

April 28, 2021

State Land Use Commission
PO Box 2359
Honolulu, HI 96814-2359

RE: Conformance of C&C of Honolulu Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) Recommendations
Land Use Commission Meetings April 28-29, 2021

Dear Members of the State LUC:

I am one of the owners of some of the lands being considered for the designation of Important Agricultural Lands.

I'm not sure if the Commission is aware of the petition with nearly 500 signatures opposing this designation of lands but I have included the link below.

https://www.change.org/p/hawai-i-state-land-use-commission-stop-hawai-i-state-control-of-private-ag-lands?recruiter=58723797&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=psf_combo_share_initial&utm_term=bb7a7518a88d47628b588def7d3243f4&recruited_by_id=f262ee00-e043-0130-173d-00221964dac8&use_react=false

I submit this along with my personal testimony as evidence that the County's recommendation for the designation of Important Agricultural Lands does not comply with section 205-47, specifically Part B which clearly states that this recommendation was to be made in consultation and with the cooperation of the affected landowners. As a landowner, I can attest to the fact that that did not happen.

This section states that this was to be inclusive. It was not. Proper notice was to be given. That didn't happen. The landowners whose lands were subject to this designation would be given a chance to offer written statements and some have. But I have to argue that we were not given the sufficient and/or reasonable notice that would allow us the time and opportunity to research and craft our statements.

The nearly 500 signatures on this petition show there is more than just a few of us who feel this way and these facts alone prove that County did not comply with section 205-47.

My neighbors and I received a letter dated April 12th but that I only received a few days ago, and that letter is informing us of a meeting, that it states, we should attend on March 24th and 25th which is impossible to attend without access to a time machine because that is nearly a month after the fact.

Had this been handled properly and had landowners been included in this meeting or any attempt made to include and notify landowners as the sections require, perhaps the County would be in compliance but they are not.

The landowners were not consulted or included, and there certainly was no attempt of cooperation as section 205-47 stated there needed to be for the County to be in compliance.

Further complicating things is that the language defining this designation's details is vague and ambiguous with a lack of adequate punctuation. Before we move forward it needs to be rewritten and it actually needs to be rethought.

In closing, I'd like to state that a lot of the ideas here I believe are well intended but are held over from a system adopted in the 1970's that fails to understand how agriculture has changed. It's meant for a market and scale that is dramatically different than what we have today. We cannot scale our operations the way we could have then.

These smaller TMKs, like I own, sat vacant when Dole stopped using them. Hawai'i stopped being able to compete internationally but are preserved by us small scale local farmers and owners and are protected under existing laws. However, they will sit vacant again if the farmers and investors can't remain capable of pivoting as markets, technologies, and times change. The approach we are considering will seemingly limit that ability and in the end may kill our industry instead of preserving it.

Sincerely,
Sean Anderson