

February 16, 2010

OPPOSITION TO LAND FUND CA-15

I am writing in opposition to CA-15, in any form. I do not believe the charter is the place to include such a specific special fund because the charter is meant to be broad, it ties the county's hands financially in tough economic times, and because only 30.1% of the voters in Hawaii County approved the ballot question in 2006.

First, the charter is meant to be a broad document to guide the function of county government. There is already a provision in the charter that permits the creation of special funds. It is a broad provision, which is meant to get more specific through ordinances passed by the county council. The charter IS NOT the place for such a provision.

Second, a charter provision would not allow the county to be financially flexible in tough economic times because the charter may only be amended or suspended by a vote of the public. In down economic times, this fund in the charter would essentially say to the public that purchasing real estate is more important than public safety, sanitation, roads, and other government services. This is because the money for this fund will come off the top, before all other budget allocations are made. In tough economic times, the county should focus on core services and not a "nice to have" fund like the land fund.

Third, only 30.1% of the voters in Hawaii County approved the land fund in 2006. In her recent letter to the West Hawaii Today, Debbie Hecht stated that "63% of us" approved the 2% land fund in 2006. This is plainly erroneous and misleading. A quick view of the state election results in 2006 will show that 27,566 voters voted in favor of the land fund and 16,135 voted against, with 4,780 blank votes. The actual percentage in favor is 56.8% of the votes cast on that ballot question. This is much lower than the 63% stated by Debbie Hecht. In 2006, there were 91,596 registered voters in Hawaii County. The actual number in favor is a **mere 30.1%** of the total number of registered voters. This is a far cry from saying it was overwhelmingly approved.

Thus, I strongly urge the charter commission to **reject** CA-15 and not move it to the ballot. Thank you for your consideration.

Ken Adams
Hawaii County