



Natural Resources Conservation Service
PO Box 50004
Honolulu, HI 96850
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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 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:

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supports The Trust for Public Land's (TPL's) and the North Shore Community Land Trust's (NSCLT'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, and are purely voluntary, done with the express cooperation and support of the landowner.

From 2002 to 2007, over 10,000 acres of Agricultural Lands came out of production on O`ahu alone (*Agricultural Census, 2007*), much of which was due to urban development. The more agricultural lands that is lost the more the economic viability for the remaining operations decreases. This makes agricultural preservation that much more important. This is an opportunity to help protect Hawaii's agricultural future.

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.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Whitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "M" and "W".

MICHAEL WHITT
Resource Conservationist
Pacific Islands Area

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

