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I am David DeLeon, speaking for the Realtors Association of Maui, in favor of agenda item PIA 3.2 -5, requiring the Counties to submit their General Plans to the State Land Use Commission for its review and adoption of the appropriate State Land Use Designations.

The bill before you was the final draft of House Bill 2617 from the 2017 state legislative session. HB 2617 stalled out in Conference Committee. When suggesting that the Council consider this measure for the HSAC Legislative Package, I forgot that there was more to this bill than the significant proposal for LUC review of County General Plans. RAM does not support nor endorse those other sections of the document and would recommend that if this committee supports this proposal, then it should amend this proposed bill to include only Sections 1 and 2 of the bill, ending at the top of Page 4.

The Realtors Association of Maui supports this proposal because it would amount to an important step to reduce the time it takes to entitle housing projects in Hawaii. By the Land Use Commission's own estimate, it now takes the average housing project using agricultural lands 10 years to receive their necessary approvals from our multi-layered land use regulatory system, adding significant costs to the final price of a new home.

This proposal is offered as a compromise. Ideally, RAM would prefer that the authority for land use approvals be given to the County governments. The basic idea for the LUC was to defend agricultural lands, to keep them from being urbanized. In that sense it was a success. But now we have 200,000 acres of fallow farm land and no real agriculture. Meanwhile, because we have so restricted the availability for land for housing, the cost of housing has gone through the roof. It is a gross understatement to say that supply has not kept up with demand.

This compromise bill would keep the LUC in the land use entitlement loop, but instead of requiring each housing project to go individually before the LUC, the Commission would consider mass approvals based on the County's adopted plans. That would cut years off the entitlement process while still maintaining State land use oversight.

We have a housing crisis that we are not going to overcome by following the same patterns. This compromise bill would be a good step towards getting government out of the way of building the homes we do desperately need.

Mahalo.

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