

From: [Linas Kalvaitis](#)
To: [Planning LPC Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for the LCP June 30, 2026
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2026 1:53:09 PM
Attachments: [Public Testimony for Bill 147 Amendment \(1\).pdf](#)

I have attached written testimony.

Mahalo,

Teresa

TO: LPCtestimony@hawaiiicounty.gov

SUBJECT: Public Testimony for June 30, 2026 – Request for Amendment of Bill 147 to Protect Local Agricultural Families

TESTIMONY FOR THE LEEWARD PLANNING COMMISSION

Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM HST

SUBJECT: Opposition to / Request for Amendment of Bill 147 (Transient Accommodations) – Protect Local Agricultural Hosts

SUBMITTED BY: Teresa Kalvaitis

Dear Chair and Members of the Windward Planning Commission,

I respectfully urge the Commission to recommend amendments to Bill 147 that protect local resident families who operate small-scale, owner-occupied hosted accommodations on agricultural land.

Our Background: Local Farmers and Parents, Not Real Estate Speculators

My family and I are not off-island investors, corporate operators, or speculative real estate owners. My partner is a full-time public-school teacher and part-time university professor. I am on disability due to a seizure disorder that limits my ability to work outside the home. Together we have three children currently attending the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

We have been involved in agriculture for decades. Our family was among the original volunteers at the Waipā Ahupua'a project on Kaua'i more than thirty years ago. When we purchased our property on Hawai'i Island, we understood that farming alone would not provide enough income to support our family, maintain our land, and put our children through college. Like many local families, we developed a plan that combined farming with hosted accommodations in our home.

After years of preparation, investment, and hard work, we finally opened our small bed-and-breakfast in November 2025. We live on-site, personally host our guests, and actively manage our property. In only a few months we have earned recognition as one of Airbnb's top-rated hosts. This is not a business designed to make us wealthy. It is a way for our family to survive, continue farming, remain in Hawai'i, and contribute to our local economy.

The Regulatory Trap: Good-Faith Reliance on County Policy

One of the most troubling aspects of Bill 147 is that many local families reasonably relied on Hawai'i County's previous regulatory framework.

Under the County's 2018 STVR ordinance, Short-Term Vacation Rentals were defined as rentals where the owner did not reside on the property. Owner-occupied hosted accommodations were treated differently from unhosted vacation rentals. Many residents, including our family, understood this distinction to mean that hosted accommodations operated within an owner's primary residence were fundamentally different from the investor-owned vacation rentals that the County was seeking to regulate.

Subsequent County discussions regarding the new Transient Accommodations Registration framework acknowledged that the earlier regulations primarily addressed unhosted rentals and that hosted accommodations would be incorporated into a new regulatory system.

Many local families made significant financial decisions based on this understanding. We invested years of labor and substantial financial resources into our home and farm while believing that owner-occupied hosted accommodations were distinct from unhosted vacation rentals.

We acted in good faith.

We obtained General Excise Tax and Transient Accommodations Tax accounts. We collect and pay taxes. We pay the higher commercial property tax classification. We live on-site and personally manage our guests. We are exactly the type of local resident family that County leaders often say they want to support.

Yet Bill 147 now leaves families like ours facing a regulatory pathway that is confusing, expensive, and potentially impossible to navigate within the proposed timeline.

A Different Situation Than Speculative Investment Activity

Bill 147 was largely motivated by concerns regarding housing availability, neighborhood impacts, and speculative investment activity. Those concerns are understandable.

However, our situation is fundamentally different.

We are not removing housing from the market. We are not absentee operators. We are not investment groups purchasing multiple properties. We live on the property every day. Our guests share our home environment and our agricultural operation. The income generated through our hosted accommodations directly supports farming activities, property maintenance, food production, and our family's ability to remain on the land.

Our family represents the exact opposite of the speculative activity that prompted many of these regulatory discussions.

Special Permit Challenges for Agricultural Families

As currently drafted, Bill 147 continues to require hosted accommodations on State Agricultural land to pursue a Special Permit process.

For large commercial operators, this may be manageable. For small farming families, it is not.

The process can require farm plans, legal agreements, neighbor notifications, surveys, permit reviews, consultant expenses, and lengthy approval timelines. Many agricultural families work multiple jobs while operating their farms. Many are older residents. The average age of Hawai'i farmers continues to rise, and many do not even know these regulatory changes are occurring.

In our case, we opened only recently after years of preparation and investment. We have not yet recovered our costs. Yet we now face uncertainty regarding our future and the possibility of significant expenses simply to continue operating in the same manner we have been operating since opening.

Many families also face questions regarding historical improvements, permitting requirements, and compliance issues that may have developed over decades. Bill 147 provides little guidance for residents who acted honestly and are now attempting to comply.

Our Request

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission recommend amendments that recognize the unique circumstances of owner-occupied agricultural hosts.

Specifically:

- Exempt owner-occupied hosted accommodations on agricultural land from the Special Permit requirement when the owners reside on-site and actively farm the property.
- Create a streamlined agricultural registration pathway for bona fide farmers who can demonstrate active agricultural use through documentation such as a federal Schedule F.
- Provide clear guidance, workshops, and educational resources so residents can understand and comply with the new requirements.
- Establish an amnesty or legalization pathway for residents who acted in good faith under previous County interpretations and regulatory frameworks.
- Extend implementation and enforcement deadlines to provide families adequate time to understand and adapt to the new requirements.
- Allow existing owner-occupied agricultural hosts to continue operating during the transition period while pursuing compliance.
- Distinguish between speculative commercial operators and resident agricultural families whose accommodations directly support ongoing agricultural activity.

Conclusion

My family and I are committed to farming, stewardship of the land, and serving our community. Our hosted accommodations are not an investment scheme. They are an essential part of our family's plan to remain in Hawai'i, support our farm, and contribute to the local economy.

We respectfully ask the Commission to recognize that many local families relied on Hawai'i County's historical distinction between owner-occupied hosted accommodations and unhosted vacation rentals. These families deserve a fair, practical, and affordable pathway toward compliance.

Without reasonable amendments, transition periods, and accommodations for active agricultural families, Bill 147 risks harming the very local residents it seeks to protect.

We urge the Commission to work with local farmers and resident hosts to create a framework that preserves agricultural livelihoods while achieving the County's regulatory goals.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and service to our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Kalvaitis