

April 13, 2022

Reyna Ramolete Hayashi  
The Trust for Public Land  
1164 Bishop St., Suite 1512  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: Letter in Support of Protecting and Acquiring Maunawili Agricultural and Lo'i Lands (Palawai, TMK 4-2-007:001 and 4-2-008:001; and Makali'i, TMK 4-2-008:005)**

Hui Maunawili-Kawainui stands in full support and continuing partnership with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Ho'okua'āina, Kauluakalana and the Hawai'i Land Trust's (HILT) initiative to purchase and protect Palawai (116 acres) and Makali'i (59 acres) in Maunawili, Kailua, O'ahu. The Hui and its many individual and organizational members have been working for years to protect these lands as part of more than 1,000 acres of privately held Maunawili lands which have high natural, cultural, historical and agricultural significance and are at risk of subdivision, sale and development.

Hui Maunawili-Kawainui's larger vision is to restore the health of Maunawili so that the valley can resume its vital and traditional role in the ahupua'a of Kailua as a source of fresh-flowing water and a place of abundant agriculture and rich cultural resources. Palawai and Makali'i are critical to fulfilling that goal.

Maunawili Valley is the largest stream watershed area in Ko'olaupoko, covering 9,408 acres. Essential to the community's health and well-being, the valley is fed by more than 50 streams and freshwater springs and provides critical habitat for endemic plant and animal species. Maunawili is part of a priority watershed vital for recharge of virtually pristine fresh water flowing to important traditional riparian farmlands and the Kawainui wetland (the largest wetland in the state, a designated Ramsar Wetland of International Importance.) Kawainui provides flood control for Kailua, O'ahu, traps sediment and channels clean water to the Kailua Bay marine ecosystem. On a larger scale, mauka Maunawili forests and the adjoining wide, densely-vegetated wetland contribute to carbon capture in our warming world.

**Palawai and Makali'i.** The Palawai and Makali'i lands under consideration consist of nearly 150 acres of traditional lo'i kalo land, 75 acres of which are the highly productive Hanalei soil. Fed by Maunawili's many springs and streams which originate in the Ko'olau, these lands were extensively farmed in kalo which was famed for its sweetness and requested by the ali'i. Five streams converge on the Palawai property to form the main stem of Maunawili Stream. This stream flows along the base of Olomana, adjacent to Makali'i, passes under Kalaniana'ole Highway, and then joins Kahanaiki Stream to flow into Kawainui Marsh and eventually to Kailua Bay. Makali'i is home to the storied Makali'i Spring, valued source of fresh drinking water which also fed the lo'i kalo and gardens.

Palawai was last farmed in the 1980s when the golf course was developed. Makali'i was last farmed in 2012 when the last of the farming families were evicted by the current landowner. Both Palawai and Makali'i have suffered decades of neglect and the land is literally choked by invasive species, aggressive vines and weeds.

Pre-contact and historic Hawaiian cultural sites, including agricultural terraces, irrigation ditches, trails, house sites, and possible places of worship have also suffered neglect. At present, few sites at Palawai and Makali'i have been surveyed or studied by archaeologists or Hawaiian cultural practitioners. Extensive remnants of cultural and historic sites reflect the valley's centuries of agricultural use and traditional Hawaiian cultural practices of the area.

**Ho‘okua‘āina and Kauluakalana.** Hui Maunawili-Kawainui fully supports Ho‘okua‘āina as the proposed future owner and steward of Palawai and Kauluakalana as the proposed future owner and steward of Makali‘i.

- The principals of both non-profit organizations and ‘ohana are long-term residents of Maunawili, deeply rooted and connected to the ‘āina and the community.
- Ho‘okua‘āina successfully farms kalo in Maunawili on a 7.6 acre parcel adjacent to Palawai. They annually harvest 30,000 pounds of kalo and have grown into the largest producers of kalo on O‘ahu today.
- Kauluakalana is currently steward of a 15 acre parcel at Kukanono, including Ulupo heiau and the north-east bank of Kawainui. Ten acres of this parcel are cultivated in lo‘i kalo, yielding thousands of pounds of kalo per year. Recently Kauluakalana has received a Right of Entry from the State to farm 25 acres (Manu ‘ili) just across Kalaniana‘ole Highway from Maunawili where they have already restored three acres to kalo, ‘uala and ko production: the first time this land has been cultivated in more than 100 years.
- Both organizations have demonstrated success with stream and spring restoration enabling water to once again flow through ‘auwai, lo‘i kalo and wetlands, providing habitat for native species and gradually revitalizing the ecosystem.

Both Ho‘okua‘āina and Kauluakalana are known for their inspirational and transformative leadership through ‘āina-based education programming for youth, schools, young adults and the community.

- Ho‘okua‘āina hosts an established mentoring and internship program for at-risk youth, an apprenticeship program with Windward Community College that leads to a two year degree and certificate program, and multi-visit programs for area schools K-12 that provides opportunities for students to engage with the land, grow their own food and return with their families. Programs for college students and weekly community volunteer events further expand Ho‘okua‘āina’s community reach.
- Kauluakalana draws on their traditional Hawaiian knowledge, cultural backgrounds and expertise to implement community-based ‘āina restoration work and ‘āina education programs. They annually engage thousands of pre-K to post-secondary students, teachers, administrators, ‘ohana and other community members via school field trips, volunteer service, summer programs, work-based learning internships and cultural restoration programs for families. Through these programs they open opportunities for the community of all ages to participate in the restoration of their own ‘āina, cultivating the land and the community simultaneously.

Lastly we know Ho‘okua‘āina and Kauluakalana to be excellent stewards and partners in the work of land conservation who work well with our Hui, with TPL and HILT, DLNR and the larger community.

**About Hui Maunawili-Kawainui** (Hui MK) is a coalition of descendants and residents of Maunawili and Kailua and respected Hawaiian cultural and environmental organizations based in Maunawili and Kailua. Hui MK’s mission is to restore the health of Maunawili so that the valley can resume its vital and traditional role in the Kailua ahupua‘a (traditional land division) as a place of healthy forests, free-flowing fresh water, abundant agriculture and rich natural, cultural and historic resources. We support the purchase, preservation and restoration of conservation and agricultural lands in Maunawili and the protection and preservation of forests, fresh water resources, wetlands, traditional lo‘i lands, important ancient and historic sites, and historic trails and roads. Our purpose is to protect and revitalize Maunawili’s forests, prime agricultural and culturally significant lands. Since its founding in 2006, Hui MK has consistently worked with State and County government, TPL and HILT, other organizations and the community at large to ensure that Maunawili’s highly significant lands are protected.

**Community Benefits.** Through the purchase and preservation of the Palawai and Makali‘i properties, the community will reap numerous benefits including:

- protection of these lands from subdivision, development and further damage to their precious natural and cultural resources;
- protection of a major area of the Kawainui watershed, restoration of streams and springs and improvement of water quality and integrity;
- restoration of Maunawili’s traditional lo‘i kalo and other traditional farming practices that once made the valley a true “breadbasket” for the island; and initiating a sustainable agriculture program to enhance local food security and provide habitat for endangered species.
- stabilization and protection of Hawaiian cultural and historic sites, many of which have not been surveyed or investigated. These include agricultural terraces, ‘auwai, house sites, trails and paths and a stone workshop.
- development of aloha ‘aina educational programs that improve community access to and understanding of the significance of these important sites.

Protecting these lands is a major step toward fulfilling our community’s long standing goal of protecting Maunawili’s mountains, forests, streams, agricultural lands and sacred places which are so central to the community’s health and well-being, sense of place and cultural identity. We look forward to collaborating in the stewardship of these lands in close partnership with TPL, Ho‘okua‘āina, Kauluakalana and HILT and other community partners.

Mahalo,  
Hui Maunawili-Kawainui

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**Hui Maunawili-Kawainui Members**

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Laurie Carlson / Maunawili resident  
Lei-Ann Moana Stender Durant / Maunawili resident  
Lehuakona Isaacs / ‘Ahahui Mālama i ka Lōkahi  
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Herb Lee / Pacific American Foundation, Hui Kawainui-Kailua Ka Wai Ola  
Melody Kapilialoha MacKenzie / Hika‘alani  
Alan Murakami / Maunawili resident  
Barbara Pope / Maunawili resident  
Deborah Pope / Kailua resident with multi-generational ties to Maunawili  
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