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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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COUNTY CLERK



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
685 HALEAKALA HIGHWAY
KAHULUI, HAWAII 96732

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CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

May 4, 2022

Maui County Council
Regular Meeting of May 6, 2022
Via Email

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support for Bills No. 77 and 78, amending Appendices A and D of the fiscal year 2022 budget, as it pertains to the Open Space, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources and Scenic Views Preservation Fund for the protection of the Pohakea Watershed Lands (also known as Ma'alaea Mauka).

Dear Chair and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the subject measures. The State of Hawai'i, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife supports the Council's proposed Bills 77 and 78 to amend the budget in support of protection of the Pohakea Watershed Lands at Ma'alaea, Maui.

The Division is pleased to collaborate with communities and conservation partners for the protection and management of lands at Ma'alaea. The parcel proposed for purchase is one of several that pose important challenges for resource managers and affected communities due to the frequency of fires and high rates of erosion that affect near shore waters. The lands mauka of the subject parcel are currently unencumbered state lands that share those same challenges. To begin to address those issues, as part of a broader collaborative effort with partners, the Division is scoping set aside of the unencumbered lands to the forest reserve system and inclusion in the Mauna Kahalawai Watershed Partnership. Those actions will improve our ability to mitigate fire and erosion and will facilitate improved management of watershed resources. Purchase of the subject lands from the private seller will ensure that those lands will be included in collaborative conservation efforts to address watershed protection, fire prevention and mitigation, and erosion control.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott Fretz".

J. Scott Fretz, PhD
Maui Branch Manager



**TRUST FOR
PUBLIC
LAND™**

HAWAII
1164 Bishop St., Ste. 1512
Honolulu, HI 96813
tpl.org

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2022 MAY -4 PM 3:44

**THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND'S TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF BILL 77 (2022) AND 78 (2022) RELATING TO POHAKEA
WATERSHED LANDS (ALSO KNOWN AS MA'ALAEA MAUKA)**

OFFICE OF
COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI

Regular Meeting, May 6, 2022 9:00 a.m.

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Aloha Council Chair Lee and Councilmembers:

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) strongly supports Bills 77 and 78 (2022) to amend the budget to support the protection of the Pohakea Watershed Lands at Ma'alaea, Maui.

TPL has been working closely with the State of Hawai'i, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) to apply for \$1 million of State Legacy Land Conservation Program to help fund the purchase and protection of these lands. The State Legacy Land Conservation Commission recommended this project for funding, and the Board of Land and Natural Resources is expected to approve the recommendation shortly.

TPL has also been working closely with the private landowner of the Ma'alaea lands, and has completed an appraisal valuing the property at over \$8.2 million (including water well infrastructure). Although TPL and the landowner have not signed a definitive purchase and sale agreement, TPL has been negotiating and discussing the conservation purchase with the landowner for over a year and both parties have signed a confidential letter of intent. Based on the letter of intent and continuing discussions with the landowner, TPL believes the total of public funds raised -- \$6.2 million from the County and \$1 million from the State -- will be sufficient to effect a purchase. TPL will transfer the lands to the State DOFAW for stewardship and management.

DOFAW has committed to collaborate with communities and conservation partners to protect and manage the lands at Ma'alaea. These lands are subject to frequent fires and high rates of erosion that negatively affect near shore water quality and corals. The lands located mauka of the Ma'alaea lands are unencumbered state lands that share the same wildfire and erosion challenges. DOFAW has committed to scoping set aside of these unencumbered lands and the Ma'alaea to the forest reserve system and include all the lands in the Mauna Kahalawai Watershed Partnership. This will improve DOFAW's ability to mitigate fire and erosion and will facilitate improved management of watershed resources.

Bills 77 and 78s will allow TPL to purchase of the subject lands from the private seller and transfer the lands to DOFAW for management and collaborative conservation efforts to address watershed protection, fire prevention and mitigation, and erosion control.

Mahalo to the Mayor and this Council for their leadership in protecting these lands.

Mahalo –

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lea Hong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the word "Hong".

Lea Hong

Associate Vice-President, Hawai'i State Director
Edmund C. Olson Trust Fellow
The Trust for Public Land

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May 6, 2022

2022 MAY -5 PM 4: 34

RE: Bill 77 and 78 pertaining to Maui County Open Space funds

Aloha Maui County Council Chair Alice Lee and Members,

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY CLERK

My name is Lynn Britton. I am a Maui resident since 1973 and Maalaea owner since 1985. I am founder and immediate past president of the Maalaea Village Association and previous president and director for the former Maalaea Community Association which served Maalaea from 1988-2018.

Today is a very special day. Today, I hope you will approve Bills 77 and 78 to extend and increase funding for purchase of Maalaea Mauka/Pohakea with County open space funds. Time is of the essence as the landowners are eager to sell and have prospective buyers waiting in the wings.

The Council's and Mayor's support will preserve Maalaea Mauka/Pohakea for posterity. It's an amazing accomplishment for the Maui community. The Trust for Public Land is facilitating the purchase and transfer to DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW). DOFAW will create a forest reserve to manage the entire 5,000 acre watershed to control sedimentation and wildfire impacts. This is a major step in restoring Maalaea Bay. DOFAW will work with community nonprofit organizations to develop plans for the future to protect and enhance these valuable natural and scenic resources and open space for Maui's people and expand the historic Lahaina Pali Trail.

Along with purchasing these lands, your leadership in supporting SRF funding for a County owned and operated wastewater system in Maalaea will provide a holistic approach to restoring the once pristine waters of Maalaea Bay. Both actions combined will address the two known sources of pollution - sedimentation and injection wells.

Protecting the precious jewel of Maalaea Bay and its vast natural and environmental resources is a must for preserving our quality of life. The future of Maui is based on our ability to malama the land and the ocean and care for our people, and attract those visitors who will value same.

Mahalo!
Lynn Britton