

To: Chair Shane Sinenci & Members of Maui County Council
From: Victor C. Pellegrino, Waikapū
Re: Visitor Impacts to County Environmental and Infrastructural Resources throughout Maui
County, 17-231
Date: 6-18-2019

Good afternoon Chair and members of the Maui County Council.

My name is Victor Pellegrino. I am speaking on behalf of my family.

My wife is a native of Maui and we chose to build our home in Waikapū—a quiet, country village, and a family-centered community. Now, 55 years later, it is quiet no more. There has occurred what we now call **“over-tourism.”**

Helicopter companies catering to tourists have created a deafening level of noxious noise. Between 2017 and 2019, my wife and I counted helicopter flights over and adjacent to our home between 7:20 AM and 6:15 PM. We selected different days each month. The average number of helicopter passes per day was 24, and on one day 53!

We built our home in Waikapū and not Kahului or Sprecklesville because Waikapū was not located in an air corridor. Now the air corridor has come to Waikapū, and we face daily unnecessary, annoying, and nerve-racking helicopter noise.

We host students for instruction and activities on our farm, and are regularly interrupted by helicopter noise. We host halau and other native Hawaiian groups that are disturbed while following native Hawaiian practices and protocol. Student film groups creating educational movies are rudely interrupted by helicopters.

Helicopters fly below 1,500 feet for falls viewing, land in pristine areas, and scare birds and animals in their natural habitat. Helicopters fly over our residences in Waikapū. Our right to privacy is compromised because we know that helicopter companies “provide unique videos of tours.” What goes on around our house and on our ancient kalo farm is a violation of our right to privacy. In addition, we worry about whether one will crash onto our house!

Helicopter companies collect tourist dollars but at the same time **violate the very rights of citizens of Maui County who reside, work, and play below and who have a right to quietude.** They continue to disturb our sleep, vibrate our homes, interrupt our conversations, and put fear into our grandchildren.

Why do helicopter companies think of their businesses first without considering the adverse conditions they are subjecting our residents to? Well, because they have, they practice **“dirty tourism.”**

Helicopter tour companies should be made accountable. We need a forum, a citizen’s planning committee, noise abatement routes, revised air corridors, tour management plans, and higher altitude flights. Companies need to work with citizens in order to recapture the relative peace and quiet Mauians deserve.

Cultural and environmental impact studies are required for development on Maui. Along with trying to protect our land, our streams, and our wildlife, **it is now time we turn our attention to the problems in the skies above us.** Do we not need to protect **PEOPLE in our environment?**

And a final note about tourism, overtourism and dirty tourism: **Where has “respect” gone?**

Mahalo.

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