BEFORE THE LAND USE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF HAWAI'I

In the Matter of the Petition of:

WAIKAPU PROPERTIES, LLC; MTP
LAND PARTNERS, LLC; WILLIAM S.
FILIOS, Trustee of the William
S. Filios Separate Property
Trust dated APRIL 3, 2000; and
WAIALE 905 PARTNERS, LLC,

To Amend the Agricultural Land
Use District Boundaries into
the Rural Land Use District for
certain lands situate at
Waikapu, District of Wailuku,
Island and County of Maui,
State of Hawaii, consisting of
92.394 acres and 57.454 acres,
bearing Tax Map Key No. (2) 3-
6-004:003 (por) and to Amend
the Agricultural Land Use
District Boundaries into the
Urban Land Use District for
certain lands situate at
Waikapu, District of Wailuku,
Island and County of Maui,
State of Hawaii, consisting of
236.326 acres, 53.775 acres,
and 45.054 acres, bearing Tax
Map Key No. (2) 3-6-002:003
(por), (2) 3-6-004:006 and (2)
3-6-005:007 (por).

DOCKET NO. A15-798
DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ROBERT W.
HOBBDY
DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ROBERT W. HOBDY

My name is Robert W. Hobdy. I am a resident of Maui and have lived on Maui for over 46 years. I am an environmental consultant specializing in flora and fauna surveys, wetland surveys and site evaluations.

I received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry from Oregon State University in 1965. After graduation, I took a job with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, for the State of Hawaii. I was employed by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife for 37 and one-half years, retiring in 2003.

Throughout my career I worked with and managed forest resources with particular attention focusing on native and endangered species and their eco systems. I collected plants for the Bishop Museum and other institutions, documenting the plants and their distribution.

While with the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, I discovered 12 new species of native plants in Hawaii, two of which I described in scientific publications and five of which were named after me by other botanists.

I served on the Maui County Arborist Advisory Committee for over 30 years and on the Federal Weed Risk Assessment Advisory Committee.

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I served on the Maui Invasive Species Committee from 1991 to the present.

Throughout my career with the Division of Forestry and Wildlife I participated in game species census and forest bird surveys.

I also documented wildlife species and made habitat assessments. I also administered forest bird and endangered species habitat management and recovery programs.

I testified as an expert witness on flora and fauna evaluations of properties on several occasions in the State of Hawaii.

I have authored over 300 flora and fauna surveys.

I am familiar with the proposed Waikapu Country Town Project that is outlined in Exhibit "25" which is the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

In February 2013, I was contracted by Waikapu Properties LLC to conduct a flora and fauna survey of a property in the Waikapu area in Central Maui. I understood that the property was vacant land that Waikapu Properties LLC was working on entitlements to allow that land to be developed as a residential subdivision.
In conducting a flora and fauna survey, I independently assess the animal and plant resources of a property.

If there is an item of concern about the flora or the fauna, I will note that concern. I do not advocate for or against a project. Rather, I investigate, report the results of my investigation, and identify matters of concern, offering recommendations consistent with the guidance of the government agencies responsible for determining appropriate activities and procedures that affect endangered and threatened plant and animal species.

In conducting a flora and fauna survey I will review maps and aerial photographs of the project site, review soil survey maps, review an atlas concerning rainfall in the area, and identify potential areas that warrant closer examination.

I then go to the property and walk the property identifying and cataloging the species of plants and animals that exist on the property.

When walking the property, I will spend a minimum of several hours, taking the time to cover all the property fully. I pay particular attention to gullies, rock outcrops, and other physical formations on the property which survived previous farming or other activities conducted on the property.
I also will observe the property at dusk and into the evening to identify and catalog the animals which could be expected to be seen or heard at dusk or at night such as the Hawaiian hoary bat.

After I conduct the surveys necessary to catalog the plant and animal life, I prepare a report.

The report I prepared concerning the investigation I made of the property on which the Waikapu Country Town Project is proposed is attached as Appendix "B" to Exhibit "25." This report accurately lists the plants and animals that I observed and cataloged on the site.

I wish to highlight some items in the report for your consideration.

As to the flora survey, a total of 130 plant species were recorded in the project area. Of these, 127 were plants that are not native to Hawaii. I observed three plant species that were native to Hawaii which were 'uhaloa (Waltheria indica), koali awahia (Ipomoea indica) and pololo (Solanum americanum). Each of these species are common and widespread in Hawaii and occur on other Pacific Islands as well; none of these species raise conservation concerns due to the widespread occurrence of the plants. From a botanical standpoint, there was nothing found on the property that warranted protection, either as a native plant species or as habitat for an existing
native plant community.

As to the animal population, I observed and inventoried 4 mammal species, 21 birds, 15 insects, 1 amphibian, 2 reptiles and 1 mollusk. The four mammal species (mongoose, cats, dogs and cattle) were all non-native. Looked for during an evening survey, but not detected, were any Hawaiian hoary bats (*Lasiurus cinereus semotus*). Birds observed included 20 non-native species that are of no environmental concern and one indigenous, migratory species, the Pacific golden plover (*Pluvialis fulva*), which is common in Hawaii. Again, because the golden plover commonly occurs throughout Hawaii, it is of no special environmental concern.

Insects were represented by 15 species. Twelve species were non-native and of no environmental concern. Two indigenous native dragonflies, the green darner (*Anax junius*) and the globe skimmer (*Pantala flavescens*) were identified. These two dragonflies are common in Hawaii and are of no special environmental concern.

One native insect that was found, the Blackburn’s sphinx moth (*Manduca blackburni*), is on the federal endangered species list. The Blackburn’s sphinx moth is currently known to occur in the central valley area of Maui. This native moth was
originally associated with plants of the genus *Nothocestrum* ('aiea) which are toxic plants. The Blackburn’s sphinx moth can ingest those toxins which then rendered the moth inedible to potential predators. The abundance of the native 'aiea plants have greatly decreased over the years, resulting in the decrease in populations of the moth, and which in turn resulted in the moth’s eventual placement on the endangered species list. The moth however, has been able to adapt to a similarly toxic non-native plant, the relatively numerous tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*) plants which now provide the same protections to the Blackburn’s sphinx moth.

Accordingly, whenever 'aiea plants or tree tobacco plants are found on a property, particular attention is directed to those plants to determine whether the moth might be present.

On the property which I surveyed, no aiea plants were found. I did, however, find two tree tobacco plants which I carefully examined for the moths, their eggs, or their larvae. I found two maturing eggs on one of the tree tobacco plants that would soon be hatching into larval caterpillars. I noted this in my report for the owner’s information and attention. I later consulted with the owner to discuss the review process and the implications of this finding. I also described the likely federal guidance that would be forthcoming, that would
provide protections for the Blackburn’s sphinx moth while
allowing the project to move forward.

In summary, when I conducted a flora survey of the
project site I found no plants which were endangered. However,
I found three native plants, all of which are common throughout
Maui, the State of Hawaii and Pacific islands. These native
plants are of no special conservation concern given their
common occurrence. It is my opinion that the proposed change
of land use of the property will not have any significant
negative impact on the botanical resources found in Central
Maui.

As to the impact on the fauna resources, I saw a good
number of non-native birds and insects and a few non-native
mammals, amphibians, reptiles and mollusks. I observed no
evidence of Hawaiian hoary bats, and found no evidence that the
property would represent habitat for any native forest birds.

Based upon my review of materials, my inspections of
the site on several occasions, and my knowledge and experience,
I concluded that with recommended remedial actions dealing with
the endangered Blackburn’s sphinx moth, the development of the
property will not have any significant negative impact on the
animal resources of the Waikapu area of Central Maui. No
important habitat for endangered native fauna exists on the
property either.
Thank you for the opportunity to address you.