

AH Committee

From: Lauren Kang <lkang@hawaii.edu>
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2019 1:46 PM
To: AH Committee
Subject: Concerns re: proposals in Launiupoko
Attachments: image.jpg; image.jpg; image.jpg; image.jpg; image.jpg

Aloha e council,

My name is Lauren Kang, I testified last Wednesday and have many further concerns regarding the proposed rezoning from agriculture to urban in the Launiupoko area, and the segmented developments of Makila Rural-East and Polanui. In efforts to keep this email relatively short, I will do my best to touch each issue briefly.

I have attached photos that I've taken in regards to some of these issues, along with photos from our land after the fire devastation that I spoke about in my testimony.

WATER ISSUES. There have been serious water issues in Launiupoko for the past few years. The farmers there have had to use potable water for nearly two weeks to date because that's the only water available to them. They are forced to pay the high cost of potable water to care for their plants and crops. Their finances are not my issue. My issue is this potable water is being wasted on plants. This water is being pumped up via wells, and contributing to depleting our water table.

As this water table begins to lessen, I am concerned it is causing the river water to saturate into the ground before it reaches the ocean. The Kaua'ula muliwai (river mouth) at Puamana has been bone dry for two weeks now! We have previously witnessed and documented the native stream life dying whenever the muliwai starts to dry up (not even at a bone dry state). We have also hiked far up past the dam and documented with CWRM researchers and found different species of 'o'opu that we didn't know existed in our stream. Above the dam, we also saw 'opae that they confirmed they did not see on their most recent trip there a couple of weeks ago. They believe this is because the 'opae cannot travel past the pipe where the dam supplies water to the stream. Also, hīhīwai that we used to see in our stream is no longer found. This is proof that the disconnect of mauka to makai stream connectivity has been killing off the native stream life. Unacceptable!!!

WATER RIGHTS. My boyfriend and kalo farmer, Charlie Palakiko, has been farming this native crop on his family land in Kaua'ula for 18+ years. This kuleana land has been in his family for many generations. According to state law, kuleana land that is adjacent to stream flow has riparian and appurtenant water rights. This gives the kalo the first rights to the water, above anything else, and the same rights are given to the stream life there within. Charlie has been opening and preparing more lō'i, however the current amount of water in his auwai is barely enough to keep his existing crops alive.

Last March 2018, the state had passed a mandated amount of water in the IIFS from both the dam and the siphon to be released into the stream. I don't believe we have ever seen the amount that the state decided for our stream being released yet, and it's been about fifteen months since then. Since the IIFS has been set up until the last two weeks, WMLC's water manager, Dave Minami has been less than cooperative, respectful, and responsive with the valley farmers. Dave is who we call whenever the stream water is low, because it is usually due to WMLC taking majority of the water through their diversions, sometimes hoarding the water in their reservoir, also deciding to close the siphon which feeds Charlie's auwai!

Just this morning, Dave called Charlie to let him know he will be closing the siphon to our auwai. Our water is currently running dry. This is unacceptable! Our crops suffer every time they play with our water levels like this. I honestly don't see how they could ever comply with CWRM's IIFS if there were any further developments.

SEPTIC LEACHING. As we've heard expert testimonies from the last two hearings about this same development proposal (the first was about two/three years ago), septic leaching really concerns the public. Many ocean professionals testify about the leaching here and how it has effected the reefs below at the popular family spot, Launiupoko beach park. As divers, we have seen Lahaina reefs in decline and dying off due to the runoff from the land.

This is seriously disturbing. Not just the septic leaching hitting the water where our kids play, but the reef is where marine life flourish. If our reefs keep dying, we may not have fish left to eat. Besides the natural beauty of this land, the tourism industry thrives from our fresh island fish and produce. If we continue to make decisions for profit and not the protection of our land and resources, how can our state's biggest industry continue to succeed?

DEVELOPER INTENTIONS. It is obvious Peter Martin and his associates want to appear as if they have the best intentions for the community. Mr. Martin has already profited (some say) hundreds of thousands times more than what he has invested into buying this land. If he really desires to do what is best for the Lahaina community, he could keep the land agriculturally zoned with the same sized plots and sell the land at truly affordable rates to Lahaina families.

During the testimonies, majority of the 55 who spoke opposed all of these proposals. The only people who supported it were clearly employed by, doing business with, or feel like they owe something to WMLC, or will be gaining much from the change in zoning. For instance, we saw a couple realtors speaking on behalf of the projects. They will gain much commission off of each sale, and once again when they turn around and sell at market price five years later, so on and so on.

IN CLOSING, I humbly advise you all as decision makers to consider all of the community's pleas for this land, water and ocean. These have all been compromised with previous development here, which we have had to accommodate. Everything native to this ahupua'a has struggled immensely since then. Consider this land, which we are all caretakers of. As antie Mary Kawena Puku'i wisely said, 'He ali'i ka 'āina; he kauwā ke kanaka'; 'the land is the chief; man is its servant'.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

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Mahalo,

Lauren Kang





