From:	Franny Johnson
To:	DLNR.BLNR.Testimony
Cc:	Kauai Mayor"s Office; Felicia Cowden
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] Testimony
Date:	Tuesday, December 5, 2023 6:00:03 PM

Please accept this as my testimony for the Board of Land and Natural Resources Meeting December 7, 2023 5 of 15 5. Cancellation of Governor's Executive Order No. 4566; Issuance of Direct Lease to Kapa'a Business Association, Inc. for Non-Profit Office, Meeting Hall, and Public Parking Purposes, Kapa'a, Kawaihau, Kauai, Tax Map Key: (4) 4-5-008:008. I would also like to request to participate in reading my testimony via ZOOM.

Aloha,

My name is Francyne Johnson, I am Native Hawaiian, resident of Kawaihau District and business owner in Kapaʻa. The imminent lease allocation of this beachfront property to the Kapaʻa Business Association, Inc. has raised concerns within our community. I strongly oppose this decision due to the lack of community input on the potential use of this valuable recreational asset.

The ½ -acre property is situated along Ke Ala Hele Makalae, the County of Kauaʻiʻs linear park along the coast of Kapaʻa, one block away from the town center and Kuhio Highway. Despite its strategic location and potential for community benefit, it has been brought to light that the State DLNR has accepted a proposal to grant a direct lease to the Kapaʻa Business Association.

Several key issues have arisen in this process:

1-Representation: The Kapaʻa Business Association, Inc. does not represent all businesses in Kapaʻa. Other organizations, such as the Old Kapaʻa Town Business Hui and the Royal Coconut Coast Association, also represent businesses in the area.

2-Lack of Outreach: The DLNR Land Division did not reach out to other business organizations or non-profits in the region to inform them of the potential lease option.

3-Inadequate Consultation: A meeting held on November 3, 2023, at the community's request, revealed that the DLNR land agent informed attendees that the Kapaʻa Business Association was the lease applicant, seemingly indicating a predetermined outcome. The proposed use for paid public parking, a non-profit office, and a meeting hall was presented as a "done deal."

4-Inadequate Parking Assessment: Kapaʻa Town embodies a charming blend of history, characterized by its quaint streets adorned with traditional street parking. The dynamics of parking in Kapaʻa have undergone notable shifts, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. Numerous businesses have either shuttered or scaled back their operations, resulting in reduced hours and a significant decrease in the number of employees. This collective change has naturally diminished the overall demand for parking in the area.

I strongly object to the transformation of this property into a parking lot. It is well-established that Iwi is located on the parcel. The prospect of grading this land to construct parking stalls, especially on a site containing Hawaiian burial remains, is not only lacking in sensitivity but also constitutes a backward approach.

I advocate for the development of the property as a park or another recreational space for the benefit of the entire community. Moreover, proposals to designate it as an "open space" memorial in acknowledgment of the iwi discovered along the coast should also be considered.

I sincerely request your careful consideration of these concerns and implore you to defer the decision to grant a lease to the Kapaʻa Business Association. It is crucial to provide the community with an opportunity to actively participate in planning the future use of the property. Engaging in arranging "special" deals that exclude community members, particularly those most impacted, should not be entertained. A transparent and inclusive decision-making process is essential to ensure the well-being and interests of the entire community are adequately represented.

Thank you for your time.

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