

To: Charter Commission
Fr: Margaret Wille, Waimea resident
Re: Charter Amendments: 2/12/10
Date: 2/10/10

SUPPORT FOR CHARTER AMENDMENTS #9, #23, #30 PROMOTING TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC: The Charter is the County's constitution and, accordingly, organizes the distribution of power among the various governmental divisions and subdivisions. These Charter provisions are meant to provide a fair balance of power between the various divisions of government and powers reserved to the people. With regard to the reserved powers of the people a key issue is the right to timely notice of governmental decision-making processes. Therefore in the interest of maintaining a well-informed and participatory public I encourage you to support the related proposed charter amendments:

CA 9: relating to electronic notice of meetings hyperlinked to an appropriate county website;

CA 23: relating to requiring public notices to be distributed by electronic medium within the same time frame as newspaper publication; and,

CA 30: requiring the County to maintain a basic website for each board to include the purpose and authority of the board, biographical information on the members, posting the agendas, and providing summaries of the final actions taken.

SUPPORT FOR CA 26: MEMORIALIZING THE COUNTY'S PUBLIC TRUST RESPONSIBILITIES: This Amendment adapts the corresponding "public trust" provision of the Hawaii constitution, which the Hawaii Supreme Court recently said applies to the Counties. For me this is simply a message to the county to be mindful of its natural and cultural resources for the benefit not just of current generations, but so to for future generations--take care for our childrens' children.

SUPPORT FOR CA 29: PROVIDING FOR A MORE EDUCATIONAL ROLE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. Having worked with the Department of Corrections in Vermont, I observed close at hand the importance of promoting a more preventative pro-active role by law enforcement and the office of the prosecuting attorney.

OPPOSITION TO CA 37: REDUCE AND REVISE THE AUTHORITY OF THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. I realize this proposed amendment is well-intended by our Mayor, but in essence it pits short-term economic well being against the more wholistic concept of prosperity social and environmental well-being.

COMMENT ON CA 31: REMOVES AGRICULTURE AND ENERGY FROM THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND CREATES NEW DEPARTMENT

Were the economy on the upswing, I would be more supportive of this charter amendment. Simply out of concern for adding more top end bureaucracy, I have continued to lobby for this proposal. I am concerned however. I was upset to see the Research and Development Department object to the creation of a website for its energy advisory committee and for the soon to be established ag/food advisory committee. Also I am disturbed that the County, through this department or otherwise has not rallied an army of pro-active programs to confine the fire ant colonies spreading around this county. A year or two ago I rallied people involved in the new AG plan and we put together a request for a County ordinance on this issue. Pete Hoffmann authored and submitted that legislation which unanimously passed the Council. Had I been running Research and Development I would have been all over this problem –insisting on notices to all plant purchasers on the island and incentives to disclose findings of this truly horrific invasion of predatory ants. So my question is do we have enough manpower looking at critical problems in this industry? And how can we secure that manpower and know-how in these difficult economic times?

CA-15: SUPPORT FOR THE LAND FUND AT 2%: SUPPORT inclusion of land fund at 2% -- the figure mandated by the voters in this County. There must be some honor and respect for a law just recently passed by the voters.

Margaret Wille
65-1316 Lihipali Road
Kamuela, Hawaii 96743