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March 18, 2019

Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land

Dear Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

RE: **HB 1219, HD1 Proposed SD1 Relating to Public Lands**

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on a proposed amended version of HB 1219, HD1, 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 Big 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 peninsula consists almost entirely of State land.

Although there may be paths forward, other than this bill, which 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 directs resources, both statutorily and financially, toward the redevelopment of Banyan Drive while providing some local perspective in decision-making.

We suggest that the proposed amended version of HB 1219, HD1 be improved with the following additional amendments (which are geared to the proposed Waiakea district specifically, but which should perhaps apply to all districts created in the future, except for item #3):

- (1) Provide that the makeup of the committee include appointees by the Mayor (perhaps two or more);
- (2) Provide that district-specific cultural/historical expertise be included in the makeup of the committee;

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(3) Provide 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) Provide that all meetings of the committee be in or near the district, and open to the public;

(5) Authorize and require that the district or the committee adopt rules; and

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

I hope you will act favorably on the proposed 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