

LKOC Testimony to Governor Ige re pending FEIS approval – sent Oct 6 2020

Presented here as a copy of the email notification of receipt of message from noreply@honolulu.gov on October 6, 2020:

Thank you for your message!

Your Name: Mrs. Diane Harding

Your Title: President

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Message Type: Comment/ Suggestion

Your Message: Dear Honorable Governor David Ige,

The Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle (LKOC) strongly urges you to NOT approve the FEIS for the Kawainui-Hamakua Master Plan Project.

It is LKOC's position that the natural, historic and cultural resources of Kawainui and Hamakua wetlands and watersheds entrusted to the public must be protected for the benefit of present and future generations. It is imperative that a prioritization of resource management be done for the improvement of Kawainui and Hamakua's functional ecosystems, the preservation of its cultural and archaeological sites, and the desire for public access.

However, the current Kawainui-Hamakua Master Plan FEIS, as presented to you, proposes numerous modern structures and public access elements that would inexorably alter the marsh ecosystem and lead to water contamination of both the marsh and Kailua Bay, just as prior proposed plans for a shopping mall, boat harbor and sewage outflow would have done. These damaging effects far outweigh the public benefit being offered in the Master Plan.

To further demonstrate these significant impacts, the Master Plan includes numerous uses of terms such as "mitigate", "reduce" and "minimize" harm, when discussing the

proposed construction of these modern elements within the Marsh. This indicates an acknowledgement of the Plan's failure to do the right thing, i.e., to aggressively protect the wetland and Kailua Bay from further decline. The only way to truly do no harm is to remove these modern elements from the plan. Their removal would prevent further contamination of the downslope waterways of the Kawainui Canal, Kawainui Stream and Kailua Bay.

LKOC proposed an Alternative Plan, (discussed in Section 2 of the FEIS, and presented in its entirety in Appendix A-1, pp. 106-116), which has no such modern construction elements, but still achieves the Master Plan's purpose and objectives as stated in the Master Plan: "to sustain and enhance the natural and cultural resources associated with this area and increase public access and outdoor recreational opportunities".

LKOC's Alternative Plan includes implementation on a smaller scale to avoid negative environmental impacts to the wetlands, watersheds, endangered waterbird habitat, and archaeological sites. Our plan contends that modern buildings, other than those necessary for maintenance operations, and extensive trails and other structural additions, are not needed in order to comply with the Plan's objectives. Our plan meets the mandate of Section 6(f) of the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program to provide recreational opportunities on lands acquired with federal LCWF funds. Additionally, numerous stewardship activities and public access are already taking place without the harmful imposition of modern structures.

Public opposition to the Master Plan has not supported DLNR's claim that the proposed plan is "reasonable" and "beneficial". Nor is there any evidence given to support their claim that the Master Plan is environmentally sustainable. In fact, the current Master Plan will provide unprecedented public access and increase in demand for recreational use of an already endangered water bird habitat and an already degraded ecosystem. We believe the Master Plan's insistence that Ramsar and the Land Water Conservation Fund require the level of recreational, educational, and cultural presence being proposed is unfounded. Exceptions to such high levels of public access would and should be allowed for wildlife sanctuaries and wetlands as small as Kawainui-Hamakua.

The natural, cultural and scenic capital of Kawainui are public trust resources that benefit all of Hawaii, and environmental damage to these resources must be avoided at all cost.

We urge you to reject this FEIS for the Kawainui-Hamakua Master Plan Project.

Sincerely,
The Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle