

December 1, 2010

Via email: CCLBC@honolulu.gov
Clean Water and Natural Lands Commission
Honolulu City Council
530 South King St., Rm. 302
Honolulu, HI 96813

Via email: molly.e.schmidt@hawaii.gov
Legacy Land Conservation Commission
Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 'i 96813

**Re: Turtle Bay Mauka Ag Lands - Testimony In Support Of The Trust
for Public Land's Application For Funding**

Aloha Commission Chair and Members:

I strongly support The Trust for Public Land's (TPL's) efforts to acquire an agricultural conservation easement over 469 acres of prime agricultural land located in Kahuku, O`ahu owned by Turtle Bay Mauka Lands, LLC (an affiliate of Turtle Bay Resort). Agricultural conservation easements dedicate land to agricultural purposes in perpetuity, forever removing the threat of re-zoning, re-classification, and development, on a voluntary basis and with cooperation and full support of the landowner.

About 20 small farmers are currently growing a variety of diversified crops on these lands. The lands contribute to the food self-sufficiency of our islands. The dedication of the land to agricultural purposes would also allow the landowner to issue longer term leases, enabling the farmers to invest more in their operations and qualify for financing and other government assistance programs.

These lands are also highly threatened by development pressures. The land is located directly across the street from Turtle Bay Resort and is owned by an affiliate of the Resort. The Resort has changed ownership on many occasions. The current owner is voluntarily willing to dedicate these lands to agriculture in perpetuity, and we should jump at this once-in-a-lifetime chance before the Resort changes hands once again. A new owner could have entirely different plans for these agricultural lands that may be at odds with the community's rural vision for the area.

Many of our North Shore agricultural lands are threatened with re-zoning and development, resulting in community dissension and controversy (e.g., Gunstock Ranch, Malaekahana). We can avoid these conflicts through voluntary land conservation and

agricultural conservation easements like this one. I therefore strongly support TPL's application for funding before this Commission.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,

Senator Clayton Hee