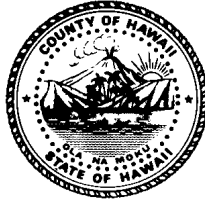


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September 20, 2022

County of Hawai'i
Director Maurice Messina
Department of Parks and Recreation
101 Pauahi St. Suite 6
Hilo, HI 96720

Cc: Councilmember Heather Kimball

Dear Director Maurice Messina:

The Hāmākua Community Development Plan (HCDP) Action Committee (AC) is writing in support of repairing and maintaining the Laupāhoehoe Boat Ramp and Breakwater.

The HCDP acknowledges that there are infrastructure challenges in Hāmākua, particularly due to our long and remote coastline. The Laupāhoehoe Boat Ramp area is cited as a resource for the Hāmākua community, which should be utilized and maintained because of its importance in providing access and resources along the coast. The HCDP's values and vision statement clearly support this, stating: "We, the residents of Hāmākua recognize that the foundation of our life, livelihood, and well-being comes from the 'āina-the land, the seas...As active stewards, we mālama the 'āina as the source of sustenance for ourselves, and future generations." As volunteer stewards of the land and sea, the Hāmākua community needs government assistance in the maintenance and repair of this integral facility.

The June 16, 2022, U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) report on Coastal Navigation explicitly describes how preference is given to larger economic centers when considering repair and maintenance projects. Developing facilities for large economic gain is not a sustainable policy for Hāmākua and for Hawai'i Island in general. The COVID-19 pandemic placed sustainability and local resources at the forefront for a viable economy. Having small harbors that allow local fisherman to access fisheries for local economic development and subsistence practices is desirable.

The same GAO Report also considered how an inoperable boat ramp remains a risk for stakeholders:

Local community members and Corps officials stated that this project serves as a "lifeline" to several communities with district cultures. Specifically, Laupāhoehoe Harbor is the only ocean

access for boats on the Hāmākua Coast, which is served by a single highway, raising the risk of isolation of the community from major population centers, medical services, and supplies should the highway be inaccessible. As a result, an operating boat launch ramp would provide another method to get resources to the community or to evacuate community members in the event of an emergency.

In terms of providing access, Section 5.9 of the HCDP, *Improve Emergency Preparedness and Hazard Mitigation* is another example of how the ramp is an invaluable asset to our community. The area should be a focal point for disaster preparedness, as an access point for communities cut off from roads due to bridge failure or landslides. We note this is not a hypothetical scenario. Currently, two of our highway bridges are weight restricted and all traffic has been re-routed off the Hāmākua coast. It is logical for our community to anticipate needing the ramp/breakwater for emergency assistance.

In addition, Section 4.2.6, Community Action 4 of the HCDP encourages the development of a hui of fisherman on the Hāmākua coast. On Sunday June 12, 2022, that fisherman community was invited to voice their support for the repair and maintenance of the Laupāhoehoe Boat Ramp and breakwater. That meeting was facilitated by Councilmember Heather Kimball with your attendance and support. Approximately 75 people attended and voiced their concerns.

Lastly, the Laupāhoehoe ramp, with a functioning breakwater, can provide another option for community recreation. Per Section 5.13 of the HCDP, *Expand Parks and Recreation*, communities surrounding Laupāhoehoe may use the Laupāhoehoe Point Beach Park extensively for family time, socialization, and enjoyment. The ramp and breakwater area is a popular place to gather, and it needs to be safe. The Action Committee acknowledges budget restrictions, but we want to emphasize that the area is beneficial to the health and well-being of our community and deserves the required repair and maintenance to function properly.

For all these reasons combined, the Laupāhoehoe Boat Ramp and breakwater is considered a top capital improvement priority of our Community Development Plan. Thank you for considering how central and significant the Laupāhoehoe Boat Ramp and breakwater is to our Hāmākua community. We look forward to the ramp and breakwater functioning properly in the near future.

Sincerely,

Hāmākua CDP Action Committee
Nicolette Hubbard, HCDP AC Vice Chair

Brad Kurokawa
Carol Ignacio
Desiree Moana Cruz

Director Maurice Messina, Director
Department of Parks and Recreation
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