

Testimony for Honolulu City Council Committee on Zoning

January 11, 2023 9:00 a.m. City Council Chamber

Resolution 22-291

I am here to testify on behalf of Resolution 22-291, concerning Kamehameha School's Keawalau Project in Waipahu.

I have been living in Waipahu for nearly fifty years, and have witnessed the developments that have occurred over the years. Some have provided benefits to those seeking affordable housing and senior housing. Other developments resulted in changes to old Waipahu, like what happened with the closing of Arakawas.

The Keawalau Project has met with some opposition because of some residents' concerns over the height of the project, being higher than the iconic smoke stack that sits on the Leeward YMCA. I, for one, am not overly concerned about the height limitations of new developments if within reason. As I spoke previously in favor of Kamehameha School's Keawalau Project during a public hearing, I asked that people focus on the benefits of this project. It will provide affordable housing for 500 homes for kamaaina. To restrict this project's height to be below the level of the smoke stack, which may lead to fewer apartments being constructed, means that fewer families would be given the opportunity to find affordable housing. We should focus on getting decent housing opportunities and not just on whether the project would affect our viewplanes.

So I ask that you consider the request by Kamehameha Schools to bring improvements to our Waipahu town in a favorable light.

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HAWAI'I APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
SUPPORT RESOLUTION 22-291
Honolulu City Council Meeting
Monday, January 11th, 2023 at 9:00AM

Aloha Chair Waters and members of the City Council,

We at Hawai'i Appleseed, **strongly support** authorizing exemptions related to the Keawalaui Affordable Housing project in Waipahu. This project will create up to 500 much needed affordable homes near a rail station that is near to jobs and economic opportunities for our local residents. Affordable housing is the single biggest economic and social need for the people of Hawai'i right now and we urge this committee to support this well designed transit oriented development project.

These affordable homes will serve thousands of local residents who will feel secure knowing that their rental property cannot be sold and instead has a mission of remaining affordable for at least 60 years. Additionally they have the economic security of stable and predictable rent payments unlike most of our low-income families renting in the private market. Keawalaui will be providing much needed housing in an excellent location for residents of Oahu.

Not only will this project help to meet demand at lower income levels, but the project will also create much needed economic activity. The National Association of Home Builders estimates that for every 100 affordable rental homes that are built, 80 jobs are created from construction and 42 jobs are supported by the effects of the spending¹.

We strongly urge this committee to support this project.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Hawai'i Appleseed

¹ January 2011, "The Role of Affordable Housing in Creating Jobs and Stimulating Local Economic Development: A Review of the Literature" by Center For Housing Policy