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October 9, 2009

Dear COMMISSION CHAIRMAN Edmund Haituka and COMMISSION MEMBERS David Fuentes, Daphne Honma, Casey Jarman, Guy Kaulukukui, Jamae Kawauchi, Joseph Kealoha, Alapaki Nahale, Susie Osborne, Todd Shumway and Scott Unger

Thank you for serving on this very important commission to update our Hawaii County Charter. Please consider the following amendments when making your decisions on how to update our county charter:

1. 4-Year COUNCIL TERMS – We do SUPPORT this Amendment. With 2 year terms, the Council members are always running for office. By changing to 4 year terms, the Council members would have more time to work on the many problems facing the County rather than constantly being concerned with being re-elected.
2. 2% FOR THE LAND FUND – We OPPOSE moving this into the charter. Government needs flexibility in budgeting depending upon economy. The County of Hawaii already has more parks and land than they have the resources for maintaining it. Additionally, after excluding Federal, State, County, DOHH, and the large trusts (Kamehameha Schools, Parker Ranch, etc.), there is a shortage of privately owned, fee simple land on the Island of Hawaii. Taking more private lands from private ownership is not in the best interest of the public.
3. VACANCIES – We OPPOSE this amendment. Vacancies of active elected officials rarely occur and the current system provides for elected officials to determine the replacements without the cost of special elections.
4. APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – We are OPPOSED to changing the present procedure. This Amendment is intended to weaken the Office of Mayor and would harm our checks and balances form of government.
5. AMENDING THE CHARTER – Amending the Charter is a serious change that should not be completed upon the changing political winds of initiative and referendum. The procedure for changing the Charter should be rigorous as evidenced by the work taken on by this Commission.
6. FUNDING FOR THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR'S OFFICE – We support providing the legislative auditor's office with funding that is independent of the budget process, so they are not beholden to the council and they can do their work independently.
7. COUNCIL COMMITTEES – We support having set standing committees for the County council. We support that notices should be sent 6 calendar days before committee and council meetings and that council matters can only be delayed by one meeting and that each council member shall have one vote on each committee.
8. REDISTRICTING – It is important to have each council district to have approximately the same amount of people and the island to be divided into 9 equal districts. Federal guidelines should be followed, the process clearly defined and a report made to the people in an open and transparent manner.

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Thank you for your effort!
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Arabel L Cambor, President
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