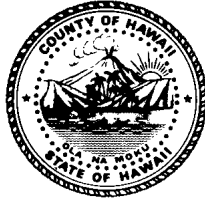


William P. Kenoi  
*Mayor*



Randall M. Kurohara  
*Director*

## County of Hawaii

### DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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January 11, 2010

The Honorable Edmund Haitzuka and Members of the  
County of Hawai'i Charter Commission  
c/o Hawai'i County Council - Clerk  
25 Aupuni Street  
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

RE: Proposed County of Hawai'i's Charter Amendment No. CA-31

Dear Chair Haitzuka and Commission Members:

Thank you for allowing the Department of Research and Development the opportunity to address the Commission in opposition to the proposed Charter Amendment CA-31.

#### Charter Amendment Proposal No. CA-31:

While we appreciate the intent of this proposal to underscore the importance of Agriculture and Energy in the County of Hawai'i, we oppose the amendment itself.

We believe that Charter Amendment No. CA-31 is not necessary as the requested Amendment to Art. VI, Section 6-8.1 through 6-8.3 further outlines and emphasizes the scope of the Department of Economic Development, to continue to provide leadership, guidance and support for sustainable economic development in agriculture and energy, among other divisions therein.

Charter Amendment No. CA-31 is also untimely as it is proposed during a time when the County of Hawai'i has limited and decreasing budgets. Having a separate Department of Agriculture and Energy with a cabinet level administrator and administrative assistant to administer two (2) staff, will be an unwise, inefficient and inappropriate use of the County's limited financial resources. Any additional administrative funds that should become available would be better used by collaborating with others to assist the Agriculture and Energy sectors.

Currently, the Department of Research and Development's existing Energy program has been revived with a new focus and a new Energy Coordinator. Already in three (3) months, we are seeing a shift in the County of Hawai'i's responsibility for renewable generation development on the island with real projects and real results. Hawai'i County is on track not only to retain its current Renewable Generation Leadership in all of the United States – but to increase that leadership remarkably. Concurrently, in energy efficiency, we have already conducted energy audits on our biggest energy facilities; providing options and solutions to reduce energy consumption by 20% (over the next 3 years). Such savings could amount to millions of dollars that could further be used for economic development for the entire Hawai'i island, as well as provide tax savings for our residents.

In addition, the County of Hawai'i has also been collaborating with others on energy issues by promoting conservation and efficiency, as well as tasking the Energy Advisory Commission to provide recommendations to help chart a course to greater energy sustainability.

The Energy program is efficient and effective in its current department.

The Department of Research and Development's existing Agriculture program has been successful in enhancing the agriculture industry's viability on Hawai'i Island. County of Hawai'i resources allocated to the Agriculture program have been and shall continue to support and focus on the enhanced production and consumption of locally produced agriculture products, which increase employment, personal income, business income, and tax revenues. These are accomplished through partnerships and collaboration with various government agencies, private landowners, the agriculture industry and the private businesses that provide support services to the industry.

The Agriculture program and its supporting institutions are numerous and diverse, and include dairies, ranching, farming, orchard crops, ornamental flowers and nurseries. Both physical and organizational infrastructure is already in place in the commodity groups, extension service, the University of Hawai'i and federal research organizations. We do not need to reinvent the wheel to enhance agricultural productivity. The Agriculture program is efficient and effective in its current department.

The Department of Research and Development's Agriculture and Energy programs are very efficient in their current home, and would fit comfortably into the mandate of the Department of Economic Development that has been proposed by the administration.

Development of sustainable agriculture and energy, along with other core economic drivers such as tourism and small business assistance, together will help ensure economic growth and stability for our island. Combining these resources under one umbrella – the Department of Economic Development – is a natural and logical expenditure of County resources. Any removal of these programs from the Department of Economic Development would mitigate its focus on job creation and blur Hawai'i County's vision for its residents.

The Honorable Edmund Huitsuka and Members of the  
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I look forward to further presenting our position and opposition to the proposed Charter Amendment No. CA-31 to you and the members of the Charter Commission at the upcoming meeting scheduled for January 21, 2010. Should you need further information and/or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randall M. Kurohara", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

RANDALL M. KUROHARA  
Director

xc: Mayor William Kenoi  
William Brilhante, Corporation Counsel