

## Erin Wade

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Date: August 6, 2015

To: Planning Committee Chair, Don Couch and Council Members

From: Erin Wade (providing testimony as private citizen)

### **RE: Amendments to Chapter 19.35 Accessory Dwellings**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue. I would like to commend Councilman Carrol for bringing the proposed ordinance changes to the Planning Committee. Amending the accessory dwelling ordinance to create additional opportunities for affordable housing invites the private sector to supply the housing and potentially expands the market supply of affordable rental units intermixed with owner-occupied, market rate housing. This kind of thinking ensures a well-balanced neighborhood and is a guiding principle in sustainability. There are three areas I wish to address in my testimony.

#### **Consider Including only Interior Floor Area in Maximum**

In Hawaii, outdoor covered spaces make small living quarters much more comfortable. Considering the covered exterior decks, walkways, and patios in the maximum square footage leads to uncomfortable living arrangements and architectural design that is incompatible with the natural environment. Deep eaves and covered entries are appropriate for Hawaii's climate and allow for passive cooling and limiting exposure to UV rays. By including those outdoor spaces as living space, we are incentivizing bad design. I feel the note identified with an asterisk at the end of Section 2 should be removed, and all the elements listed therein could be addressed by the lot coverage clause in 19.35.025.

#### **Consider further increasing Ohana size for lots over 10,000 square feet and in a UGB**

I strongly support of the increased square footage allowance for accessory dwellings as discussed in 19.35.020, and believe the benefit could be further increased for lots in the 10,000 square feet and more categories. For larger lots within urban growth boundaries, it would seem to be a good opportunity to expand housing options to the greatest extent comfortable for the neighborhood and in keeping with the community character. 700 square feet is still pretty tight for small family, but 800 square feet allows for two, comfortably sized bedrooms, a

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bathroom and a main room with living room and kitchen. For the larger lots within the UGB, I would recommend allowing ohana dwellings 800 square feet and up to create more housing suitable for families within existing residential neighborhoods. Perhaps the asterisk at the bottom of the table could change to read:

- For properties with a lot area greater than 10,000 square feet an additional 100 square feet of maximum interior covered floor area will be permitted when the property is located with urban growth boundaries as defined in the Maui Island Plan

### **Clarification of Affordable Accessory Dwelling**

The Affordable Accessory Dwelling (AAD) concept is something that has the potential to be life changing for our family. Speaking from experience, multi-generational households in Hawaii are financially necessary and can have wonderful benefits, but can also be incredibly stressful if adequate separation and privacy are not provided. It is unclear to me from the proposed ordinance language if the Affordable Accessory Dwelling is intended to be allowed in addition to the regular accessory dwelling or not. I am assuming this language is intended to allow something like an attached studio apartment. It would be helpful to clarify if this AAD is allowed in addition to the detached ohana.

I strongly support this concept as well. For us, a 350 to 400 studio apartment with a very small kitchen (but more than a wet bar) is all grandpa Curt needs. If this proposed ordinance passes we will be designing grandpa's unit to be entirely ADA accessible so he is able to age in place as long as we are able to care for him. ADA accessibility may be an appropriate requirement to add to this clause as it will ensure a supply of more housing options for seniors within existing neighborhoods.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input on this progressive and creative piece of legislation. I am unable to testify in person this morning, but can be available for questions.

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Sincerely,

Erin Wade