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**TESTIMONY TO THE GPAC**  
**February 24, 2009**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the proposed Land Use and Growth Management Sections of the Maui Island Plan. Our association appreciates the work the GPAC has put into the General Plan effort to date and respects the sincerity of your efforts. These comments are offered with the same degree of sincerity:

Rural Growth Boundaries

**1. Maui's 2-acre Subdivisions are Rural**

The proposed plan is missing an important opportunity to clear up an on-going planning oxymoron: continuing to label Maui's two-acre subdivision properties as "farms". There are thousands of existing two-acre properties that are legal described as "farms" when they are, in fact, rural residential properties. These properties match the description of **rural residential** offered by the Land Use/Directed Growth IRC:

**"Primarily a residential development pattern with lower residential densities (.5 to 2 acres), limited agricultural activities, and few services or employment opportunities."**

Some two-acre subdivisions were included in this category, but others were not. There is no explanation for the different treatment. Nor is there any direction given to future community plans to deal with this mis-categorization for those communities that were not proposed to become rural. The inclusion of the existing ad hoc rural patterns throughout the Haiku-Upcountry maps defeats the argument that you are attempting to create an organized pattern. The fact is these properties are rural in character and to keep attempting to force them to be farmed is a lot like attempting to force a square peg in a round hole. This plan offers an important opportunity to clear up this confusion. We are not proposing any change in density for these properties. If they are two acres, they stay two acres. Those few who farm can continue to do so. We are not arguing for the discontinuation of active farm lands. For the most part, these properties stopped having true commercial agricultural potential when they were subdivided and developed in a residential pattern. The State Legislature has been working diligently on this problem and understands that these types of properties need to be reclassified as "rural." But they are looking for the individual counties to first declare their Important Agriculture Lands. It will be a glaring failure of this magnificent planning exercise if these mis-labeled properties are simply left in the lurch.

## 2. Making Makawao Rural

The proposal to declare Maui's County Towns "rural" seems like it will lead to confusion. Makawao is a rural in character, but first and foremost, it is a town. In density, land uses and state land use classification, it is urban. To declare it a "rural" town gives mixed signals. If it is rural, then does its urban planning base no longer apply? And if it does not, are we talking about down zoning the town? Does this make the existing urban zoned properties non-conforming? If Pukalani is to remain urban, then why not Makawao?

### Urban & Rural Growth Goals and Policies

#### 1. **Developers Must Provide All Associated Infrastructure and Public Facilities.**

We would like to take this opportunity to point out a simple economic fact: in the case of residential developments, "developers" do not pay for the cost of infrastructural and public facility improvements. Homebuyers do. Both the Urban and Rural Growth Goals make a point of saying that "**developers will be responsible for public facility and infrastructure expansion costs associated with their projects.**" Developers are not philanthropists. They are business people who pass their costs on to those who buy their products. It is now estimated (BOH Economist Paul Brewbaker, at the Urban Land Institute meeting in Honolulu Feb.13) that this requirement that a developer cover all costs associated with their projects has increased the cost of homes in Hawaii by an average of \$200,000 per home. That is on top of the cost to actually build the home. For some, that cost may seem acceptable if we are talking about a wealthy off-shore buyer. But it truly hurts when we are talking about local families, making their living in our local economy. If you are truly concerned about affordable housing for our local families, then this statement is too sweeping and should be modified or removed.

#### 2. **Protect Open Space and Working Agricultural Landscapes.**

This statement misses a number of key concerns. (a) It does not address the critical need to identify and to protect our Important Agricultural Lands as required by the State Constitution. If we are going to have a chance to become sustainable, then we first must identify and seriously protect these land resources. (b) There is no discussion in this plan about the greatest land planning issue facing Maui: the loss of plantation agriculture. Pioneer Mill and Wailuku Sugar are gone. Maui Pineapple Company is going. HC&S could be pushed out by the loss of water resources or simply by raw economics. Ignoring that fact does not amount to a plan for what to do about it. We saw what happened when all of that land was allowed to sit open in Wailuku and West Maui: before long people started putting houses on the land. (c) From both an economic and lifestyle perspective, it is appropriate to consider the value of landscapes and open space. But this plan depends on "agriculture" to provide that value. It seems there should be more emphasis on what it will take to make agriculture, once again, a viable economic activity on Maui, instead of focusing on its scenic beauty.