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Sent: Friday, February 08, 2008 1:01 PM

To: WLHtestimony

Cc: Rep. Roland Sagum

Subject: Testimony in support of HB 3286

Note: This testimony replaces the testimony I emailed at 10:39am this morning. It has been revised to reference the correct bill number. Please disregard the previous email Mahalo!

Aloha Chair Ito and members of the Water, Land, Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 3286. The bill amends Chapter 205 to allow mining for sand, rock, gravel and other materials suitable for use and used in construction and activities ancillary to mining, including processing and storage, within the agricultural districts as a permitted use; provided that the person is engaged in mining.

I am a Principal Planner with Belt Collins Hawaii, but my remarks today do not represent my employer. Rather, they represent the opinion of a professional land use planner who has been employed as a planner in Hawai'i for the past 29 years.

Because I specialize in the preparation of environmental impact statements and land use permit applications, I am very familiar with Chapter 205, as well as the wide range of land use controls that together constitute Hawai'i's land use control policy.

Of particular interest to me is the recently published Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan.

I believe that Bill 3286 is consistent with the goals of the Sustainability Plan, and therefore, is worthy of adoption.

From a sustainability point-of-view, high-quality basalt rock is a valued and precious natural resource. Living in an island state, over 2,000 miles from any continental land mass, it should be recognized that the availability of quarriable rock is vital to the health of our economy because it is an essential component of basic building materials: concrete and asphalt.

Goal #2 of the Sustainability Plan calls for a diversified and globally competitive economy and the report concludes that "functioning infrastructure is critical to economic health." It states,

"Public infrastructure is key to building a strong economy, protecting our environment and a better quality of life. Great strides have been made since statehood, yet for a sustainable future, we must ensure that our public infrastructure is intact and enables our citizens, businesses, and communities to function properly. Roads, highways, dams, bridges, harbors, airports, water supply and wastewater systems

are key functions of sustainable communities. It is essential that we identify and prioritize our infrastructure needs to adequately allocate resources to maintain and improve them." (page 26)

And all those elements of infrastructure mentioned in the Sustainability Plan require concrete or asphalt to construct them, maintain them, or repair them. Our ability to repair and maintain our state's and our counties' aging infrastructure is directly affected by the cost of concrete and asphalt.

As an island state, we are blessed with an abundant resource of high quality basalt. Many islands in the Pacific are not. Our ability to build, maintain and repair our vital infrastructure depends upon the continued availability of reasonably priced high quality basalt rock. (One cubic yard of concrete requires 1.85 tons of A-Grade basalt aggregate -- asphalt contains 6% "tar" and 94% A-Grade basalt aggregate).

The island of O`ahu does not presently have enough operating quarries to meet current demand for basalt aggregate. What we cannot supply locally must be imported, and the cost of imported aggregate is two to four times the cost of aggregate that is locally produced.

The Big Island has abundant resources of basalt but because of shallow harbors and limited stockpiling space at the harbors, it can only be shipped interisland in small vessels, which drives the price up.

Therefore, it is essential that we facilitate the development of new quarries on each island to meet local demand and reduce the need to import rock. Allowing resource extraction as a permitted use in the State Agricultural District will help accomplish this.

Goal #2 of the Sustainability Plan includes a strategic action to "develop a more diverse and resilient economy." It states, "Creating greater resiliency in the economy also means buying locally produced goods and services. As an island state, we may not become totally economically self-sufficient, but there are many products that we can purchase to reduce our dependence on outside sources." (page 24)

By encouraging efforts to mine basalt locally, we can help to fulfill the Sustainability Plan's strategic action to reduce our dependence upon outside resources.

To place the matter into further perspective, I would note that the 2030 Oahu Regional Transportation Plan recently published by the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization identifies \$10.9 billion of transportation projects that are targeted to be completed on O`ahu by 2030. The vast majority of those projects cannot be built without concrete and asphalt.

I believe that HB 3286 will help strengthen our efforts towards sustainability and improve our self-sufficiency.

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