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To: [DBEDT LUC](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony - IAL
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To the Land Use Commission Members,

I am an Ag 1 landowner in Waialua who has recently received the LUC April 12 letter notifying us about our land being designated as Important Agricultural Land. I recall about a year or more ago receiving a vague letter about this from someone that had very little information in it, just really a notification that our land might be included in this. That letter had no call to action and as I stated, very little information about what that would mean to us. My overall impression was that it might be a favorable thing for us, as the name Important Agricultural Land would imply. I was never contacted again either by email, or written mail, or phone again until the LUC April 12th letter.

As an owner of 100% off-grid ag land that had not been set foot on in the last 100 years by farmers, only by cattle, we have spent the last 5 years clearing rocks, halekoa, cat claw, California grass, old broken fences and other non-indigenous weeds in order to prepare our land for possible agricultural growing use. We have no access to water, electricity, or even workers as our easement road to access our land is impassable for many of the winter months due to mud caused by rain and flooding of the river we must cross twice to access our place. These are already extremely difficult conditions under which to successfully plant and maintain and grow, especially since we are not permitted to build a dwelling. At least 75% of our land is rock-covered hillside with a very steep grade. We have invested time and money to be able to farm the remaining area. There is no way we will ever recoup what we have invested by selling agricultural products. Hawaii's labor laws, compliance, etc are preventing this from ever happening. This latest IAL designation is just another obstacle. The cost of our land, the cost of water, electricity, etc...all infrastructure we must build ourselves and pay for just to get basic water and farming needs met will never be covered. Still, we have wanted to grow and have been willing to make this investment in the Aina.

Now the LUC and the City and County are actively working against us in the name of encouraging agricultural use of this land. It's so demoralizing. We are small, and to go up against the cadre of commissions, government departments, law firms and politicians is overwhelming for us. We don't have the \$80,000-\$100,000 I've been quoted to hire a law firm to make the 51% designation for our IAL so that we can maybe invest hundreds of thousands more to maybe get reimbursement via a tax credit....how does this make fiscal sense for us? We are being screwed. The big land owners have already somehow magically discovered these piles of money and have hired their own lawyers to get it. Typical age old Hawaii politics story of the big land owners getting richer and the little guy getting harmed.

This entire process has been non-existent. I've had to scramble in the last few weeks to try to get educated, as have all of our farming neighbors. Most of our land burdened up this summer in a wild fire, so luckily we know many of our neighbors who came to help us. We are all shocked and surprised by this IAL development and running around trying to find out what it means to us and what course of action is opened to us. We have been blindsided. The City & County have done NOTHING to inform us, or help us. They are not farmers, and obviously have no agenda other than political. They are killing ag, not encouraging ag.

We've been told by real estate appraisers that they are now going to reduce the value of any ag land on Oahu by at least 25% when doing their appraisals. Most buyers of ag land can't even get a mortgage from a bank as it is and this additional burden will eliminate even more prospective buyers. Do you want to buy a beautiful lot? I'm ready to give up. Is this what the government really wants? Is this part of a land grab? I don't know what's happening....other than my dream of having a small farm is dying by the day.

I also want to add that if other people have ag lots where they are allowed to build a house and live there, what is wrong with that? Every single place in America has "gentlemen" farm lots where people can choose to live. Why can't we have that in Hawaii? Why do only a few luna get to live that way?

I have waited 3 hours on zoom call this morning to have a chance to say this at the "public hearing". It's pretty outrageous that this major issue that is affecting people's livelihoods is also not given precedence and a special time. You guys knew how many people were upset and yet in addition we have to spend possibly 2 days out of our work day to try to get our voices heard. People have jobs and can't afford to do this. I know you're trying to help but this entire thing is just a mess. The city and county have caused such a scramble and panic during a pandemic when we all already have loss of livelihood, etc that this is unkind and unprofessional and really hurting people.

Mahalo,

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