

Date: November 15, 2016

The Honorable Don Guzman, Chair
Economic Development, Energy, Agriculture, and Recreation Committee
2200 South High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

RE: Support for Special Improvement Districts for Maui County EAR 36

Aloha Chair Guzman and Committee Members:

My name is Noelani Sugata, and I am the Executive Director for the Paia Town Association. We are in strong support for Bill EAR 36 relating to Special Improvement Districts, commonly known as SID's.

Currently, the PTA is primarily funded by a one-year "small town" grant, which we have been awarded again, and we are very thankful for. We are hoping to receive a grant from the Hawaii Tourism Authority, and will be doing another membership drive before the end of the year. We are also working on other creative ways to raise funds. We do what we can on a very limited budget.

Enabling the ordinance provides an option for other communities that might need to raise funds for future projects not funded solely by the government. Typically, business assessments are used for beautification, safety, and security. In our situation, current grant monies fund beautification projects. For example, the rubbish removal and maintenance program. We have six trash receptacles installed throughout Paia: one at the post office, one next to the Shell gas station, two at the Lower Paia parking lot, and two at the public lot between Paia Plaza and Mana foods. However, we need more funding to keep the program operational. A SID would hold each business accountable for paying for services they all benefit from. It is a method to ensure all businesses in the district pay.

Also, enabling the ordinance can get the ball rolling to discuss issues such as the budget, what services will be funded, etc. We do have a draft budget and proposal on our website, that can always change depending on the needs of district. I have met with other associations that are in favor of the PTA creating a SID and view it as a pilot project. If we're successful, they might consider it for their area. I have met with other landowners in Paia who are in favor of the SID. I understand that not every business is going to "like" the proposed bill and we are working on addressing those concerns. Also, I have met with merchants who want services, and after explaining that they come at a cost they seem to understand. Furthermore, if for whatever reason the SID doesn't work, it can be terminated.

A lot has happened in our government since the last time I was here, and I think more than ever it's important to have a self-funding mechanism in place to pay for services communities need. I humbly ask the committee to support Bill EAR 36.

Mahalo,



Noelani Sugata,
Executive Director

RECEIVED AT EAR MEETING ON 11/15/16