

Testimony in Opposition of HME

Aloha Land Use Commission or to whom it may concern. My name is Bronson Azama and I am a kama'āina of the neighboring ahupua'a of He'eia which is included in what is known as "Kāne'ohē Town." I am a class of 2020 Castle High School graduate and greatly love the community I was born and raised in. I would like to express my extreme distaste for the expansion of the Hawaiian Memorial Park. I simply cannot support the expansion of the park because of the adverse impacts it will have on the environment and cultural resources of the area.

Hawaiian Memorial Park which claims it will be protecting and offering stewardship of various cultural resources to the Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, will still be desecrating a few cultural sites which include Agriculture terraces. I know these seem like "minor" things however, for me desecration is still desecration no matter how big or small. We are in truly unsustainable times, and to allow the destruction of areas in which could be used to grow food is a deep disappointment for me. This would cause permanent damage to the heiau complex, while also changing the topography of the landscape. On a personal level Hawaiian Memorial Park should already be offering resources to steward the area, not leveraging it to promote their own corporate needs at the cost of our environment, specifically the natural resources of the community I live in.

As I have stated in previous testimony the burying practices of Hawaiian Memorial Park [with exclusion of the Hawaiian style burials] is damaging to the environment. As it comes with various chemicals within the coffins, bodies, and even the fertilizers used to keep the grass green. These chemicals enter groundwater and contaminate the Kāwā watershed which is a part of the larger Kāne'ohē Bay watershed. I recall seeing a commercial talking about the dangers of formaldehyde; a chemical used to preserve dead bodies; is found in cigarettes and it's so bad for human consumption, I thought to myself *knowing how bad this chemical is why would we allow such things to enter our natural resources here in Hawai'i*. Looking at the larger picture and understanding our kūpuna's concept of Mauka to Makai, the damage done in this area would affect the Waikālua Loko I'a, which already suffers from pollution from various sources including HMP. To allow further damage to our aquatic resources is like stripping the food out of my mouth, the intentional stealing and spoiling of the food in our ice box of Kāne'ohē Bay. We need to be conducting practices which help our neighbors, not poisoning the water that feeds a fishpond which hopefully one day can feed our community. They have already worked so hard to clean the water, and with this project moving forward expanding HMP's use of chemicals I simply cannot see how we can further mitigate that damage. We can no longer knowingly allow the poisoning of our resources, as a Hawaiian when I look at the land I have an intimate relationship with it. Truly personifying it as a living breathing being, and how could we knowingly poison our mother, as in our view Papa [Earth Mother] is the land itself.

Not only is the land itself culturally and environmentally significant, it is also significant for the beauty it displays for our community. It is after all a part of the Ko'olau Greenbelt, which

is supposed to protect our spaces from development for the purpose of preserving our land's natural beauty. To allow the expansion of the memorial park is to permanently change the topography of the Ko'olau Greenbelt, adversely affecting its beauty. Kapa'a Quarry already does a wonderful job destroying the beauty of the Kāwa'ewa'e also referred to as Mahinui mountains. So to now affect the side of the mountain which is supposed to be protected, is for me to question what is the purpose of our government and sustainable community plans if they fail to protect what the community requests for in the first place. How much more can we protect? To constantly fight with the community who calls this place home and appreciates its beauty is to also cause serious clout about whether or not we can protect what is sacred and important to us. If we are to allow this we may as well submit to any further request to destroy the Hawai'i we know and love. How much more can our land take in terms of bad development, before it becomes unable to produce food. Is it then that time that we will realize we made a big mistake?

I say no more mistakes! No more saying "oops", we need to change starting now! To commit to a sustainable Hawai'i not one which promotes corporate control of our resources, adverse and permanent damage to our natural resources. We need to protect our watersheds, protect our cultural sites, we need to ensure the Hawai'i we know and love is better for our children. Not a Hawai'i in which they cannot even drink from her waters because of chemicals used to preserve bodies and aid corporate efforts to profit off of people's remorse. What Hawai'i do you want to see? And trust me when I say I know what Hawai'i I want to see and will remember who brought it to light or threw us into a future of darkness.

From: [Timothy Deegan](#)
To: [DBEDT LUC](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hawaiian Memorial Cemetary Expansion Support
Date: Sunday, June 07, 2020 11:13:24 AM

Aloha:

I support one of the few construction projects moving forward during the current downturn - Hawaiian Memorial Park's proposed expansion

HMP has conducted a poll on public sentiment regarding the expansion plans. The poll was conducted prior to COVID-19 restrictions and the results were clear-

64% of Oahu Residents Support the Expansion

Only **7% Oppose**

Given the current downturn in the economy, I urge the LUC to not only approve the project but to also do it quickly to provide badly needed jobs and economic activity at a time when its most needed.

HMP has developed a plan that balances increased demand for burial space with cultural preservation and conservation.

The Expansion will provide jobs and economic activity immediately and upon project receiving all necessary approvals

The LUC should seek to support our economy by swiftly approving the project at a time when unemployment is roughly 20%.

Mahalo,

Tim Deegan

Rene M. Mansho
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June 7, 2020

Honorable Jonathan Scheuer
Chairperson
Land Use Commission
State Dept. of Business Economic Development & Tourism
P.P. BOX 2359
Honolulu, HI 96804-2359

Subject: Land Use Commission Hearing-SUPPORT: A17-804 Hawaiian Life Plan Memorial Ltd.

Aloha Chair Scheuer and Members of the State Land Use Commission,

I urgently implore your support for Hawaiian Life Plan Memorial Park's Expansion as it relates to the Ko`olaupoko Sustainable Communities Plan. With the uncertainties and devastation in our community caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, your expeditious action is needed. People have lost their jobs, unable to pay the rent and unable to pay for food, facing critical health challenges, and keeping hopes up for better days.

Now more than ever, the Hawaiian Memorial Park Expansion plan will provide needed jobs and generate increase in economic activities. My family and friends from all over Oahu who have relatives buried there are excited about the expansion in order for their friends and families can join them and purchase plots in the future.

More importantly, Hawaiian Memorial Park continues to support the community with their preservation efforts of historic sites and cultural resources on their lands and also provide a conservation easement to prevent future development in the area.

Finally, Hawaiian Memorial Park is a great example of these valuable and thriving public-private partnerships:

- Free funeral services for Police, Fire, and military killed in action while performing their duty
- 10 years sponsorship of *GOING GREEN RECYCLING COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAYS*- providing free drop off for e-waste recycling in our schools and community centers
- Annual sponsor for Wahiawa Lions Veterans Day Parade and Wahiawa War Memorial Pool Ceremony honoring 442nd and 100th Battalion soldiers
- State Veterans Cemetery for over 10,000 veterans final resting place
- Gold Star Family Memorial to honor veterans who died while on active duty serving America

Please allow the Hawaiian Memorial Park Expansion to go forward as soon as possible to enable our residents to get back to work, provide economic activity, and provide a much needed final resting place for our families in the future.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my comments to support the project. Best wishes in your decisions to help the people of Hawaii.

Sincerely,



Rene Mansho
Going Green Volunteer Coordinator

Hawaiian Memorial Park Expansion Testimony

Members of the Land Use Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would like to revise my previously submitted written testimony in light of recent flood mitigation issues brought up by various civil engineers who examined Petitioner's Environmental Impact Statement.

My main concern is still, and will always be, protecting the people and homes in my community. The homes bordering the expansion area have been subjected to flooding during periods of heavy rain. I've personally spoken with residents whose homes have been recently flooded. If Petitioner's expansion plan does not improve the flooding risk for those homes, I encourage the Land Use Commission to reject the petition.

The following are my concerns related to flooding due to the proposed expansion:

- A civil engineer from the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Facilities and Maintenance noted that the runoff coefficient used by Petitioner's engineer is unrealistic with the silty clay composition of the soil and the added roadway. If inadequate, the water control measures may also be inadequate to protect the surrounding homes.
- The retention basins may be inadequately sized due to the contours of the land directing runoff more to some detention basins than others. This may lead to an overload of one of the detention basins, leading to flooding.
- There is a very large amount of earth being moved by cut and fill, which should be phase and allowed to settle before pipes are installed underground. Groundcover should also be established to prevent runoff sediment from filling detention basins.
- A maintenance plan for the detention basins is needed in order to prevent them from filling with sediment, and a gauge should be installed to monitor the sediment.
- The expansion plans will take a large portion of the hilltop off, which will alter water flows across the property. This needs to be accounted for in order to protect the houses from flooding. On a non-flooding note, the plan calls for moving a LOT of earth, which is concerning.

While some of the added details will need to be worked out at the DPP permitting phase, I hope that the Land Use Commission can, at this stage, require Petitioner to adjust its plans to ensure the community surrounding the expansion area is protected from flooding. Until that happens, I do not support the expansion of Hawaiian Memorial Park.

Sincerely,

Scot Matayoshi

State Representative, District 49

To: Land Use Commission, State of Hawaii

re: Public Testimony

Subject: Docket A17-804

Hawaiian Memorial Park

Dear Land Use Commissioners,

This is not my first letter to your Board in opposition to the proposed expansion of Memorial Park but I am hopeful it will be the last when you consider all the facts and determine that this proposal should not be approved and that this land should remain a conservation district as you decided in 2009.

My specific concern in writing to you today is the biased nature of the survey Hawaiian Memorial Park recently submitted as an additional exhibit to promote their proposed plan. The opening statement of the Executive Summary of this survey states: "A majority of O'ahu residents support Hawaiian Memorial Park's planned expansion" when that statement should also include "*based on the description given.*" When you look at that description given to survey respondents, multiple issues of full disclosure arise:

"Hawaiian Memorial Park has been part of Kane'ohē since 1958." Disclosure: *It is now owned by a very large multi-national funeral company, SCI; i.e., it is not a 'local' business. Additionally, in 2017, a survey done by the Funeral Consumers Alliance and the Consumer Federation of America stated that "the median prices for basic funeral services are as much as 72% higher at SCI owned funeral homes than at independent rivals."*

"Currently 94% of its burial space is sold and no new cemeteries have been built on Oahu since the 1960's." Disclosure: *Though 94% of its plots are sold, HMP is nowhere near burial capacity as many of its plots are unoccupied and in fact many people continue to try to sell their plots though HMP will not assist them in that process. Additionally, HMP allows fewer internments per plot than other cemeteries.*

"The project would be located on 56.5 acres of undeveloped land owned by HMP, adjacent to its current cemetery." Disclosure: *This land is zoned for conservation use and HMP/SCI knew that when they purchased the land.*

"It would include 28.2 acres of new cemetery space and the establishment of a 14.5 acre preserve to protect significant cultural sites on the property." Disclosure: *There is no mention of the roads to be built, the 10-25 foot retaining walls to be built, the deforestation of the whole area, the massive movements of earth and rock (cuts of up to 100 feet and dirt fill up to 40 feet), and the presence of an endangered native species – the blackline damselfly. Additionally, by law, native practitioners would have access to the cultural site already.*

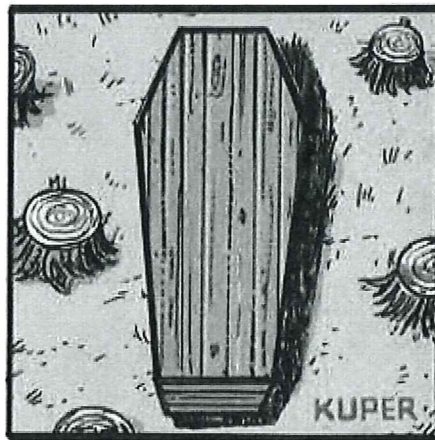
It is significant to note that over 2,000 people have signed a petition in opposition to the expansion of HMP. The survey commissioned by HMP surveyed only 400 people and those people were given a very limited view of the project highlighting only the positive aspects; e.g., the cultural preserve and the perpetual conservation easement, and none of the negative issues.

The Land Use Commission is responsible for preserving and protecting Hawaii's lands and encouraging those uses to which lands are best suited. Per HRS 205, "conservation districts shall include areas necessary for protecting watersheds and water sources; preserving scenic and historic areas; providing

park lands, wilderness, and beach reserves; conserving indigenous or endemic plants, fish, and wildlife, including those which are threatened or endangered; preventing floods and soil erosion; forestry; open space areas whose existing openness, natural condition, or present state of use, if retained would enhance the present or potential value of abutting or surrounding communities....” For all of these purposes, please, please do not allow HMP to destroy our hillside and please do not be swayed by a company whose main purpose is to make money. Most local people probably won’t even be able to afford one of their burial sites. HMP has ignored our environmental concerns and has used the proposed cultural preserve as a means of dividing our community. We must protect our land and our environment.

Sincerely,

Kathleen O’Malley, Resident of Pikoiloa



To: The State Land Use Commission

7 June 2020

Subject: Testimony in support on HMP's expansion: Jay Morford, Hawaiian Memorial Life Plan, Ltd. DBA Hawaiian Memorial Park Cemetery

We must expand the Hawaiian Memorial Park Cemetery and I enthusiastically support the expansion. This project has enormous public approval, will certainly provide needed jobs and create economic activity during our unemployment crisis. The sooner this is approved, the better for Hawaii.

I am only one of the 192,000 World War II orphans who have served in silence for 75 years. I am the Hawaii representative for the American World War II Orphans Network (AWON). Just as the greatest generation grows smaller and smaller, so do we. I stand here to have our voices heard. We are the forgotten casualties of war that lingers after the battles of victory. I am here to remind everyone of the pains of war upon children. Poets failed to praise us in verse and songwriters failed to sing about us. We have never earned a medal, yet we have carried the scars of war like a badge of courage. We never had a statue, never had a monument, nor ever had a memorial. Finally, three years ago Jay Morford fulfilled our dream. He is our hero and also Hershel "Woody" Williams who is planting Gold Star Memorials all around America. The Hawaiian Memorial Park Cemetery erected the Gold Star memorial appropriately at the gateway to the State's Veterans Cemetery. They also donated the land to the State for that Cemetery with a "promise" to expand and that promise must be kept. Here we are, it's time to expand up the hillside so that future sons and daughters have a place to rest looking across at the beautiful Ko'olau Mountains. Maybe there will be room for Gold Star orphans.

I served our troops for 42 years as an Army Entertainment Director. Hawaii is a small corner of the world where future generations of historians and students can join the experience of the beginning and end of World War II at the Arizona and the Missouri. They will visit Punchbowl and the Veteran's Cemetery, reading the names of those not forgotten. Let them also do it on the beautiful slopes of the expanded Memorial Park.

Vanita Rae Smith

Proud daughter of PFC Ray Smith

"F" Troop, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division

Died of Wounds in Luzon, Philippines 28 April 1945

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