

Sorry I have to bother with this. Please read carefully and give back the voices to the people who worked hard and have been deceived and duped by the government. Whatever little leverage is given please use it wisely and use it to show them, that WE THE PEOPLE COUNT AND THAT WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR IS VALUABLE. I hope you care for our land and that you want to protect it from overdevelopment. Think of your children and help us prevent that we look one day like Oahu.

LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE*. This decision should not be up to the charter commission.

The charter amendment for 2% for the Land Fund was proposed to take the Land Fund deposits out of the county council's yearly budget wrangling. Charter amendments can only be changed by a vote of the people and not the council or the Mayor.

IF this amendment passes, there would be TWO WAYS to put money in the land fund. HALF% would be guaranteed by the charter amendment. ALL THAT WOULD BE GUARANTEED IS \$1MILLION PER YEAR. The 2% for the land Fund would still be a bill (as it is now) and still be subject to yearly budget wrangling, suspension of the deposits or erasing the entire amount. If you remember over 3 months of council meetings and 150 people testifying, the council didn't listen.

Suspension of deposits to the Land Fund was the first piece of legislation introduced by the Kenoi administration. Government does not like special funds, which takes money out of their control. HOW MANY TIMES DO WE HAVE TO BATTLE FOR WHAT 63% of us VOTED FOR?

63% is a voter's mandate. *THE DIFFICULT EFFORT OF THE Petition Initiative DRIVE*: In 4 months in 2006, over 100 volunteers collected almost 10,000 signatures on a petition initiative to get the question on the ballot: Whether or not to set aside 2% of property taxes each to acquire Hawaii county's treasured lands. 63% of voters approved this measure. This is a resounding mandate for county government to save our treasured places. This charter amendment is an opportunity to once again: ONCE AGAIN LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE.

2% of our property taxes are roughly \$4 million per year. Half percent is roughly \$1 million per year. The council prioritized 5 lands for acquisition values at approximately \$28+ million. Pao'o - 2 acres in North Kohala for \$2 million, which is adjacent to Kaiholena= 263 acres on the Kohala Coast for \$13 million, 8 acres in Kona on the coast- for \$8 million and Kawa Bay in Ka'u for \$5 million. As you can see \$1 million will not help us to obtain much land. NOW is the time to buy in a depressed real estate market.

The "great gift" of the Land Fund is to have dependable funding to get matching funds (usually dollar for dollar) from other government agencies. In the past Hawaii County has received matching funds from the State Legacy Lands, NOAA, and USFWS Endangered Species and private sources. We double our money with matching funds

Important AG lands can be preserved with 2% funds. The County could buy conservation easements and "extinguish" the development rights on these lands, so they could be kept in AG uses forever and not lost to development.

The CHARTER AMENDMENT STATES THESE LANDS TO BE SAVED: Land for public recreation and education, including access to beaches and mountains; properties that preserve historic or culturally important land areas and sites; lands that protect our natural resources, including buffer zones and watershed lands to preserve water quality and water supply; and to land to preserve the forests, beaches, coastal areas, natural beauty and agricultural lands.

Kauai and Maui set aside 1% of their property taxes each year and Oahu sets aside ½ percent per year. All of the other islands have a much larger tax base to draw from, more population and more properties to tax. For example, property taxes for Oahu were \$791 million for 2007 to 2008. Half percent would be \$3.95 million. Most of Oahu is developed or in Federal land for military bases. Kauai is 40% government land and is mostly developed.

It needs to be stated that this money is only for property acquisition; this is part of the charter amendment. If the money was used for maintenance there would be nothing left for purchasing land. Mayor Kim proposed this to the Open Space Commission and it was voted down.

Another comment, "We don't have the money to develop parks now, why should we buy the land if we cannot do anything with it?" The County can buy land and "land bank" the property until money comes available to develop it. This way we can take beach access, cultural sites and watersheds out of the "path of development" and keep these lands for residents to enjoy. Some lands, like watersheds and endangered species habitat should be left alone or minimally used.

Thank you for your time and please evaluate this carefully.

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