

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
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September 26, 2024

Dawn N.S. Chang, Chairperson
State of Hawai'i
Board of Land and Natural Resources
Commission on Water Resource Management
Department of Land and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, HI 96809

Dear Chair Chang,

As a follow up to our telephone conversation of Tuesday, September 24, 2024, I am writing this letter asking that you consider deferring items 12(1), (2) and (3) on your September 27, 2024 Agenda, which involve the consideration of approval of the issuance of a water license covering the diversion of public surface water from the Koolau Forest Reserve on Maui ("East Maui Water License").

The purpose of my request is two-fold. As you are aware, the Maui County Charter was recently amended to create the County of Maui East Maui Regional Community Board ("EMRCB"), and the East Maui Water Authority ("EMWA"). One of the County's primary goals in supporting the formation of both entities is to pursue the County's control and management of the East Maui Water License. On March 14, 2024, the EMRCB, through its Chair Jonathan Likeke Scheuer, formally notified the BLNR of its request that the DLNR initiate the processes for the EMWA to obtain and manage the East Maui Water License. He also requested that he be informed of the steps that needed to be taken to effectuate this acquisition. You acknowledged these requests with a reply, letter dated July 31, 2024. A deferral of this item will allow the EMWA an opportunity to follow-up with the DLNR on this request.

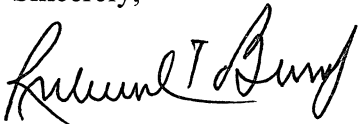
More importantly, however, a deferral of this item will allow the County of Maui and other interested parties to explore possible long-term partnership opportunities that will address the water needs of both public and private entities that depend on this important water resource. My hope is to end the long-standing conflict surrounding this water resource, and to bring the parties together to explore fair and equitable ways to balance everyone's water needs. The best way to accomplish this end is to come up with a working compromise rather than an expensive, lengthy contested case proceeding.

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Certainly, it would make sense and be fair to all parties involved to extend the current lease, as is, for another year to allow the parties time to continue to work towards an amicable solution.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard T. Bissen, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Richard T. Bissen, Jr.
Mayor, County of Maui

c: Governor Josh Green, M.D.
DLNR Land Division
DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Commission on Water Resource Management
John Stufflebean, P.E., Director, County of Maui Department of Water Supply
Jonathan Likeke Scheuer, Chair, East Maui Regional Community Board
Shan Tsutsui, Mahi Pono