

March 31, 2021

Honorable Committee Chair Keani Rawlins-Fernandez
Honorable Committee Vice Chair Tamara Paltin
BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

Re: RESO 22-84 – Disposition of Real Property to Na Hale O Maui

Aloha e Chair Rawlins-Fernandez, Vice Chair Paltin, and Committee Members,

‘O Jen Kamaho‘i Mather ko‘u inoa.
‘O Kahalu‘u ku‘u kulāiwi.
‘O Wailuku ku‘u āina.
‘O Pu‘u Kukui ku‘u pu‘u.
‘O Wailuku ku‘u wai.

I write to you today IN SUPPORT of resolution 22-84, granting 19 lots in the Fairways at Maui Lani to Nā Hale O Maui. We just returned from Amelika after a 16 month respite for my family. During our time there we realized that no matter how expensive, troubling, and sometimes downright difficult it is to live on Maui, it is our home and we belong here.

The most difficult part of returning is the knowledge that we will most likely never own a home here. Although the dream hasn't fully left us, we recognize that this opportunity has been pulling further away from many of us who are kānaka ‘ōiwi. Until the return of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, these grants to the Community Land Trust of Nā Hale O Maui will make it just that much more attainable than before.

Our ‘ohana of four have been on the Nā Hale O Maui list since 2017 with the hopes of being able to secure one of the Kahoma Residential lots the trust developed from the ground up. From 2017 until 2019 our hopes were high. During the year of 2019 we fell out of their affordability bracket by approximately \$1,700.00 because the AMI they based it on was from 2016 rather than the 2019 numbers. That did not leave us any other options but to move in mid-2020 with the hopes of finding our homeownership dreams elsewhere.

My suggestion is to never leave your home, especially in the middle of a pandemic. You'll return later wondering if that was all a dream (or nightmare) and even more determined to make change happen for the better. Maybe it is good to leave, to know and feel just how much there is to lose.

The rest of the Nā Hale O Maui people may ask you to think about the firefighters, teachers, police officers, and others that make up the “workforce” of our economy. I spoke on this during the blessing of their Kahoma Residential lots, as a community liaison for the office of Councilmember Paltin, but more so, I spoke of the community that I saw living in this new neighborhood and how Nā Hale O Maui made it possible for even more of the Lahaina community to realize homeownership; people we know, faces we love, voices we hear. I want you to think of these people, the ones you see struggle in your community, trying to make ends meet, scratching together dimes and nickels to put towards a down payment toward a home so they may never look to distant shores as their only prospects. Think of the many kānaka dying on a waitlist for homes where the land is already plentiful, designated for them, and yet nothing happens, and take this step to proactively designate these 19 lots to assist 19 more families to make it more attainable for generations upon generations (40, the 400, 4,000, 40,000, and 400,000) of ‘ohana to have the chance at affordable homes in perpetuity.

It is my fervent wish that you support this grant. As always, you hold the future of our ‘āina and our po‘e in your esteemed and capable hands. Work well for us.

Me Ka Ha‘aha‘a,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jen Mather', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jen Mather
85 E Papa Ave
Kahului
Kingdom of Hawai‘i