.

- I have spoken to many of the people that work for me and they have said that any affordable housing they would be interested in would be closer to bus routes, health care facilities, hospitals, schools, and more ample supplies of natural resources.

- Lastly, if these proposed houses are really being built to add supply of affordable housing then why would there be the ability to sell these homes after five and ten years at market prices? So, after five and ten years we are right back to where we started from, having only kicked the can down the road, so to speak.

- As a business owner I understand full well the need for affordable housing, but this is not the right location. It appears this project is really a wolf in sheep's clothing and a pure profit center for the developer at a huge risk to the current infrastructure and stakeholders. I respectfully request that the zoning change from Agricultural to urban be denied and this proposed project be disapproved.

Mahalo

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