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## County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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February 7, 2019

Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Representative Chris Todd, Vice Chair  
Committee on Water, Land and Hawaiian Affairs

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Todd, and Committee Members:

**RE: HB 1219 Relating to Public Lands**

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on HB 1219, as it would impact the Waiakea Peninsula in Hilo, Hawai'i.

Simply stated, we support any legislation that will help the revitalization of Banyan Drive and the rest of the Waiakea Peninsula. Virtually everyone familiar with this area agrees that it is underutilized and in disrepair. It is the center of tourism in East Hawai'i, but it is a jewel that is quite tarnished at the present time.

Hawai'i County has taken first steps toward revitalizing the peninsula. The administration, Council, community, and Hawai'i Island legislators have found common purpose; the redevelopment area has been defined; the Banyan Drive Hawai'i Redevelopment Agency (BDHRA) is functioning, and a conceptual master plan has been created as a starting point. Now funds are needed to conduct the environmental impact statements necessary to complete the redevelopment plan and move forward.

The Hawai'i County budget is severely strapped, and I have already had to impose increases in our property, fuel, and vehicle weight taxes. Therefore, I am hoping the State will provide funds for the EIS. We believe that it is just and proper to ask the State to share in the EIS expense, given that the redevelopment area consists almost entirely of State land.

Although there may be paths forward, other than HB1219, that build on work already done, we do not want to risk having this Legislature take no action at all. Therefore, we will support any measure that direct resources, both statutorily and financially, toward the redevelopment of Banyan Drive while providing some local perspective in decision-making.

We suggest that HB1219 should be improved with the following amendments:

- (1) Changing the makeup of the committee to include appointees by the Mayor (perhaps two or more by Mayor; reduce the Governor's appointees by an equal number);
- (2) Providing that local cultural/historical expertise be included in the makeup of the committee (we do not think that non-specific expertise is sufficient);

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(3) Providing that the new committee coordinate with BDHRA, which was established under HRS, Chapter 53. The work of the two organizations should be compatible and complementary. In fact, it would be best if, like the BDHRA, the committee's actions were subject to Windward Planning Commission review, and Hawai'i County Council adoption of the redevelopment plan;

(4) Providing that all meetings of the committee be in Hilo, and open to the public;

(5) Authorizing and requiring that the district or the committee adopt rules; and

(6) Providing that public hearings be held at least annually during the life of the pilot project.

I hope you will act favorably on an amended version of HB 1219, and move it along for further discussion.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Kim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harry Kim  
MAYOR