

GET Committee

From: Jason Schwartz Maui <jasonschwartzmaui@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 11:34 PM
To: GET Committee
Cc: jason
Subject: Support for a number of GET 10 items for your consideration

GET 10(x) items I would like to support

Some I feel more specifically passionate about, but all these do I support:

10 (1, 4, 7,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,16,17)

There are numbers of very pivotal and important items here

Thank you for your understanding of my support.

I have seen good reason to limit terms and authorize council and mayoral authority as narrated in these items

Aloha,
Jason Schwartz
Kahului
808-874-5900

Sent from my iPhone

GET Committee

From: John Gelert <jgelert@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 8:55 PM
To: GET Committee
Subject: Corporation Counsel

Aloha GET Committee,

Most of our Council Members only found out after the fact that Moana Lutey publically lied in her confirmation hearings in order to secure her extremely powerful job as Maui's top lawyer. By then it was too late to protect the citizen's interests as our current charter allows only the Mayor to remove Corporation Counsel.

Corporation Counsel is supposed to represent both the Mayor and the County Council, yet Director Lutey took it upon herself to ignore the Council's legitimate vote to settle the Injection Well case in favor of the Mayor's conflicting choice to continue on to the Supreme Court.

Lutey clearly violated her ethical responsibility to serve her client, the Council, when she personally chose sides without first bothering to have a court determine whether the Mayor has the authority to overrule the County Council's vote.

Lutey's action set a precedent that undermines the Council's authority which will surely be asserted again next time the Council and the Mayor disagree.

Lutey's mishandling of the injection well case is just one example of why Council Member Keani Rawlins Fernandez has thoughtfully proposed a Charter Amendment to give the Council the authority to remove "their lawyer" should the Council see fit to do so.

Please support these changes to correct this problem:

(GET-10(8)) "Establish standards for interpreting and complying with the Charter, including by requiring a judicial action to be filed within 30 days to seek clarity when a conflict in the interpretation of the Charter is identified."

(GET-10(10)) "Allow attorneys within the Office of Council Services to serve as legal representatives of the Council and its members."

(GET-10(14)) "Authorize the Council to appoint and remove a Director of Council Services and a Supervising Legislative Attorney, by resolution, and authorize the Director of Council Services to appoint and remove other necessary staff in the Office of Council Services."

(GET-10(9)) "Authorize the County Council to retain and terminate special counsel by a simple-majority vote of its members." This would make it easier for the Council to get it's own representation by a vote of 5 out of 9 and fixes the 2016 Charter Amendment that even the author of which, Don Guzman, admits was flawed because the threshold is too high requiring a super-majority: 6 out of 9.

(GET-10(1)) "Any person appointed as an acting head of a department should not have been previously denied by the Council as the administrative head for the same department." This is in reaction to when in 2019, after the Council denied David Goode's nomination as Public Works Director, Mayor Victorino immediately reinstated him as interim director.

This one is SUPER IMPORTANT in order to return a measure of control to the Council over future development on Maui through the Planning Commission. Currently, the Planning Commission is entirely appointed by the Mayor and the County Council has zero ability to represent your interests in this vital arena:

(GET-10(16)) "Allow the Council to appoint seven of the nine members of the Maui, Molokai, and Lanai planning commissions, with the Mayor appointing the remaining two members.

And similarly for the Council to appoint members of Charter Commission:

(GET-10(11)) "Authorize the Council to appoint nine members, and the Mayor to appoint two members, of the 11-member Charter Commission, which is required to study and review the operation of the County government."

All of the above serve to enhance and protect the authority to the County Council that has over the years been grossly subverted.

These next offer two options on Council Member terms and limits that voters can choose:

(GET-10(13)) "Establish stricter term limits for Council members by limiting the number of terms a person may serve as a Council member to five full terms." This is so a council member can't serve 4 consecutive terms, then take time off and come back for another 5 terms.

and/or

(GET-10(7)) "Establish shorter lifetime term limits for Council members from five two-year terms to two four-year terms." This would lessen the burden on Council Members to run for reelection every two years, which is arguably a huge time-suck and distraction.

And finally two proposed revisions to the council committee's structure for voters to consider:

(GET-10(4)) "Require the Department of Housing and Human Concerns be divided to form two separate departments, a Department of Housing and a Department of Human Concerns."

and

(GET-10(15)) "Establish a Department of Agriculture to develop a sustainable regional agricultural system for Maui County."

Mahalo nui,

John Gelert
Kihei, Hawaii

GET Committee

From: Maureen Bacon <mauimo808@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 9:20 AM
To: GET Committee
Subject: Dept of Agriculture

Council members I urge you to consider a dept of Ag. It is urgently needed here on Maui.

Maureen Bacon
808.866.2840

GET Committee

From: Maliko Estate <malikoestate@hawaii.rr.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 12:43 PM
To: Gary Saldana; GET Committee; Mike J. Molina
Cc: aknranch@aol.com; carver@mauifloral.com; bobbiepatnode@fastmail.fm; olumauangus@msn.com; evehogan@aol.com; lavaboy458@gmail.com; jd@kulahavenfarms.com; jrezente@gmail.com; kmdcorp000@gmail.com; yamamura1951@gmail.com; simon@farm-maui.com; ranchgirl808@aol.com; jacinthow001@hawaii.rr.com; flammerfamily@aol.com; starr@maui.net; Alice L. Lee; Keani N. Rawlins; karacajy@gmail.com; Tasha A. Kama; Riki Hokama; Kelly King; Tamara A. Paltin; Shane M. Sinenci; Yukilei Sugimura
Subject: Ag Working Group testimony GET-10 (15)
Attachments: Proposed Amendments for Ag Dept Charter Amendment Reso[1].docx



AG WORKING GROUP

June 29, 2020

GET Committee GET 10-(15)

Aloha Chair Molina and Council members,

Over the past week we have used video conferencing for two meetings of the Ag Working Group and many emails and phone calls to come to a consensus in our Ag community regarding the formation of an Ag Department. We appreciate Jennifer Karaca's hard work more than you can know. We wouldn't be on the way to possibly having an Ag Department without her. However, we could not get agreement on the full 6 page Charter amendment. Too many felt some of the requirements for the department would be burdensome if budgets get cut to the bone in the future, which is a real possibility and others felt some parts would actually hinder agriculture. We were able to get across the board agreement from the Ag Working Group*, Wailuku and Upcountry Chapters of Hawaii Farmer's Union United, and some Maui County Farm Bureau board members, (with a little more time I feel confident we could have brought them all to the table) on the issue of should we have a Department of Agriculture and we wish to simplify the ballot question to:

"Shall the Charter be amended, effective July 1, 2022 to establish a Maui County Department of Agriculture?"

or

"Shall the Charter be amended, effective July 1, 2022 to establish a Department of Agriculture to support a viable regional agricultural system for Maui County by strengthening community preparedness to avoid food shortages, building the resiliency of our island communities by increasing economic opportunities in the agricultural sector providing access to more locally grown produce and promoting healthy farms and ranches through soil regeneration and best practices?"

Keeping it simple allowed for some agreement. Those of us who did agree also concluded that an Ag Department is the only way for our voice to have parity with the other County Departments. We also agreed that sooner is better than later during these critical times.

The Ag Working Group agrees to participate in the formation of a forum or Ag summit to flesh out the structure of the department in the two years we have to plan. We think Jennifer Karaca could be an excellent facilitator where she would have time to elaborate on her vision and reconcile it with existing stakeholders, large and small. Ag Working Group would like to see reference to the Maui Island Plan and involvement from the whole agriculture community.

Getting flexibility on this overdue and excellent idea is paramount in these changing times.

We have attached our amendments from last weeks Ag Working Group testimony, should they be of value.

Mahalo!

Sydney Smith
Maliko Estate Coffee
Maui Coffee Association
Ag Working Group
808-572-0072 - Farm
808-268-3646 - cell
malikoestate@hawaii.rr.com

**The Ag Working Group was appointed by Councilmember Don Guzman when he was the Council Ag Chair (EAR Committee) in 2012. His goal was to include stakeholders from Maui County Farm Bureau, Maui Farmer's Union United and representation from the commodity groups, Maui Flower Growers Association, Maui Cattleman's Association, Maui Coffee Association and other farmers and ranchers in our community. Members must be active farmers or ranchers in Maui County. We also include representatives from the County administration and Council that do not have to be active farmers or ranchers.*

We have remained an active part of the Ag community working as a bridge between the farming and ranching interests in the County. With few exceptions we have remained neutral and continue to be a resource for our Farmers and Ranchers with issues they need to solve and the County when they need actual experienced stakeholders to weigh in on issues. We have successfully worked with departments in the County to write ordinances, streamline processes and correct conflicts in the code.

Proposed Amendments for Ag Dept Charter Amendment Resolution submitted by the Ag Working Group to Shane Sinenci, Gina Flammer and Jennifer Karaca, June 21, 2020

1. Require the director to have agriculture experience. Change the paragraph describing the Director qualifications to:

“The director of the department of agriculture shall be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the council, and may be removed by the mayor with the approval of the council. The director of the agriculture department must have a minimum of five years of experience in the field of agriculture, at least three of which shall have been in an administrative capacity, either in public service, private business, or both.

The director and deputy director must have a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree in operations management, project management, public administration, agriculture, sustainability, or a related field, or a combination of education and work experience substantially equivalent to such a bachelor's degree.”

2. We believe certain positions would be most helpful to the agriculture community in working with the county administration, and would like the language to be specific about critical staff positions. **Section 8-18.1. Organization** would be changed to read:

“There is a department of agriculture consisting of a director, deputy director, and necessary staff including but not limited to an advocate/ombudsperson, inspectors, and grant writers; organized to fulfill the department’s powers, duties, and functions through the establishment of necessary and appropriate divisions and other means.”

3. Change the wording in the Powers, Duties and Functions section to eliminate overlaps with other agencies. It could read: “Establish divisions within the department to provide, perform, and coordinate actions, propose and implement policies in the county, minimize barriers and incentivize growth in the agricultural sector in collaboration and consultation with existing agricultural support agencies including NRCS, FSA, DOA, CTAHR, Maui School Garden network and all Maui school agriculture programs, MISC, NASS, and relevant county agencies (Planning, Water, etc.). “
This is also addressed in the following change in the description of the powers, duties and functions of the department.

4. Simplify the language to allow greater flexibility for the department to be established and grow to achieve the aspirations in the current version and in the presentation from

Jennifer Karaca at the EACP meeting presentation. Pattern the description after other department descriptions in the Charter. More specifics can be defined in the County Code.

Here's how it would read:

“Section 8-18.3. Powers, Duties, and Functions.

The director of agriculture must:

1. Implement the Policies, Goals and Actions related to Agriculture described in the Maui Island Plan, including but not limited to:
 - a. Build the economic resiliency of the county's communities by increasing opportunities in the agricultural sector.
 - b. Promote healthy ecosystems and implement programs that ensure the sustainable utilization of major natural resources, such as land, water, air, minerals, forests, fisheries, wild flora and fauna, and waste streams.
 - c. Support ordinances, programs, and policies that promote the countywide availability of affordable agricultural-zoned land and water for farmers and ranchers, agricultural workforce housing, agricultural equipment, and processing and distribution facilities.
2. In coordination with the mayor and director of finance, secure federal, state, and private funding and provide grants and grant writing services to agricultural related businesses in the County.
3. Organize programs and opportunities to provide on-site assistance to farmers and ranchers.
4. Serve as the County's liaison to the agricultural sector.
5. Enable a successful agricultural sector through advocacy and assistance in complying with County, state, and federal regulations and permitting requirements.
6. Develop and implement programs to diversify and expand sustainable forms of agriculture. Collaborate and consult with existing agricultural support agencies including NRCS, FSA, DOA, CTAHR, Maui School Garden network and school agriculture programs, MISC, NASS, MPD and relevant county agencies.
7. Perform agricultural property inspections as county departments require.
8. Support programs that position the county's agricultural products as premium export products.
9. Advise the council and other agencies on policies and practices relating to contracts, procurement, and transportation that help reduce the need to import agricultural products and expand opportunities to export agricultural products.
10. Report to the mayor and council annually on the County's overall performance in meeting agriculture objectives and any barriers that could be addressed by ordinance.
11. Perform other duties and functions as assigned by the mayor or managing director.”

5. To help more voters support the amendment, change the wording of the ballot question to:

“Shall the Charter be amended, effective July 1, 2022 to establish a Department of Agriculture to support a viable regional agricultural system for Maui County by strengthening community preparedness to avoid food shortages, building the resiliency of our island communities by increasing economic opportunities in the agricultural sector providing access to more locally grown produce and promoting healthy farms and ranches through soil regeneration and best practices?”

GET Committee

From: David Johnston <hawaiiidhr@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 1:52 PM
To: GET Committee
Subject: Support Dept. of Agriculture

Aloha Councilpersons,

Would you agree that if we have a problem it is important to take a microscope to it to find out the root cause? Like anything, there is a solution closer than we think. Let's put the Dept. of Agriculture on the ballot for the people to vote on it. Only when we have a department like this can we take a real hard look at problems like:

- What agriculture certifications are out there that Maui County farmers could be benefitted by, and what can be done to support farmers to get the niche certification(s) they need?
- What's causing food deserts on Maui, and who can help, and what can be done?
- Who has the knowledge we need to restore lands for production, and what can be done to support them?
- How do we get young people interested in agriculture as a career, and what can be done to support them?

Any number of more possibilities could be explored if the voters have a chance to vote on this, but only if you put it on the ballot. Please leave a legacy for our future agriculture and food sovereignty in Maui County.

David Johnston
PO Box 388
Puunene, HI
96784

GET Committee

From: Pd <depontepaige@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 2:20 PM
To: GET Committee
Subject: Support Maui Dept of Ag

Aloha

I fully support MAUI COUNTY Dept of agriculture we really go red our own dept to handle situations in a timely manner !! And for emergencies to be handled like Covid on island with funds to aid and programs to help our community grow and be more sustainable!!

Thank you

Paige De Ponte,
M:[808-280-7070](tel:808-280-7070)
EM:depontepaige@yahoo.com
Triple L Ranch Private Horseback Tours
www.triplelranchmaui.com

PHOTOGRAPHY & ART GALLERIES:
MALIBU: <http://www.malibuartistsunite.org>

NYC: www.salomonarts.com

GET Committee

From: John Dobovan <jd@kulahavenfarms.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 5:17 PM
To: Tasha A. Kama; Mike J. Molina; Riki Hokama; Yukilei Sugimura; GET Committee
Subject: Maui County Ag Dept

On behalf of the Haleakala chapter of Hawai'i Farmer's Union United I would like to state our support for the establishment of a Maui County Department of Agriculture. Our need for increased food security grows stronger with each passing year as the current pandemic has demonstrated. What I hear from various members of the farming community is that we need an advocate to work on our behalf on things like taxation, zoning, water, transportation, funding and much more. Currently, these issues are handled by numerous agencies, none of which have any expertise in ag and many of whom don't even communicate with one another. While there needs to be more discussion as to exactly what form this department may take and how it will be paid for, it is our opinion that these issues can be resolved at a later date and that the most important thing at the moment is to keep this process going. If we are to move agriculture forward we need a coordinated, informed ally in County government. HFUU Haleakala Chapter urges you to vote in favor of establishing a Maui County Department of Agriculture.

Sincerely,

John Dobovan

John Dobovan
President,
Haleakala Chapter
Hawaii Farmer's Union United
(808) 955-0955
jd@kulahavenfarms.com

GET Committee

From: Teena Rasmussen <teena@pffmaui.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 4:48 PM
To: GET Committee
Subject: Testimony RE: GET-10(15) 6-30-20
Attachments: MCFB_Additional Testimony_Charter Amendment DoA_6-29-20.pdf

This is additional testimony from the Maui County Farm Bureau on this Proposed Amendment

Mahalo,

Teena M. Rasmussen

President

Maui County Farm Bureau

teena@pffmaui.com

Cell: 808-283-7859



PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

Executive Director
Warren K. Watanabe

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Brendan Balthazar
James "Kimo" Falconer
Mario Gaggero
Heidi Watanabe
Carver Wilson

June 29, 2020

TESTIMONY

RE: PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENTS (ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE) (GET-10(15))

Aloha Chair Molina and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to provide an update to our testimony of last week. After meetings with various Council members and our constituents of the Maui County Farm Bureau, we are standing by our decision to ask you to defer on the charter amendment to establish a County of Maui Dept of Agriculture.

We want to thank Councilman Sinenci for elevating the discussion on the needs of our farmers and ranchers. There is no question that there has been a great deal of dialogue over the last 10 days since this measure was posted on the GET agenda. This dialogue and a myriad of ideas that have been put forward have infused us with new energy to make the needs of farmers known. We credit the Councilman for re-energizing us to find a better way forward. Through our many consultations this week, we know that our members are unwilling to support the language of the resolution which we feel is costly, duplicative of other government agencies, and will create a department that will be enforcement driven rather than advocacy driven. Our farmers do not want more bureaucracy to navigate. Furthermore, the very constituents who will be impacted the most by this proposal, our farmers and ranchers, were left out of the process and their input was not sought.

Our members are eager to work collaboratively with the Council on a plan that will more quickly and more effectively address the needs of Maui's farmers and ranchers, while not overburdening the taxpayers. We are proposing an alternative plan, attached, that our members believe will be far more expeditious than going the Charter Amendment route. This plan, would create an Office of Agriculture that would reside in the Mayor's office; one that will serve as an advocate for agriculture, not a regulator; an office that will work to utilize the county's agriculture land assets to their highest and best use, and promote our locally grown products and the farmer's markets, food hubs, coops, and other venues that sell those products. The Office will clear bureaucratic hurdles for farmers and collaboratively work with all commercial farmers, ranchers, and agriculture organizations to grow agriculture as a vital sector of our economy.



P.O. Box 148, Kula, HI 96790
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

Executive Director

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Vice President

Kyle Caires

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Brendan Balthazar

James "Kimo" Falconer

Mario Gaggero

Heidi Watanabe

Carver Wilson

-2-

We urge you to defer the charter amendment today, and as soon as you can take it up, consider the voice of Maui's farmers and ranchers. This plan is a feasible option; it is affordable, expeditious, and far easier to implement.

Thank you for your support of Maui's producers. Our numbers may be few compared to the majority of Maui residents who don't farm, but we work hard every day to provide locally grown and raised products to sustain our community.

Teena Rasmussen

President, Maui County Farm Bureau

Attachment

County of Maui Office of Agriculture (OA)

Resides in the Mayor's Office

1 --Agriculture Commissioner

(Consistent with the existing Energy Commissioner and the Film Commissioner model)

3 --Support Staff:

1-- Land Manager

1-- Agriculture Marketing and Promotion Specialist

1 --Agriculture Grants Manager/Administrative Functions

Purpose of the Office:

The role of the Office will be as an advocate for the agriculture community in Maui County. It will foster a collaborative environment that supports all types of agriculture—with a primary focus on commercial operations that will foster the growth of agriculture as a sector to diversify Maui's economy. The Office shall be a convenor and bridge to bring agriculture entities together to work toward the common goal of growing this sector of our economy. All categories of commercial agriculture should be valued and promoted.

The Office will act as a liaison and resource on agricultural issues within Maui County and all departments who interface with and/or regulate farming.

The Office will be an advocate for agriculture in the area of crime reduction, working in collaboration with the Maui Police Department and the Maui Department of the Prosecuting Attorney for reduction of agriculture crime by coordinating with those agencies to create awareness of agriculture crime laws and to help facilitate prosecution of offenders.

At no time will the Maui County Office of Agriculture be used to regulate or create rules or ordinances that will generate more bureaucracy for farmers or make their profession more difficult. The Office will not engage in regulatory activities nor duplicate those functions of the federal or state governments; including but not limited to those of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the State of Hawaii Department of Agriculture; and the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

The Office of Agriculture does NOT include oversight of Invasive Species or Watershed Protection efforts supported by the County of Maui but will collaborate with MISC and Soil and Water Conservation Districts on matters and needs that overlap with agriculture.

Agriculture Commissioner (AC)

The AC will serve as a liaison between farmers and all departments within the County who interface with agriculture. The Commissioner's role is to lessen the regulatory burden on farmers by working with

departments to streamline information required, i.e., water department agricultural rates, real property tax, agricultural zoning, or use, etc.

The AC will work with all agriculture organizations within the County of Maui and serve as a resource for information. The AC will encourage and foster an environment of collaboration and productive dialog to bring the organizations to the common goal of growing agriculture as a sector.

The AC will manage the staff and set the agenda for the office, making sure projects and goals are progressing, constituents are being served properly, and that agriculture, as a sector, is growing within the county.

Land Manager:

The Land Manager will serve as the manager of the County's agriculture land assets and will ensure they are used to the highest and best use to grow agriculture as a sector.

Specifically, the Land Manager will manage the Kula Agriculture Park and work with its 31 tenants. The position will oversee lease transfers as well as the application process when lots become available for lease. The position will ensure the ag park remains secure, will assist with feral animal eradication when damage is occurring to farms. The position will communicate with the tenants and be their advocate as issues arise. The manager will be responsible for working with the Kula Ag Park Committee, calling meetings when appropriate, and creating and posting the agendas.

The Land Manager will work to develop the former A&B land (purchased by the County in 2018) to expand the Kula Agriculture Park for conventional farmers and a buffered parcel for organic farmers.

The Land Manager will work to develop the former A&B land -- the Hamakualoa parcel in Haiku (purchased by the County in 2016) -- which was partially intended for an organic agriculture park and possible food hub.

In the event of other County lands becoming available on Maui, Lanai or Molokai for agriculture parks, the Land manager would also be responsible for the agricultural development of those parks.

The Land Manager, along with the AC, will advocate for county, state, and federal funding to provide the water delivery system to these lands, and subdivide the parcels in order to facilitate long-term farming leases.

Agriculture Marketing and Promotion Specialist:

The position will work to promote, market, and be an advocate for all agriculture products grown or manufactured in Maui County.

The position will be involved in promotional activities at Maui Ag Fest and the 4H Livestock Fair, Made in Maui County Festival, Maui County Fair, Lanai Pineapple Festival, Molokai 4H Fair, Farm to Table food events, and trade shows, as appropriate, to showcase Maui County agricultural products.

The position will promote and be an advocate for farmer's markets, food hubs, ag co-ops within the County. The position will also advocate with large wholesalers and government institutions to buy locally grown food.

Agriculture Grants Manager/Administrative Functions:

The Grants Manager will handle all aspects of managing the county agriculture grants funds, to include promoting and increasing awareness of the funds to the agriculture community, working with the Agriculture Commissioner to award the grants, process grant documents, payments, and ensure reporting compliance. The Grants Manager will oversee a census system (to be developed) for tracking the growth of the agriculture sector within Maui County.

This position would also support the other three staff members with administrative functions.

TO BE WORKED ON:

1. How & where County inspectors for Ag RPT, and Ag Water should be incorporated.
2. Job Description, Qualifications, and Salary Range Guidelines for the proposed positions
3. Determine a reasonable but effective program budget for the positions. (Not including grants funds)

We propose a joint, collaborative effort between HFUU Chapters, MCFB, and AG Working Group to work on implementation and seeking stakeholder input.

New Positions:

Agriculture Commissioner

Land Manager

Marketing and Promotion Specialist

Already funded position: Grants Manager/Administrative can replace current OED Ag Specialist Position

Program Budget:

GET Committee

From: Sean Lester <mauisean2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 8:07 PM
To: GET Committee
Subject: please vote yes on charter amendment for Dept of Agriculture

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Please vote yes to place a charter amendment to allow a Maui County Department of Agriculture to be placed on the November ballot.

We are in a world where we are not assured of barges coming with food and supplies from Oahu or the mainland. It is time to help local farmers and people growing here on Maui - and to do so ourselves. To have a department that is charged with by charter to support small organic, bio diverse and sustainable farming is vital to the world we are now facing. There are many people in Maui county that just need local support to greatly increase our ability to feed and sustain ourselves and our economy.

Anyone who has attempted to work with the state dept of ag understands the need for us to do this work ourselves. The state entity is large, unresponsive and not focused on the unique needs of our county.

As we look at diversification of our economy and the very reality of this uncertain world a focused and dynamic local department of agriculture can help connect the dots that will help usher in a new level of connected sustainable agribusinesses.

Please allow us to vote on this by placing it on the ballot.

Mahalo,

Sean Lester
Haiku, Hawaii 96708
808-264-1312

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"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

– **Theodore Parker**

GET Committee

From: Nathaniel Oswald <nloswa@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 8:30 PM
To: GET Committee
Cc: 'OSWALD, NATHANIEL'
Subject: Molokai Farm Bureau testimony - PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENTS (ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE) (GET-10(15))
Attachments: Molokai Farm Bureau Testimony 06.29.20_MKKFB.pdf

Aloha,

I have attached testimony in regards to the proposed charter amendments. Please see attached.

The Molokai County Farm Bureau **opposes** this measure and echoes many of the sentiments in previous Maui County Farm Bureau testimony.

Respectfully,

Nathaniel Lee Oswald
President MKK Chapter and Executive member Hawaii Farm Bureau

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335 Kikipua Street
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The Molokai Farm Bureau serves as Molokai's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community. We are also an arm of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, organized in 1948 and comprised of 1800 farm families statewide.

MAUI COUNTY COUNCIL
GOVERNANCE, ETHICS, AND TRANSPARENCY COMMITTEE
JUNE 30, 2020
10:00am

IN THE MATTER OF:
PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENTS (ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE) (GET-10(15))

June 29, 2020

Aloha Chair Molina and Members of the Committee,

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the of the Molokai Farm Bureau and its members, we thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

The Molokai County Farm Bureau opposes this measure and echoes many of the sentiments in previous Maui County Farm Bureau testimony.

Although well intentioned, creating a separate Department of Agriculture at the County level is sure to create inconsistencies with State Agriculture Policy and existing County of Maui departments.

- Our collective Post Covid-19 landscape *must* be acknowledged and taken into consideration. As we carry the highest unemployment rate in the State and an economic recovery that is projected to see considerable shortfalls well into the future, creating a new County Department of Agriculture that would require new positions, staffing and resources which current Federal and State agencies cover with greater expertise and resources, is a questionable use of our limited County budget and taxpayer money.
- Adding duplicative layers of bureaucracy to the already heavily regulated ag industry will add to the complexity and increase the cost of farming, placing a burden on our agricultural producers which they simply cannot bear – particularly when there is no definitive date farmers can plan for, regarding the return of their markets.
- Also concerning is the lack of outreach to those who are involved in agriculture. With many farmers preoccupied with simply existing in this economic strife, it is questionable timing to proceed with sweeping proposed amendments like these when farmers are more concerned with staying afloat than monitoring legislation that may not be as beneficial to them as non-farmers may presume.
- There are few things, if any, suggested in this proposed charter amendment that can't be done now within the existing County Departments and governmental framework. A simple County position with the intent and focus to serve as a liaison, or navigator, or advocate could more fiscally and responsibly better

serve this role, versus a new Department with duplicative Federal or State regulatory roles. Adding these additional layers of bureaucracy would hinder the process, production and distribution of current agriculture operations in the County of Maui.

- The reality is, the monies it would take to administer this program would be better spent by providing direct aid to farmers and developing economic programs to assist farmers in all aspects of their work, from innovation and production all the way through to marketing and distribution. Farmers need help, not additional hinderance.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the of the Molokai Farm Bureau,

Nate Oswald

Nate Oswald
President, Molokai Farm Bureau