

TO: Chair Shane M. Sinenci and EACP Committee Members August 20, 2019

From: Dick Mayer dickmayer@earthlink.net

RE: Visitor Impacts to County Environmental and Infrastructural Resources (EACP-6)

Tourism is a lot like eating. We need to eat in order to sustain ourselves and support our health. Youngsters need to nourish their development. However, as we mature, eating too much can cause a host of problems and eventually poor health, disabilities, pain, social and psychological problems, and possibly worse.

Similarly, tourism initially provided our community with good jobs, a higher standard of living and a more interesting lifestyle. However, as tourism grew it began to threaten the very viability of our island community and ultimately it can destroy itself, much like cancer damages the body in which it lives, or excessive eating can cause health concerns. At first, there may be only small irritations and minor pains, but then we may find growing limitations on our activities, well-being, and quality of life.

After 1959 when jet planes began flying here and Hawaii became a state, Maui's business and political leaders had to make a decision as to what kind of tourism should be supported on Maui. They could have chosen small-scale tourism with visitors staying in B&Bs or ohanas, allowing local residents to earn a supplemental income.

However, since plantation workers' homes were usually small units that could not accommodate additional visitors and were far from beaches, the business leaders designated West Maui's Kaanapali and later South Maui's Wailea for large-scale hotel resort developments operated by off-island corporate investors.

With the steady growth of tourism in the past few decades, Maui has become bloated and many residents feel a need to moderate our tourism diet. We must eat selectively and carefully. In fact, we probably need to go on a modest diet to limit actual negative impacts that have been listed by others and are well documented.

RECEIVED AT EACP MEETING ON 8/20/19

We now recognize the symptoms and impacts of overtourism and we should selectively manage various aspects of the tourism industry.

What we need to do now is to protect our tourism industry from destroying itself, rather than allowing tourism and hotel construction and illegal vacation rentals to grow and kill both our economy and quality of life.

----- So I would like the Council to consider the following -----

Please Implement the Maui Island Plan to Protect Maui's Future and to Protect the County Environmental and Infrastructural Resources

The Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan pointed out that, "the "Maui County Tourism Goal" is: To strategically manage tourism on Maui, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i in a sustainable manner that promotes economic well-being, quality of life for residents, preservation of natural and cultural resources, and quality experiences for visitors."

The Maui County Council in 2012 and 2014 adopted the Maui Island Plan as a legal binding part of the Maui County Code which states in MCC 2.80b.030.B, that "All agencies shall comply with the general plan, and administrative actions by agencies shall conform to the general plan,"

The Maui Island Plan explains that, "The relationship between the number of residents and visitors on the island at any given time cannot be overlooked as an important public policy discussion point;"

Resort communities all around the world that are dependent on tourism have grappled with the "golden goose" debate, whereby the tourism experience may be compromised by the very nature of the area's popularity, thus threatening both the desire for tourists to visit the area and the employment of local tourism industry employees;

The Maui Island Plan (Chapter 4 Economic Development, Pages 4-8 to 4-14) states two policies, "Policy 4.2.1 Increase the economic contribution of the visitor industry to the island's environmental well-being for the island's residents' quality of life," and "Policy 4.2.1.d Provide a rich visitor experience, while protecting the island's natural beauty, culture, lifestyles, and aloha spirit."

As the scale of the visitor industry has expanded, the Hawaii Tourism Authority has reported a decline in the satisfaction of residents in their quality of life; As tourists impact Maui more and more, the Hawaii Tourism Authority reports that we have many more visitors coming to Maui, but that they are spending less here, on an inflation-adjusted basis;

Maui now has such a low unemployment rate that if new hotels were built, workers would need to be imported from elsewhere adding to the pressure both on traffic and on housing for our existing residents;

Many of the people who work in the tourist industry at hotels, restaurants, rental-car facilities, and activity centers are unable to afford a house that their family can rent or buy;

Eight or nine new hotels are now beginning their planning, entitlement and construction process;

While local, long-time residents seek housing, many wealthy tourists come to Maui, fall in love with the island, and then return here to buy a second or third expensive home, thus out-bidding local residents for housing; these 2nd homes are really very fancy accommodations for part-time visitors;

Maui's hotels are owned by off-Island investors who take their profits elsewhere, rather than having the funds circulate within the County;

The Hawai'i State Constitution provides in Article IX, Section 6 for the *Management of State Population Growth* "to protect and preserve the public health and welfare; except that **each political subdivision, as provided by general law, may plan and manage the growth of its population in a more restrictive manner than the State**"; and for Maui County the Maui General Plan implements Article IX, section 6;

The Countywide Policy Plan, on page 60, directs policy makers, such as Councilmembers, to: "Monitor the carrying capacity of the islands' social, ecological, and infrastructure systems with respect to the economy."

The Maui Island Plan declares as Objective 4.2.2 that we need to "Comprehensively manage future visitor-unit expansion;" and in Policy 4.2.2.a "Mitigate the impact of tourism on the host culture, natural environment, and resident lifestyles."

The Maui Island Plan provides a call for Council legislation by stating in "4.2.2-Action 3 "Develop programs and/or regulations to: (2) Cap the number and type of visitor accommodations that can be permitted; and (3) Manage the number and type of visitor accommodations that can be permitted;

Management of the number and type of visitor accommodations is necessary to achieve the goal of Maui Island Plan Policy 4.2.3.a, "Promote a desirable island population by striving to not exceed an island-wide visitor population of roughly 33 percent of the resident population;" and

Maui Island now has a visitor to resident ratio of 41.3%, which significantly exceeds the recommended 33% basis in the Maui Island Plan.

Maui has been traveling on a road that has taken us from an agricultural, plantation economy into one based on tourism. We have now reached a fork in that road (a sort of "Tipping Point"), and we must decide which branch of the path we will want to travel.

The left fork will continue the present road of rapid population growth, increasing tourism dependence, more McMansions, gated communities, and a decreasing quality of life for Maui's long-time residents.

The right (and correct) fork will mean that we will change our direction significantly by preserving and restoring a high quality of life that residents of Maui deserve, while carefully protecting our **EXISTING** tourist industry and workforce from overdevelopment.

Although there are financial forces that might try to seduce County decision-makers down the left road of over-development, Maui has the legal tools that can keep us on the road to long-term stability and prosperity.

What do we need to do? We have to recognize the importance of preserving Maui's high quality tourist industry, and not let it be eroded by continued, excessive development. With our present full employment, any new development will mean more people moving here, further damaging and diminishing our quality of life.

Please pass a stronger resolution than the one before you today. It only demands an "assessment" that delays action. Please include the following or similar wording in the resolution you are now adopting. It is a good first step along the right path.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

- 1. That as stated in the Maui Island Plan,” To protect the quality of Maui’s visitor industry, and the island lifestyle, the County must carefully manage and control any future expansion of visitor units on Maui island”, the Maui County Council resolves to limit any new tourist accommodations (hotel, resort, timeshare, vacation tourist condos, etc.) until we have established a ratio of no more than one tourist for every three residents; and**

- 2. That the Maui County Council requests that the Maui Planning Commission shall postpone any approvals or entitlements that would increase tourist accommodations until Maui Island has accomplished the Maui Island Plan’s policies and actions to have no more than one tourist on Maui Island than for every three residents.**

That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable David Ige, Governor, State of Hawai’i; the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai’i; Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser, Chairperson, Board of Agriculture, State of Hawai’i; Suzanne Case, Chairperson, Board of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai’i; Chris Tatum, President and Chief Executive Officer, Hawai’i Tourism Authority; the Honorable Michael P. Victorino, Mayor, County of Maui; Sananda K. Baz, Managing Director, County of Maui; Michele Mclean, Planning Director; County of Maui; Kay Fukumoto, Economic Development Director, County of Maui; Chair Lawrence Carnicelli and members, Maui Planning Commission; Sherry Duong, Executive Director, Maui Visitors Bureau; Lisa Paulson, Executive Director, Maui Hotel & Lodging Association; John Monahan, President & CEO, Hawai’i Visitors & Convention Bureau.

To: Chair Shane Sinenci and Members, Environmental, Agricultural, and Cultural Preservation Committee

From: Dick Mayer dickmayer@earthlink.net

August 20, 2019

RE: Concerns regarding Overtourism on Maui Island

RE: EACP-6 VISITOR IMPACTS TO COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL RESOURCES

MAUI ISLAND VISITORS 2008 - 2018 from the Hawaii Tourism Authority											
YEAR	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Visitor Arrivals (Thousands)	2,075.80	1,892.40	2,092.10	2,168.50	2,309.20	2,358.80	2,417.40	2,540.20	2,634.20	2,745.00	2,914.10
Visitor Days (Thousands)	15,832	15,140	16,751	17,429	18,527	19,264	19,770	20,724	21,530	22,059	23,537
<p>The Maui Island Plan (Page 4-14, Policy 2.2.3.a) promotes "a desirable island population by striving to not exceed an island-wide visitor population of roughly 33 percent of the resident population." We are now way over the desired goal. Visitors are now 41.3% of the resident population and growing.</p>											
Average Daily VISITORS on Maui Island	43,300	41,500	45,900	47,800	50,600	52,800	54,200	56,800	58,800	60,400	64,500
Resident Population - Maui Island	140,900	142,900	144,500	146,300	148,300	150,300	152,400	153,300	154,800	155,600	156,300
Ratio of visitors to residents	30.7%	29.0%	31.8%	32.7%	34.1%	35.1%	35.6%	37.1%	38.0%	38.8%	41.3%
Ratio of residents to visitors	3.25	3.44	3.15	3.06	2.93	2.85	2.81	2.70	2.63	2.58	2.42
YEAR	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Sources: from the Hawaii Tourism Authority - via UHERO	https://data.uhero.hawaii.edu/#/category?id=36&data_list_id=41&view=table										
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