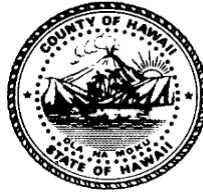


C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Gregory Henkel, Vice Chair
Jennifer Scheffel
Martha Morishige
Kanoë Wilson
Leilani DeMello, Chair
Vacant
Leila Kealoha
Susan Osborne
Franny Brewer

County of Hawai'i

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

Aupuni Center • 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
(808) 961-8288 • Fax (808) 961-8742

March 21, 2025

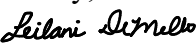
Department of Water Supply
County of Hawai'i
345 Kekuanaoa Street, Suite 20
Hilo, HI 96720

**Subject: Request for Water Line and Water Hauling Station on Orchidland Drive,
Puna, in Alignment with Puna CDP Goals**

Aloha Mr. Okamoto:

The Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee (AC) met on February 27, 2025, at the Kea'au Community Center. Included on the agenda was discussion and decision making on whether to submit a formal letter regarding the Orchidland Estates Infrastructure to the Department of Water Supply Chief Engineer and related agencies. The discussion incorporated valuable community input to ensure the concerns and perspectives of residents were fully represented. Following deliberation, the committee voted unanimously to submit the letter collectively, identified as Communication No. 2025-03.

Sincerely,


Leilani DeMello, Chair
(Mar 21, 2025 11:33 HST)
Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee

KK:jh

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Communications\Communication No. 2025-03 Orchidland Estates Infrastructure Letter.pdf

cc via email: Matt Kaneali'i Kleinfelder, District 5 County Councilmember
Kimo Alameda, County Hawai'i Mayor
Jeffrey Darrow, Planning Department Director
Board of Water Supply

March 20, 2025

Keith Okamoto
Department of Water Supply Chief Engineer
345 Kekuanaoa Street, Suite 20
Hilo, HI 96720

Dear Mr. Okamoto,

The Puna Community Development Plan (PCDP) prioritizes infrastructure improvements that enhance the quality of life for residents and support sustainable community growth. In alignment with these objectives, we urge the County of Hawai'i to construct a water line and establish a water hauling and spigot station along Orchidland Drive to address the pressing needs of residents and businesses in the area.

Critical Need for Public Water Access

Orchidland Estates and surrounding neighborhoods currently lack adequate access to public water. With Puna's annual rainfall decreasing, reliable water access has become a more urgent issue than ever before. Orchidland Drive serves as a central location between Kea'au and Pāhoā, making it an ideal site for a water hauling station. Establishing this facility would allow water haulers to shorten delivery distances and provide residents and farmers with more convenient access to essential water resources—without requiring travel on Highway 130.

Supporting the PCDP Goal of a Village Center

The PCDP (Section 3.1) envisions the development of Village Centers that provide essential goods and services within residential communities, reducing reliance on major highways. A water line along Orchidland Drive is a critical first step in realizing this vision by enabling the future establishment of a Village Center. Potential businesses, such as a grocery store and laundromat, could serve the daily needs of residents while decreasing traffic congestion on Highway 130.

Additionally, a major development was initiated along Orchidland Drive between 35th and 36th Avenues, possibly as the foundation of a Village Center. However, the project has stalled. Installing a county water line could help revitalize this project and attract investment to the area.

Enhancing Community Spaces

The local non-profit Orchidland Neighbors has taken proactive steps to enhance community infrastructure by purchasing a four-acre lot on 36th Avenue to develop a community center and park. Their plans include a multi-purpose facility with classrooms, a commercial kitchen, a meeting hall, and outdoor recreational spaces. However, the lack of public water access remains a major obstacle to the realization of this project. Extending a water line to Orchidland Drive would also directly support this community-led initiative.

Request for County Action

In accordance with the PCDP's priorities, we respectfully request the County of Hawai'i to construct a water line along Orchidland Drive, extending at least to the 37th Avenue intersection. This would facilitate the establishment of a water hauling station and public spigot access, directly benefiting residents, businesses, and future developments.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with relevant county departments to advance this essential infrastructure project. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Leilani DeMello

[Leilani DeMello \(Mar 21, 2025 11:33 HST\)](#)

Leilani DeMello, Chair

Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee

Orchidland Estates Infrastructure Letter 3-21-25

Final Audit Report

2025-03-21

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-  Signer m.leilani.demello@gmail.com entered name at signing as Leilani DeMello
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