

Aloha [Recipient Name],

Re: SB2372 Relating to Trees

The Kona Community Planning Action Committee strongly supports SB2371 SD1. This bill establishes base selection criteria for exceptional trees, adopting new exceptional tree selection criteria and the designation of significant trees. We see the value of establishing a State Arborist Advisory Committee within the Department of Land and Natural Resources and strongly support a cooperation with the University of Hawaii and the State and County Arborist Advisory Committees to carry out the Exceptional Trees Program.

Article XI of the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i mandates the conservation and protection of Hawai'i's natural beauty and resources for present and future generations. Similarly, the first Guiding Principle of the Kona Community Development Plan (KCDP) is to "Protect Kona's natural resources."

In 1974, the Hawai'i Legislature passed the Exceptional Tree Act (Act 105). The law's intention has been to protect exceptional trees statewide on both public and private land, from improper trimming and unnecessary removal. Bill SB2372 will offer a standard of consistency and added resources to care for and protect these resources.

Establishing base selection criteria for exceptional trees is line with the Kona CDP's Environmental Resources Goals and Objectives, Policies, and Actions

Chapter 4.3.2 Overall Strategy which states, "People in Kona have a growing ecological awareness and respect for their diverse resources – one that must be translated into a commitment to protect and manage these resources. This commitment will only be implemented by policies that are based on knowledge about our diverse resources..."

Exceptional trees enhance our open spaces and align with KCDP Policy LU-2.5 (Village Design Guidelines), which seeks to incorporate natural and cultural features into our community. These trees serve as cherished landmarks and are vital to maintaining our urban canopy, providing shade, preserving rainfall patterns, and filtering groundwater.

The recognition and preservation of exceptional trees is an essential part of our growing community's awareness and appreciation for one our most valuable natural resources; our trees.

Sincerely,