

Testimony against the Ho'opili project to the LUC on Friday, October 23, 2015

For the record, my name is Denise Boisvert; I am speaking on my own behalf and my address is 225 Kaiulani Ave in Honolulu.

I actually spend most of my spare time fighting proposals for skyscrapers in Waikiki because I don't understand why developers are so obsessed with filling up open air space instead of just upgrading existing buildings or replacing dilapidated ones with new low and mid-rise buildings.

But this project is beyond belief. How is it possible that people actually need to fight against this? I cannot believe that the destruction of such fertile land is even on the table. I feel like I'm in the Twilight Zone. You don't have to be a member of the Sierra Club to know that this is wrong.

Are Hawaii's natural resources simply just doomed by profit-hungry outsiders? In past centuries the outsiders were somehow able to acquire hundreds and thousands of acres to plant sugarcane and pineapples. Now, in our lifetime they are still somehow able to acquire valuable land to plant concrete, to plant metal and to plant asphalt on the most fertile soil left on this island, left in this state, for that matter; and according to some, left in the entire country.

Some decision-makers have used the excuse that the project falls within Oahu's urban growth boundary and is part of the island's general plan. Is it possible that the general plan is wrong?

The housing shortage could be alleviated by recycling existing buildings, by upgrading them, adding a few stories, or by tearing down dilapidated ones and rebuilding low and mid-rise multi-unit buildings in their place. Ask the developers to invest in those types of properties if they want to help the state. They should not be allowed to destroy rich, fertile agricultural land to make their billions in profits.

Once it is paved over, it will be gone forever. You know that; I know that, even the developer knows that.

Unfortunately, I am not in the Twilight Zone. This fight to save the land is really happening. It sometimes takes courage to do the right thing despite the pressure from politicians and deep-pocketed developers; and despite very flawed general plans.

Please don't sacrifice the land for unnecessary development. Please think of all the food that can be grown on it to feed our future generations. Please don't give those generations the opportunity to say, "what were they thinking?"

Mahalo