

Item #1 Jessica Stevens (PL-USE-2026-000042)
2026-06-05 Ginger Hamilton Opposition Testimony
Info Given at WPC 6-5-26 Meeting

From: [Ginger Hamilton](#)
To: [Mayor's Office Executive](#); [Kimball, Heather](#); [Representative Matthias Kusch](#); [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony (PL-USE-2026-000042)
Date: Friday, June 5, 2026 7:31:29 AM
Attachments: [Testimony Medical Clinic Use Permit Pepekeo 6-5-2026.pdf](#)

Aloha Kakou,

I will be attending today's meeting of the County of Hawai'i Planning Department; Windward Planning Commission. This is in regards to the following:

Testimony for Project PL-USE-2026-000042 (Please see the attached)

- Applicant: Jessica Stevens
- Request: Application for a Use Permit to allow the establishment of an outpatient medical clinic
- Location of proposed project: 28-1167 Old Mamalahoa Highway; Pepe'ekeo, HI (TMK: (3)2-28-007:084 por.)

Mahalo a hui hou, Ginger Hamilton

DATE: 6/5/2025

TO: County of Hawai'i Planning Department; Windward Planning Commission

FROM: Ginger Hamilton

SUBJECT: Testimony for Project PL-USE-2026-000042

- Applicant: Jessica Stevens
- Request: Application for a Use Permit to allow the establishment of an outpatient medical clinic
- Location of proposed project: 28-1167 Old Mamalahoa Highway; Pepe`ekee, HI (TMK: (3)2-28-007:084 por.)

Aloha Chair and Members of the Windward Planning Commission

I am testifying to voice my strong opposition and concerns to the Use Permit application from the Big Island Neuro Health Foundation for an outpatient medical clinic in the single-family residential, agricultural zoning district of Pepe`ekee. Although the location is convenient for Dr. Emanuel, who will be the resident psychiatrist for the facility and who lives in the area, it is not an appropriate business for this rural community.

Here are my concerns regarding this proposed facility:

1. The people who live in Pepe`ekee love this place because of the rural lifestyle, small farms, and multigenerational family community. What many shared at a recent meeting of the Pepe`ekee Community Development Corporation, is that they are not supportive of any of this kind of commercial venture that would bring outsiders, and increased traffic that would be disruptive to this tranquil way of life here and cause negative impacts to the fragile infrastructure (roads, bridges, water supply, etc).
2. Many of the community members are distrustful of the intentions that were reported to us. Some who live next to the proposed site were never notified about this permit use request and were not aware of this project until it was revealed at the community meeting! Also, there were mixed messages presented by the spokespersons.
 - a. The Foundation representatives explained that this site was chosen because the location would better serve clients who were not easily served by the other similar treatment facility in Waimea. I would like to point out that the distance between Pepe`ekee and Waimea is approximately 46 miles, consisting of small rural neighborhoods with a more sparse population, and likely fewer potential patients. The districts of Hilo, Puna and Volcano are far greater in numbers and would possibly have a larger clientele base. They did not respond to a question about whether they have done a study on the potential need for this type of treatment, the number of clients who might be eligible and where they reside. The distance from Pahoa to Pepe`ekee is about 30 miles and would take about 50 minutes to drive to the proposed site. The distance from Volcano area to Pepe`ekee is even greater, over 50 miles. The treatment

plan is 5 days a week for a period of 6 weeks! In addition, if clients need to rely on public transportation, the county bus does not frequent this area, stays on the main highway and does not drive down the road leading to this proposed site. Therefore, if the Foundation is truly wanting a center that is accessible to those in need, a more central location would be Hilo, where other medical establishments are found.

- b. Another concern is that clients who have to travel long distances for the duration of this treatment will find this a hardship and the foundation will then try to use that to justify turning this into a residential facility during the treatment period.
- c. It was mentioned this site was selected for its therapeutic surroundings, yet they claimed that the Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) treatment is done in an enclosed room for an approximate 20 minutes session. This type of treatment does not justify a therapeutic setting so there is conflicting information being communicated.
- d. In addition to the 5.74 acre parcel, the reps mentioned that they are also planning to purchase the adjacent property, which does give the impression that they are planning to expand the facilities in the future.

I hope that you will carefully consider the reasons why so many of us are opposed to this project and concur that the Big Island Neuro Health Foundation's Use Permit application to build and operate a clinic in Pepe'ekeo is NOT a good fit for this rural, residential community.

Mahalo for your attention to this important matter and for your efforts to address the concerns that impact Hawai'i County.

Me ka `oia`i`o,

Ginger Hamilton

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