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March 14, 2017

Dear Ms. Sokugawa:

The Land Use Commission was recently contacted by a representative, Wren Westcoatt, of the company that currently owns/controls two projects that are covered by State Special Permits SP15-405 (Waipi'o PV, Ltd.) and SP15-406 (Kawailoa Solar, LLC). Mr. Westcoatt was inquiring about the process to follow in order to request and obtain an extension to the start dates for establishing the two projects.

Staff provided information regarding the two-step process for making amendments to a Decision and Order covering a State Special Permit ("SP") found in Sections 15-15-96.1 and 15-15-95, Hawai'i Administrative Rules ("HAR").

The petitioner's representative informed us that the County Planning Commission had already heard and acted upon the extension request for SP15-405 in February 2017 and the request for an extension for SP15-406 was scheduled for March 29, 2017.

Commission staff followed up with Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) staff to coordinate receipt of the County Planning Commission's complete record and decisions for both dockets at the same time in order to process them on a single hearing date in the future. At that time DPP staff indicated that SP15-405 was not processed as a modification of a SP but as a minor change that DPP believed the County Planning Commission was empowered to grant.

DPP had determined that the language contained in Condition 5 (SP15-405) directed that requests for extension of the project start date be submitted to the DPP Director and then that the County Planning Commission was able to grant such a request. However, the County was mistaken in this regard as the petitioner's request in both cases is for a modification of a condition of the SP, which is subject to the requirements of section 15-15-96.1, HAR.

Condition 5 states:

"5. The Applicant shall establish the Project within two years of the date of the State Land Use Commission's (LUC) Decision and Order approving the SP. Requests for extension of this deadline shall be submitted to the Director of DPP prior to the expiration of the deadline. The Commission may grant an extension to the deadline to establish the Project due to unforeseen circumstances that were beyond the control of the Applicant. This SP shall be valid for a period of thirty-five (35) years from the date of the State LUC's Decision and Order approving the SP, subject to further extensions upon a

timely request for extension filed with the Commission at least one-hundred twenty (120) days prior to the SP's expiration."

Reading the document in its entirety, the use of the term "(T)he Commission" is intended to refer to the State Land Use Commission. DPP and the County Planning Commission have mistakenly read the language of the condition to allow the County Planning Commission the authority to grant any requested extension to the deadline to establish a project. Such a request must therefore be made consistent with the process outlined in our administrative rules.

Section 15-15-96.1, HAR, indicates that requests for modification, release or deletion of a condition is first submitted to the county planning commission and then the Land Use Commission, and shall comply with Section 15-15-95, HAR. That section spells out the notice and information requirements, guidelines for determining "unusual and reasonable uses," compliance with county planning commission rules, and ability to impose protective including time limits for establishing and ending the proposed use. Specifically, Section 15-15-95(f), HAR, states "(t)he county planning commission, with the concurrence of the commission, may extend the time limit if it deems that circumstances warrant the granting of the extension."

The time for establishing the proposed use in SP15-405 must also follow the procedures outlined in the Land Use Commission's administrative rules. This would include: notice of the request to the Land Use Commission, the State Office of Planning, and the State Department of Agriculture for review and comment; a decision by the County Planning Commission of their decision along with a complete record and transcript of the proceedings. Should the Land Use Commission receive a recommendation for a time extension request that did not follow the appropriate process or was not supported by the record, then the Land Use Commission may remand the request to the County Planning Commission for further proceedings.

The Land Use Commission and its staff would like to work with the County Planning Commission and the Petitioner to determine the most efficient way to proceed forward to preserve the legal integrity of the SP process. Should you have any questions please contact me at 587-3822.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Orodenker
Executive Officer

Cc: Dean I. Hazama, Chair - City & County Planning Commission
Leo Asuncion, State Office of Planning
Scott Enright, State Department of Agriculture
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