

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
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Vacant
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County of Hawai'i
HĀMĀKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE
Aupuni Center • 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
(808) 961-8288 • Fax (808) 961-8742

February 13, 2026

Jeffrey Darrow, Planning Director
County of Hawai'i Planning Department
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

**SUBJECT: Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee –
Request for Special Permit Process Reassessment**

Aloha Director Darrow:

At the meeting of the Hāmākua Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC) held on Tuesday, February 4, 2026, at the Honoka'a Complex, the AC voted unanimously to submit the attached letter to the Planning Director.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tisha", written over a horizontal line.

Tisha Mahealani Maikui, Chair
Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee

JL

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Hamakua Community Development Plan Action Committee

January 28, 2026

Jeffrey Darrow, Planning Director
Hawaii County Planning Department
101 Pauahi St
Hilo, HI 96720

RE: Request for Special Permit Process Reassessment

Dear Director Darrow,

The Hamakua Community Development Action Committee (HCDPAC) would like clarification on the Planning Department's procedures for Special Permit Applications.

The SPP-2024-000075 case brings to light challenges and raises questions beyond the specifics of that case. The desirability of Hawaii island and our state in general makes our lands and cultural uniqueness highly susceptible to commodification. This case highlights the difficulty of evaluating the appropriateness of unique non-conforming activities and development and their impact on our community, aina and culture. The Planning Department's favorable recommendation of the Special Permit application seems to inadequately address community concerns regarding noise, traffic, neighbor, fire hazard and environmental impacts. Additionally, there seems to be some misalignment between the State and County's regulatory process.

Consequently, HCDPAC has the following questions:

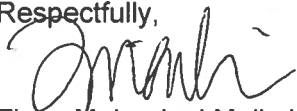
- Why be favorable to combined commercial and industrial uses into a single special permit on agricultural land?
- If Hawaii County has the authority to enforce HRS 205-4.5, which specifically states that overnight camps are not a permissible use in the Agriculture District, why are applications like SPP-2024-000075 being given favorable recommendations.

- Why not follow the process of requiring district boundary amendments for uses not permissible in the State Land Use Agricultural districts, instead of continuing to give favorable recommendations to Special Permit applications in State Land Use Agricultural districts.
- The County's General Plan and Hamakua CDP documents have dozens of policies and rationale for protecting areas that are designated as Important Agricultural Lands. Why were none of these policies noted in the Planning Director's Background Report?

These challenges call upon us to reevaluate our current regulatory process and oversight for its rigor and thoroughness to best protect our aina, culture and community. Teppy Mountain LLC, the owner of the lands in question, has indeed purchased additional large parcels (800+ acres) in Hakalau. Without singling out Teppy Mountain LLC, there is the high likelihood of other similar requests for Special Permits by not only Teppy Mountain LLC but other landowners. It behooves us to thus examine and evaluate our current regulatory process to better prepare us for these inevitable requests on at least an island and if not statewide basis.

Accordingly, the HCDPAC respectfully requests that you and the Planning Department hold broader discussions and examination of this issue and for those conversations to include all the CDP Action Committees, the Planning Commission and other community stakeholders. This would provide an opportunity to reassess our Special Permit process, its criteria and enforcement and how it would be better aligned with the State's Land Use Classification system to guide our island's future development.

Respectfully,



Tisha Mahealani Maikui, Chair

Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee