

Written testimony: **A10-786 Olowalu Town: Testimony on the Final-EIS**

My name is Francois Seneca, I write on my own behalf and my address is 476 SE Krueger Creek Place, Stuart, Florida 34996.

I highly recommend the Commission to deny the Final-EIS for the Olowalu Town development.

I am a researcher for the University of Hawaii working on the effects of land-based pollutions including sediments on the health of coral reefs. The Olowalu reef is one of the sites I currently study along the coast of West Maui. I have experienced first hand the recent loss of live coral covers in the shallows at Olowalu. That decline preceded the damage done during the bleaching events of the 2014 and 2015 summers. Based on my personal investigation of the site, corals living at depth less than 3 meters are affected by an excessive input of terrestrial sediments in the system. I can affirm that this issue has taken place within the past 10 years. In fact, an examination of past google earth images strongly suggests that recent clearing of the vegetation along the coastline and on land adjacent to the beach has most likely contributed to the problem. I have read the current EIS for the Olowalu Town project and nothing is mentioned about best management practices to prevent further sediment-driven damage to the reef during constructions. My opinion based on my understanding of the Olowalu coastal system and 15 years of research on the stress response of corals is that if the Olowalu Town project goes ahead following the current EIS, people of Maui will lose one of their natural treasures. The key question is: will the West Maui community benefit more from the Olowalu reef being alive in the future or the Olowalu town being built?

Best regards,

Francois Seneca
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