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December 6, 2021



VIA Email: dbedt.luc.web@hawaii.gov
Mr. Jonathan Scheur, Chair
and Members of the State of Hawai'i Land Use Commission
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
P.O. Box 2359
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804-2359

Chair Scheuer and Land Use Commissioners:

Re: Petition of Kekaha Agriculture Association for Declaratory Order
to Designate Approximately 12,123 acres at Kekaha, Kauai;
TMK 4-1-002:001 (por) IAL
Docket Number: DR21-76
Filed: December 2, 2021
Hearing Date: December 23, 2021

The State of Hawaii, Department of Agriculture, through the Agribusiness Development Corporation, a body corporate and politic administratively attached to the Department of Agriculture ("ADC"), submits the following testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** for the above-referenced Petition.

As noted in the Petition, ADC is tasked with managing and controlling the lands and improvements on more than 12,000 acres of agricultural lands in Kekaha, Kauai ("Kekaha lands") under an executive order. Daily operation and management of these improvements were contracted to the Kekaha Agriculture Association ("Petitioner") in 2007, which contract was updated and amended in 2008. With the further passage of time, more improvements and long-term planning and development of the agricultural infrastructure on Kekaha lands have been successfully accomplished by the Petitioner. These developments include the repowering of hydro-electric power plants that service the Kekaha lands and its tenants, upgrading and modernizing irrigation water delivery systems to ensure adequate water supply and at minimum waste and loss, installing security devices and real-time video to reduce crop loss and decrease vandalism to farm assets, and so much more. These ancillary services and upgrades are often overlooked in the agricultural business but are as crucial to profitable production as the crops themselves.

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With continued capital investment by Petitioner in the Kekaha lands, with its movement towards applying smart technology on the lands to assist the Kehaha farmers, and now, with the added advantages that IAL incentives will afford, ADC anticipates increased and sustainable yields from the Kekaha lands which will contribute to the agricultural revenues and provide opportunity for agricultural labor. Designation of the Kekaha lands will promote the long-term use and viability of the lands and will allow the Kekaha community to "keep the county, country", but with newer technology, better infrastructure, and more efficient use of water and energy resources.

ADC strongly urges this Commission to GRANT this Petition and declare the Kekaha lands as Important Agricultural Lands in accordance with HRS Chapter 205, Part III.

Sincerely,



James J. Nakatani
Executive Director

c: KAA
ADC board members