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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
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February 16, 2024

Director of Council Services
Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.
Deputy Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.



County of Maui
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear : Thomas Fischer

SUBJECT: Lanai 201H - Offsite Utility Discussion

Thirty years have passed since the last concentrated effort for any much-needed Lānaʻi affordable housing project. The issue has always been project cost as anything proposed is immediately hindered by the additional burden of infrastructure. Due to Lānaʻi rural location the amount to ship materials, equipment and workers, and then housing the workers while the project progresses all but doubles lowest bids proposed.

Currently, Lānaʻi has an average homeownership age of 50 and older, with many of our grown children unable to purchase homes and leaving the island. With a limited housing inventory, two things have developed when houses are put on the market, out-of-state or off-island purchases, or multi-home investment purchases all while a large proportion of our rental market is rented to construction workers who are working on our large majority landowner's projects. A recent inventory check shows a single-family home for sale at \$900,000 and a studio apartment for sale at \$300,000. As a result of this lack of housing inventory and high purchase cost Lānaʻi has developed into a town of multigenerational homes with many families living under one roof.

In 2021 my team went door to door with a survey to take stock of my community's housing needs. We gathered feedback from 398 households. 29% stated that their family was doubled up or overcrowded in one home because there was no other housing available. 69.6% stated their family was in need of affordable housing with 65.4% wanting to own or a rent-to-own model. Overwhelmingly 81.2% of the residents surveyed wanted single-family housing with the majority wanting 2 and 3 bedrooms.

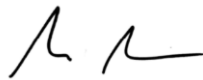
This same survey revealed that 28.6% of those surveyed would qualify for senior housing with many surviving on low income. I strongly encourage that phase one of any new development consists of kūpuna housing to serve our most vulnerable and single-family homes that will lead to home ownership.

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In the same year, the county approved Pulama Lānaʻi 201H project consisting of 150 2-bedroom rental units, 76 slated for workforce housing. This project was originally slated to be housing-to-own but ultimately came in front of the council as fully furnished rentals. Many residents feel that this project caters more for off-shore workers being imported by the company than long-term residents. This project is now complete and began to fill at the beginning of the year, which is great, but my community needs the opportunity for home ownership. Lānaʻi was famous for exporting pineapples - the only thing we are exporting now is our keiki!

I strongly support any project that will take care of our vulnerable and provide affordable home-owner housing that my community sorely wants and needs.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Gabe Johnson- Lānaʻi Residency

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cc: Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr.