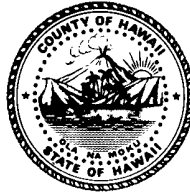


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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN of the following matters to be considered by the Puna Action Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 92-7, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

NOTE: Pursuant to Act 220, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021, which amended the Sunshine Law to allow meetings to be remotely conducted online, effective January 1, 2022, Action Committee Meetings will be held online, and the location listed below for the public to provide testimony on agenda items. The Action Committee meeting can be viewed live online or at a location listed below. **Pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Proclamation Related to COVID-19 (Omicron Variant) dated January 26, 2022, the requirement to have at least one in-person meeting location has been suspended through March 25, 2022. No in-person meeting location will be provided during this time period, unless the suspension is earlier terminated or superseded by a separate proclamation.**

DATE: Thursday, March 3, 2022

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: This meeting will be held by Interactive Conference Technology (ICT) through Zoom. The public may provide verbal testimony at the meeting by joining online or calling into the Zoom meeting. Members of the public may also attend via Zoom or watch the live stream on the Planning Department's YouTube channel.

To register for verbal testimony please use this online fillable form: <https://tinyurl.com/hx35p4pu> or contact staff at cdp@hawaiicounty.gov or (808)961-8188.

Zoom registration link: <https://tinyurl.com/4ayt56yc>

To view the live stream on YouTube, click the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/CountyofHawaiiPlanningDepartment>

If internet connection is lost, the public meeting will be automatically recessed to restore communication. If lost connection exceeds 30 minutes, the meeting will be terminated.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Welcoming Melissa Leilani DeMello and Kanoe Wilson to the Puna Action Committee.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: The Action Committee will consider the draft minutes for the Joint AC Meeting on January 19, 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: Written testimony may be submitted via email at cdp@hawaiicounty.gov or in person at the Hilo or Kona Planning Department, up to two (2) business days prior (Tuesday, March 1, 2022) to the meeting (see the Notice Section below). In addition, members of the public may provide oral testimony at the meeting on any of the agenda items. To register for access to the Zoom meeting please email cdp@hawaiicounty.gov. With discretion of the Chair of the CDP Action Committee, comments may be made either during the public comment portion of the agenda or just prior to the relevant business item and may be limited to three (3) minutes in length per agenda item.

BUSINESS:

1. **Information Sharing:** Sharon Hirota from the County Office of Housing and Community Development will present several programs, including: Emergency Rent Assistance, Homeowner Assistance, Landlord/Tenant Mediation Center, Financial Empowerment Services and the recently launched Coordination Center. Action Committee members are encouraged to share these programs with their networks.
2. **Action Committee Support of Hawai'i Ports-of Entry Biosecurity Program (Communication No. 2022-06):** Chair Franny Brewer will introduce a draft letter to the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council outlining Action Committee support for the Hawai'i Ports-of Entry Biosecurity Program (see Communication No. 2022-05 for program information). Committee Members will discuss and vote on finalizing the letter.
3. **Synergies between Implementation of the Puna CDP and the Kilauea Recovery and Resilience Plan (KRRP):** Action Committee members will share and discuss their work with Resilience Action Teams relative to CDP implementation to identify synergies and establish priority implementation projects and interests for 2022. Discussion will include exploring mutual interests between Action Committee members to create investigatory subcommittees and community liaison groups, as applicable. Joint initiatives with community members or partner organizations are encouraged.
4. **Framework for Action Committee Run Meetings:** As part of the 2022 Roadmapping discussions, some Action Committees have expressed interest in hosting their own official meetings. This discussion is to clarify the framework for that option, establish the general roles/responsibilities, and ensure proper measures are taken to adhere to the State Sunshine Law.

5. **Election of Action Committee Officers:** The Action Committee will nominate and elect a Chair and Vice-Chair to serve during the 2022 calendar year. Nomination and election to be facilitated by Planning Staff.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING: Agenda item suggestions from the Action Committee and Planning Staff for the Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee meeting on May 5, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

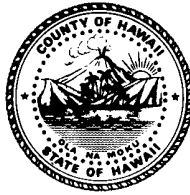
This agenda and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee folder via the County of Hawai'i Public Documents Repository: <http://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/fol/13985/Row1.aspx>. These documents may also be requested from the Planning Department by calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing cdp@hawaiicounty.gov.

NOTICE: The purpose of the public hearings is to afford all interested persons a reasonable opportunity to be heard on the above items. A person desiring to submit oral or written testimony shall indicate their name and whether the testimony is on their behalf or as a representative of an organization or individual. Written testimony can be submitted via email or hard copy. Hard copies should include an original and nine copies and be submitted no later than 4:30pm two days prior to the hearing date.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service, other reasonable modification, or language interpretation to access this meeting please contact the Planning Department at (808) 961-8288 as soon as possible, but no later than five working days prior to the meeting date, to arrange for accommodations. "Other reasonable modification" refers to communication methods or devices for people with disabilities who are mentally and/or physically challenged.

If you are a lobbyist, you must register with the Hawai'i County Clerk within five days of becoming a lobbyist. (Article 15, Section 2-91.3(b), Hawai'i County Code). A lobbyist means, "any individual engaged for pay or other consideration who spends more than five hours in any month or \$275 in any six-month period for the purpose of attempting to influence legislative or administrative action by communicating or urging others to communicate with public officials." (Article 15, Section 2-91.3(a)(6), Hawai'i County Code). Registration forms and expenditure report documents are available at the Office of the County Clerk-Council, 25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720.

PUNA CDP ACTION COMMITTEE



County of Hawai'i PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

Aupuni Center • 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Phone (808) 961-8288 • Fax (808) 961-8742

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was attended by members of all Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committees (AC) in the County of Hawai'i. Long-Range Planner, Keiko Mercado serving as a non-voting Chairperson for the island-wide convening of CDP ACs, called the Puna Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC) meeting to order at 5:11 P.M. Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held via the Zoom interactive video platform.

Kona AC Chair Charles Young shared an 'Ōlelo No'eau:

E kanu mea 'ai o nana keiki i ka ha'i

Plant edible food plants lest your children look with longing at someone else's.

ROLL CALL

Action Committee Members Present: Franny Brewer (Vice-Chair), Kanoe Wilson, Leilani DeMello, Leila Kealoha, Susan Osborne.

Planning Department Staff: Zendo Kern (Planning Director); Grant Nagata (Admin Services Officer); Keiko Mercado, Heather Bartlett, and Jaslyn Nathaniel (Long Range Div. Planners); Courtney Costa (Long Range Div. Staff).

Members of the public: 9 members of the public attended the meeting via Zoom. Members of the public also observed the meeting via the Livestream on YouTube. The Livestream is available at <https://youtu.be/eEv32s28l4g>

STATE SUNSHINE LAW UPDATE BY CORPORATION COUNSEL

Deputy Corporation Counsel Jean Campbell presented the basic tenets of the State Sunshine Law and its new changes.

Click here for the presentation slides (Communication No 2022-01):

<http://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/doc/113992/Page1.aspx>

Hāmākua Committee Member Keeney asked for clarification from Ms. Campbell on Sunshine Law restrictions for contacting members of other Action Committees. Ms. Campbell responded that discussing business with members of your own Action Committee is a breach of Sunshine

30 Law and that caution should be taken when discussing business with other AC members,
31 especially if there is potential for applicability across multiple Action Committees.
32 Kona Committee Chair Young questioned amending an agenda and whether rearranging items
33 would be applicable. Ms. Campbell clarified that agenda items may be re-ordered or postponed.
34 She added that boards are generally discouraged from adding agenda items during a meeting as
35 it does not give the public advanced notice.

36 Hāmākua Committee Member Kua asked if there were any plans to switch to in-person meetings
37 and, if so, how much notice would the Planning Department provide. Ms. Campbell responded
38 that the Governor’s current Emergency Proclamation lifts the requirement of in-person meetings
39 until the end of February and that the proclamation could be extended/canceled depending on
40 the COVID-19 emergency. Remote meetings may resume after the proclamation is lifted but will
41 require at least one in-person site (usually at a County facility).

42 Hāmākua Committee Member Keeney inquired further on communication with other members
43 through email on recommendations for agenda items. Ms. Campbell responded with a
44 suggestion that communications outside of meetings should generally be discouraged and
45 recommended that Action Committee members share their agenda item suggestions with staff.

46 Ms. Mercado reminded Committee Member Keeney that staff contacts AC members about three
47 weeks before each meeting to request input for the upcoming agenda. She requested that any
48 additional questions and/or feedback be included in the post-meeting feedback form.

49 **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

50 Two (2) members of the public and one (1) Action Committee member (representing
51 themselves) provided testimony.

52 1. Community member Cory Harden provided testimony on the Planning Director’s message
53 and on item (3) 2022 RoadMap. She contended that the North Kohala Action Committee “fell
54 apart” a while back due to what the Kohala Mountain News quoted as “Tight rules [that]
55 made it impossible to respond to issues in a timely manner and to allow discussions on items
56 that are not in the agenda.” Ms. Harden expressed concern with the AC meetings moving
57 from once a month to once every three months. She also described long delays in filling
58 vacant Action Committee and Kailua Village Design Commission seats. She mentioned that
59 the multi-meeting process for taking action combined with the limited number of meetings
60 severely slows progress. She also conveyed frustration with Planning Staff that an agenda
61 item request to discuss a large 201H housing development on agricultural land, was not
62 honored. Ms. Harden shared her concern that Action Committees were changing from being
63 place-based to issue-based. Lastly, she expressed concern that the draft General Plan is
64 formatted so differently from previous General Plans that it is too difficult to differentiate the
65 changes.

66 2. South Kohala Committee Chair Smith, representing herself, testified on the Planning
67 Director’s message. She read her written testimony to Director Kern regarding incoming
68 Federal infrastructure funding. She asked the Director to advocate for the CDP
69 Infrastructure/ Emergency preparedness priorities. Ms. Smith expressed that each Action

Committee has worked thoroughly, investing time to research and find the infrastructure needs for each community to meet favorable selection criteria.

Ruth Smith's written testimony (Communication No 2022-04) can be found at the following link: [Communication No. 2022-04 -R. Smith Testimony to PD Dir. Kern](#)

3. Community Member Meizhu Lui, representing herself, testified on the State Sunshine Law Update. She expressed agreement with the previous testifiers, adding that CDPs are products of a democratic process and that she hoped the administration would honor that. Ms. Lui explained that the Sunshine Law premise would mean nothing if there were no meetings. She shared that infrequent meetings are a hindrance particularly given the significance of the incoming Federal funds and the pandemic. She expressed support for place-based AC initiatives given how different each district is. Ms. Lui echoed concern about the 100-acre 201H housing development Ms. Harden mentioned. She talked about the disadvantages of bypassing zoning regulations through the 201H and how it could potentially harm the community. Community Member Lui voiced the need for affordable housing, however, not at the expense of agricultural land.

MESSAGE FROM PLANNING DIRECTOR, ZENDO KERN:

Planning Director Zendo Kern introduced himself and shared his appreciation to Action Committee members for their service to the community. Mr. Kern described the heavy workload in the Planning Department explaining that it is not meant to be an excuse but an insight on staff experiences. He mentioned Mayor Roth's priority of sustainability and how the Planning Department plays a central role in that function. In describing his strategic approach; Director Kern utilized the Japanese term *Kaizen*. He defined it as continuous improvement and an approach to improve the multifaceted processes of the department through improving communication and addressing ongoing challenges. Director Kern shared the benefits of the County's EPIC system that would increase transparency, improve customer service, and streamline processes.

He summarized some primary project goals to improve the EPIC system, increase digitization of department files, and ongoing work with the Research and Development Department on a Climate Action Plan to be a "living document" attached to the General Plan. He explained that the Department is now back to "full throttle" on the General Plan comprehensive review although it still has an extensive process to go through. He also shared plans for a comprehensive update of the Zoning Code and Subdivision code to include a framework for green infrastructure and transit-oriented developments (TODs) among other initiatives. He shared that the Puna Eruption Recovery work continues to be a big priority for the Department which includes the property buyout program, working with FEMA on infrastructure needs, and designing a resiliency framework that can be applied island-wide. Director Kern also explained the work he's done to connect with Senators and the State DOT to understand and plug into the process of dispersing Federal infrastructure funds. He said the County is still waiting on information but that he would advocate for CDP Action Committee priorities as the process moves forward. Lastly, he expressed that the Roth administration cares deeply about the CDP Action Committees and shared regret that previous statements had been misconstrued to imply

otherwise. Moving forward, he encouraged AC members to contact the CDP team so that further feedback could be shared with him.

BUSINESS:

1. Presentation by Susan Kuntz from the Office of Housing and Community Development:

Housing Administrator Susan Kuntz presented an overview of the 201H process and provided information on its use and applicability. In her presentation, she covered the housing needs in Hawai'i County by outlining how they used Area Median Income (AMI) figures of 5 years to estimate the need for 10,796 affordable housing units. Ms. Kuntz identified the challenges developers face as affordable housing is not as profitable as developing market-rate housing and may not always be financially feasible. She spoke about different mechanisms available to assist qualifying housing projects, including federal funding assistance and the State's 201H law. This law allows for exemptions from various permitting constraints relative to affordable housing developments. Administrator Kuntz also shared 201H projects that were proposed in 2021. She explained the agency's Strategic Roadmap which included regulatory reform of the inclusionary zoning code (Hawai'i County Code (HCC) Chapter 11), as well as working with the Planning Department on amendments to the subdivision (HCC Chapter 23) and zoning codes (HCC Chapter 25). Ms. Kuntz also included the creation of an affordable housing program that identifies potential or existing State and County properties that could be used for affordable housing developments.

Based on questions posed in the Zoom chat, Ms. Bartlett summarized a general question around the qualifications for 201H. Ms. Kuntz replied by stating that both private and non-profit developers could apply with the stipulation of a 50% plus 1 criterion of affordable units. Ms. Bartlett assured participants that other questions or comments would be followed up on after the meeting.

Click here for the OHCD presentation slides (Communication No. 2022-02):

<http://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/doc/114215/Page1.aspx>

Click here for the 2019 Hawai'i Housing Study mentioned in the presentation:

https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hhfdc/files/2020/01/FINAL-State_Hawaii-Housing-Planning-Study.pdf

2. Presentation by Executive Director Kristine Kubat from Recycle Hawai'i:

Recycle Hawai'i Executive Director, Kristine Kubat shared information on strategic methods to reduce solid waste, available resources, and their mission as a non-profit organization. She stressed the importance of recycling and the general goals and objectives that the non-profit organization would like to see communities accomplish. Ms. Kubat phrased Zero Waste as "The conservation of all resources through responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health". She provided examples of self-sufficient community successes and current waste management practices that could be expanded. Recycle Hawai'i would like to be further involved with Action Committee work and invites the community to get involved in the mission.

Click here for the 2021 Zero Waste Plan:

<https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/home/showdocument?id=304313&t=637812904261834301>

Click here for the 2019 Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan:

<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/weblink/ElectronicFile.aspx?openfile=true&dbid=1&docid=110921>

Click here for the 2009 Zero Waste Plan: <http://hawaii Zerowaste.org/site-content/uploads/3-14-09-Hawaii Zero Waste Plan.doc.pdf>

3. 2022 Roadmap Discussion:

Long-Range Planner, Heather Bartlett presented on the 2022 Action Committee Roadmap and provided the Action Committees and community with updates, foreseeable events, and upcoming discussion topics. Ms. Bartlett explained that the slideshow was a brief skeletal overview to be discussed in greater detail at individual AC meetings. Ms. Bartlett covered a collection of thoughts, ideas, and feedback from one-on-one meetings with AC members and encouraged more AC members to share their thoughts with the CDP Team. She highlighted progress for the Puna AC who gained two new members to satisfy quorum requirements along with their progressive recovery efforts. Ms. Bartlett highlighted ongoing work to engage the North Kohala community as they work to formalize an AC. She shared that the Mayor's office had received numerous applications for the Ka'ū CDP Action Committee and the CDP Teams aspires to have members appointed by mid-2022. Suggested upcoming AC discussion topics include chair and vice-chair elections in March, sharing of the draft Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) budget, project prioritization/road-mapping, Chapter 16 review and guidelines, and the hosting of mixed Zoom and in-person (hybrid) meetings.

The 2022 Roadmap Presentation slides (Communication No 2022-03) may be accessed at the following link: <http://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/doc/114216/Page1.aspx>

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The February Action Committee meetings have been moved to March. The next Puna Action Committee meeting will be on March 3, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 pm.

These minutes and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee folder via the [County of Hawai'i Public Documents Repository](#). These documents may also be requested from the Planning Department by calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing cdp@hawaiicounty.gov.



The Critical Role of the Ports-of-Entry Biosecurity Program

January 19, 2022

The Purpose: Secure funding for The Ports-of Entry Biosecurity Program. This program fills a critical gap in our overall biosecurity system, minimizing opportunities for new pest incursions and safeguarding our islands from further invasion and damage from invasive species. Making small investments in the monitoring and rapid response efforts provided by this program saves the state millions of dollars in long-term response efforts and economic damages.

The Issue: The Ports-of-Entry Biosecurity Program is in its last year of funding from the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT). A 5-year pilot period has demonstrated that this program is an excellent investment for the biosecurity of the State. The program fills an important gap in surveillance at ports-of-entry and enhances the state's ability for early detection and rapid response of species that can severely impact human health, our environment and the economy. The list of targets includes Africanized bees, invasive ants, mosquitos, and coconut rhinoceros beetle. The program currently operates at airports, but there is momentum to expand efforts to include seaports as well as the list of current targets. The program is in its last year of funding and facing the possibility of operating at a significantly reduced capacity or not at all without additional funding.

Background: Small investments in early detection and rapid response programs are the most cost-effective way to deal with invasive species and can save the state billions of dollars in economic losses and damages. The Ports-of-Entry Biosecurity Program (formerly known as Māmalu Poepoe), has acted as the invisible shield to prevent the introduction and spread of some of the most high-risk pests to Hawai'i. The program has successfully operated at Hawaii's six main airports with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Transportation's Airport Revenue Fees for the past five years and brings together multiple state agencies including the Hawai'i Departments of Transportation, Agriculture, Health, Land and Natural Resources, and the University of Hawai'i. The program monitors for four target pests; Africanized bees, invasive ants, mosquitos, and coconut rhinoceros beetle. Each of these targets could easily hitchhike on planes, slip through inspections, and impact multiple sectors of the local economy, as well as human health and our way of life in the islands. This program fills a critical gap in our island's biosecurity system.

The State Legislature declared invasive species to be the single greatest threat to Hawaii's economy, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of Hawaii's people and visitors in a 2015 report (LRB 2015). Hawaii's role as a hub for travel, commerce, and military transport is a major contributor to the economy but also increases its vulnerability to new pest incursions. Prior to COVID-19, the state had over one million aircraft operations, landings and takeoffs and 600,000 shipping containers processed through Hawaii's seaports (DOT 2017). In 2019, Hawaii received more than 10.5 million visitors (air and cruise ships), setting a new record for visitor arrivals and visitor spending. Each of these arrivals and shipments provides a new opportunity for the introduction of invasive species.

Overall Benefit:Cost: A recent economic analysis looked at the costs of the current program's monitoring efforts compared to the potential costs to airports if a pest incursion occurred without any monitoring or rapid response capabilities. The economic analysis found that there is an overall 110:1 benefit: cost ratio. The economic analysis only took into account the benefit of monitoring for invasive species at airports. Clearly the benefits from airport monitoring and rapid response would extend to the surrounding areas, the island, and the entire State. These benefits are expected to be many times larger than the benefits to the airport thus further warranting continued funding of the program.



Africanized Bees, also known as killer bees, are currently not present in Hawai'i. They were intercepted in 2011 at Honolulu Harbor which made them a high priority for monitoring through the program. The establishment of Africanized bees would decimate Hawaii's ability to grow diversified agriculture and the beekeeping industry, valued at over \$220 million. Africanized bees are significantly more aggressive than common honeybees and would threaten the health and lifestyle of residents and impact the \$14.9 billion tourism industry.



Invasive ants threaten agriculture, natural resources and pose a health risk to residents, pets, and wildlife. Little fire ant (LFA) and red imported fire ant (RIFA) pose a serious threat to human health, quality of life, and agriculture. LFA and RIFA can bite and sting people and cause severe pain and serious skin reactions to people and animals. An economic study estimated that current control costs for LFA on Hawai'i island alone averages \$200 million per year. The red imported fire ant (RIFA) is not currently present in the State, but the economic costs if it does establish are estimated at \$200 million per year in damages to tourism and agricultural sectors.



Mosquitos: The introduction of new species of mosquitoes can transmit new diseases, posing serious health threats to people and native species, not to mention more mosquitoes are an added nuisance to both visitors and residents. Local transmission of high-profile diseases like Zika and Dengue in Hawai'i could cause many visitors to travel elsewhere impacting an important driver of our economy.



Coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is the most recent introduction, detected in Hawai'i near the end 2013 and is currently confined to O'ahu. This invasive beetle is a major pest of coconut palms and feeds on a wide array of palm species including the native loulu, *Pritchardia spp.* Coconut palms are an important symbol, populating much of the State's skyline. If CRB was left unchecked much of our iconic skyline could be whittled down to mere stumps, which has occurred in Guam where the beetle is now widespread.

Budget: \$525,000 to continue the program as is (monitor for current targets at 6 main airports) + expansion to seaports on Oahu, and monitor for 2 additional targets. This budget is for 12 months.

Total Personnel Cost \$425,000

Total Materials & Supplies Cost \$60,000

Total Travel Cost \$15,000

Total Other Cost \$25,000

Contacts:

For more information, please contact:

Chelsea Arnott, Hawai'i Invasive Species Council planner, chelsea.l.arnott@hawaii.gov

Leyla Kaufman, Mamalu Poepoe Coordinator, leyla.v.kaufman@hawaii.gov

References:

Gutrich, J.J., E. VanGelder, and L. Loope. 2007. Potential economic impact of introduction and spread of the red imported fire ant, *Solenopsis invicta*, in Hawai'i. *Environmental Science & Policy* 10: 685–696

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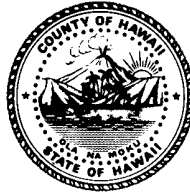
Lee, Donna. 2021. Unpublished data. Economic analysis of monitoring efforts at Hawaii's airports.

Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB). 2015. Can't see the forest for the (albizia) trees: an invasive species update. - Honolulu, Hawai'i. - xi, 416 pages. tables ; 28 cm. - Report ; no. 15-3 . - Report (Hawai'i. Legislative Reference Bureau) no. 15-3.

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Mayor

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Managing Director

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County of Hawai'i

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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DATE: March 3, 2022

TO: DR. LEYLA KAUFFMAN
Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

FROM: PUNA CDP ACTION COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Support for Hawai'i Ports-of-Entry Biosecurity Program

Aloha,

The Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee on the Big Island of Hawai'i would like to express support for the Ports-of-Entry (POE) Biosecurity Program (formerly known as Māmālu Poepoe), which actively surveils our ports for pests like invasive ants, coconut rhinoceros beetle, Africanized bees, new mosquito species, and more.

We are highly supportive of proactive efforts taken to prevent the naturalization of new damaging species. For many years, the Puna district has been subject to severe impacts from invasive pests that have cost us not only monetarily but have also negatively impacted our health and well-being. From the invasive albizia trees that crushed hundreds of our homes and left us without power for several weeks after Tropical Storm Iselle, to the parasite-carrying semi-slug which has led to our district being the hotspot for the highest rates of severe rat lungworm disease in the world, to the little fire ants that blind our pets and make growing more difficult for our farmers, we are plagued by the worst of the worst in Hawai'i. Our burden is already great without the addition of new pests known to be some of the worst in the world.

For many years now, economic analyses have made it clear that relatively small investments into biosecurity can have large payoffs later. Just one of the invasive ants targeted by this POE program, the red imported fire ant (RIFA), has been projected to cost Hawai'i more than \$200 million *per year* should it become established here. The health costs of diseases carried by certain species of mosquitoes, the losses to our honey industry and pollination services caused by Africanized bees - any of these impacts run into the millions of dollars annually, yet this statewide program costs less than a million dollars a year. Truly a bargain!

Puna is a wonderfully rural and forested place, with many large- and small-scale agricultural endeavors. We are currently engaged in a robust effort to recover from a series of natural

Dr. Leyla Kauffman
Hawai'i Invasive Species Council
March 3, 2022
Page 2

disasters and move forward with a community-driven vision to enhance and improve our district. We appreciate any biosecurity efforts that seek to allow us to put those plans into action without additional strains from new invasive species that could affect our environment, our farmers, and the health and well-being of our residents.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Frances Kinslow Brewer
Chair, Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee

KM:hb

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