



## The Senate

STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

June 22, 2012

Glenn M. Okimoto  
Director  
Department of Transportation  
869 Punchbowl Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Director Okimoto:

Re: Pi'ilani Promenade Shopping Center and Outlet Mall

I am writing on behalf of my constituents in the South Maui community and their concerns regarding the impact of a massive retail development planned on 88 acres of land located mauka of Pi'ilani Highway at Kaonoulu Street in Kihei. I recently attended a public meeting of the Kihei Community Association, where residents of South Maui expressed frustration and anger that they have been denied the opportunity to be heard on a project that will forever change the character and landscape of South Maui.

As the Department is aware, in 1994, Kaonoulu Ranch petitioned the Land Use Commission for a boundary amendment to re-characterize the land from the agricultural district to the urban district. That land is the site of the proposed Pi'ilani Promenade shopping center and outlet mall. In 1994, Kaonoulu Ranch proposed development of a light industrial park configuration. A Traffic Impact Analysis Report which estimated approximately 4,800 average daily trips was prepared in conjunction with Kaonoulu Ranch's petition. The 1994 study estimated the impact on surrounding areas based only on light industrial use, as no reference was made to a retail shopping center or mall in the original 1994 petition.

The current owner is now planning on developing a sprawling shopping center and outlet mall on the property. It is being touted as the largest retail complex on Maui, and the plans indicate the project will be 100% retail, with no light industrial use. I am deeply concerned that the public has been denied the opportunity to comment on this new use, one that will have a significantly different impact on the community than the original plan for a light industrial park.

I understand that the developer has provided HDOT with an updated traffic study, but this study has not been made readily available to the public. There have also been no public meetings in which to take comments or propose mitigation. An independent traffic engineer recently calculated that approximately 25,000 average daily trips would be generated by the proposed retail shopping center and outlet mall. According to information obtained on the developer's website, this stretch of Pi'ilani Highway already sees approximately 38,000 cars a day. Due to the dramatic increase in traffic from the previously proposed industrial park to the current planned retail development, it is highly likely that the proposed shopping center and outlet mall will have substantially different transportation impacts than were previously disclosed to the Land Use Commission in 1994.

I also understand that HDOT does not have authority to enforce Land Use Commission's Decision and Orders. However, the Department of Transportation has an obligation to the citizens of South Maui to provide for an efficient movement of people and goods. The proposed development of the retail center mauka of Pi'ilani Highway impedes this obligation. HDOT also has an obligation to ensure that any development which impacts the efficient movement of people and goods on its roadways must mitigate those impacts in a manner approved by HDOT. At the moment, the project plans indicate only one signalized access point at Pi'ilani Highway and Kaonoulu Street. This will result in a Level of Service F intersection with increased congestion and greater potential for gridlock. This is **unacceptable** for the community. The Department must give assurances to the public that the flow of traffic along Pi'ilani Highway will not be grossly impeded. Mitigations must be planned for now and executed now. They should not be allowed to wait until the project is constructed and then assess a mitigation plan. That approach I find unacceptable.

I am therefore requesting that the Department of Transportation take immediate steps to address the impacts the proposed retail and outlet complex will have on the Kihei community and Maui as a whole. An updated traffic study that focuses on trip generation and potential traffic impacts of the two shopping centers must be completed. Questions regarding the impact the shopping centers will have on other businesses, residents, and evacuation plans in the event of a tsunami must be addressed. Furthermore, there is a problem of increased response time for emergency vehicles if this project moves forward. Increased congestion along Pi'ilani Highway may result in delays in access time for emergency vehicles. This is a vital public safety concern that also must be addressed in a traffic study.

I am also interested in the Department addressing the lack of frontage or connector roads, a condition originally imposed in the 1995 Order of the Land Use Commission. The current plans also indicate a lack of sidewalks and access points into the proposed shopping complexes. The proposed development is planned as a retail destination center attracting visitors from across Maui island and larger than any retail complex on

Maui. Queen Kaahumanu Center, for example, has 33 acres of land with 572,000 square feet of leasable space. Therefore this complex should have more than one entrance and exit as the other large Maui retail centers do. The developer should have to address this matter in any mitigation plan and HDOT must require it as a condition of having access to a state roadway!

A public hearing on this matter is essential. The South Maui community has been denied the opportunity to voice concerns over a project that will have permanent consequences for residents of Kihei and all of Maui. The refusal of the developer to engage with the public has alienated the community. Furthermore, if the Department and the Land Use Commission fail to address the numerous concerns over this project, public confidence in an inclusive democratic process will be eroded.

If I have been misinformed regarding the impact this project will have on traffic patterns in South Maui and the community as a whole, I will gladly meet with a representative from the Department and a traffic engineer who can demonstrate to me why I should not be concerned or why I should not demand relief by HDOT. We can then meet with members of the community together and explain the effects this project will have on South Maui.

Community involvement and input in this process is critical. The developer has begun to prelease space for the proposed shopping center and outlet mall, which underscores the importance of addressing this situation in an expedited manner. I look forward to a response from the Department no later than June 29, 2012.

Sincerely,



Rosalyn H. Baker  
Senator, 5th District

cc: Governor Neil Abercrombie  
Attorney General David M. Louie  
Mr. Alvin Takeshita, Highways Administrator  
Mr. Ferdinand Cajigal, Engineering Program Manager  
Ms. Charlene Shibuya, Department of Transportation