

From: [T. Kauhi](#)
To: [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony RE: Opposition Against the Falls of Fire permit
Date: Friday, May 8, 2026 9:26:30 PM
Attachments: [Testimony in Opposition to the Falls on Fire Special Permit.docx](#)

Please accept this letter as my official testimony in opposition to the proposed special permit for the Falls of Fire.

Tanya Kauhi

tkauhi@gmail.com

808-795-5866

May 8, 2026

RE: Opposition Testimony Regarding Falls on Fire Festival Permit Hearing – Papaikou

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my firm opposition to the proposed special permit application for the Falls on Fire Festival planned in Papaikou.

While I understand the importance of economic activity for our island, I have serious concerns regarding the location, community impact, public safety, infrastructure strain, and environmental effects this multi-day event will have on the Papaikou area and surrounding communities.

Papaikou is a small residential and agricultural community with limited infrastructure capacity. An event of this scale raises concerns regarding:

- Traffic congestion and road safety on Highway 19 and nearby residential roads
- Noise impacts extending late into the evening hours
- Emergency access limitations for residents and first responders
- Parking overflow into neighborhoods and private property
- Increased litter, waste, and environmental damage to surrounding natural resources
- Potential impacts to nearby streams, waterfalls, and culturally sensitive areas
- Public safety concerns related to alcohol consumption, large crowds, and overnight activities

Beyond the logistical concerns, many community members view this type of commercial festival activity as fundamentally inconsistent with the cultural values and stewardship principles of Hawai'i. The land in Papaikou is not merely a venue for entertainment — it is an area deeply connected to the history, culture, and spiritual significance of this island.

Using these lands for a large-scale festival environment involving amplified music, heavy foot traffic, commercial activity, and potential environmental degradation can be viewed as a desecration of 'āina rather than a respectful use of it. Hawaiian culture teaches mālama 'āina — to care for and protect the land — not to exploit it in ways that may damage the natural and cultural integrity of the area.

Additionally, approval of this multi-day event would negatively affect neighboring communities that will ultimately bear the burden of increased traffic, noise, trespassing, parking issues, safety concerns, and disruption to the peaceful rural character of the area long after the event has concluded.

Hawai'i should not be expected to accommodate every type of large-scale commercial entertainment event simply because similar festivals are common elsewhere. Papaikou and the surrounding communities possess unique cultural, environmental, and rural characteristics that deserve thoughtful protection and stewardship.

Events modeled after large mainland festival culture are more appropriate in locations specifically designed with the infrastructure, emergency access, transportation systems, and zoning necessary to support them without negatively impacting residential communities and culturally sensitive lands.

Many residents also feel there has not been sufficient transparency or meaningful community engagement regarding the long-term impacts this event may create. Large commercial festivals should not move forward without thorough environmental review, traffic management planning, emergency response coordination, and direct consultation with the surrounding community.

Papaikou is not designed to support repeated high-volume festival activity without negatively affecting the quality of life of nearby residents and the integrity of the area itself.

I respectfully ask that you carefully consider the cumulative impacts this event may have before approving any permits or special use authorizations. This festival is not essential for the sake of our community and should not be approve to proceed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your consideration of the concerns raised by community members.

Sincerely,

Tanya Kauhi