

TESTIMONY
GM 310

*Lauren Tanaka
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Senator Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 228
415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Nomination to the Kahana Valley Living Park Planning Council
G.M. No. 310

Dear Senator Hee and Members of the Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs:

This is in response to your letter requesting a written statement of my interest and qualifications to serve as a member of the Kahana Valley Living Park Planning Council. I did not initiate the process for my nomination. A decision was made by the Chairperson of the Department and my boss, Daniel S. Quinn, State Parks Administrator that I would best represent the department on the council due to my objectivity and impartiality regarding the people and issues at Kahana. Over the years, I have heard many "stories" about what happens in Kahana and while I have some knowledge about the issues, I make no assumptions and will remain open-minded and will focus on the legal and factual realities. When decisions need to be made, they will be based on the most fair and appropriate actions.

I have been a Planner with the department for 22 years, most of the time in State Parks, with 5 years in the Land Division. I have a graduate degree in Political Science and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Hawaiian Studies. At State Parks, one of my primary responsibilities is the development of statewide park master plans and EIS's which qualifies me to work with the other members of the council to develop a master plan for Kahana, one of the tasks described in Act 15 which created the planning council. I have experience in working with community based organizations such as the Kaluanui Advisory Group, the South Kona - Kā'u Coastal Conservation Task Force, and the Kōke'e State Park Advisory Council, the latter two are also results of legislative acts.

My career goals have been to look at my professional tasks as challenges and opportunities to learn more about others and myself, and to find ways that help improve the way I do things and interact with people. I am able to relate to people of diverse interests, backgrounds, and histories and find it particularly interesting when divergent views are expressed and through dialogue and negotiation a mutually beneficial resolution can be found. In the face of adversity, I try to look for a silver lining.

I am honest, reliable, and trustworthy.

In trying to describe one experience that is most applicable to this situation, it would be the South Kona - Kā'u Coastal Conservation Task Force, created by the Legislature in 2005 by the adoption of a concurrent resolution. The task force was charged with identifying coastal lands and near shore marine areas that need protection, reviewing and analyzing any impacts to those areas, proposing

future uses and restrictions, identifying mechanisms and sources of funds for the management of those areas, and recommending protection measures for marine animals, i.e., monk seals, green sea and hawksbill turtles, and their nesting areas and habitats.

There were 24 members on the Task Force, including a scholarly kupuna, cultural practitioners, community resource individuals, large landowners, farmers, an attorney, nonprofit conservation organizations, a nonprofit economic development administrator and government officials. These people who had such diverse backgrounds shared a vision that the resources in the South Kona - Kā'u area needed to be protected and preserved. The 80 miles of pristine, unspoiled, and undeveloped coastline, the significant historic and cultural sites, and the marine life made it the largest and last natural and undeveloped coastal area left in the State. I am proud to say I brought these people together and worked with them to find ways to ensure its preservation for future generations.

And lastly, I don't believe that any decision which I may make as a council member can be perceived as a conflict of interest because I do not have an agenda which needs to be expressed or promoted nor would there be any personal benefit. I am committed to doing the best that I can and to work as much as I have to in order to work with the other council members to accomplish the goals and objectives expressed in Act 15.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lauren Tanaka

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(END)