



Ala Kahakai Trail Association

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May 22, 2025

Chair
Board of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Via email: blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

RE: Agenda Item C-1, Approval of proposed dispositions of interests in land acquired with a Legacy Land grant by Ala Kahakai Trail Association at Waikapuna, Ka'ū District, Island of Hawai'i, Tax Map Key Number (3) 9-5-007:016, including revenue sharing provisions

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Ala Kahakai Trail Association, we are requesting your support for the extension of existing telecommunications licenses at Waikapuna.

The Ala Kahakai Trail Association (ATA) is a Hawaii Island based, 501 (c)3 non-profit organization and a federally listed Native Hawaiian Organization (NHO). Our board is comprised of descendants with genealogical ties to the ancient Hawaiian trail system known as the Ala Loa, Ala Nui and Ala Aupuni. In the year 2000, Congress officially designated the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail and added it to the National Trails System. The mission of ATA is to support and guide a community-managed trail that honors those who came before and perpetuates for those to follow – with protocols and respect for Hawaii's past, present and future.

Revenues derived from these licenses are instrumental for our stewardship of cultural and natural resources at three properties in the Ka'ū District, all acquired with funding from the State Legacy Land Program and the County of Hawaii Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Fund (PONC). Together, this protected landscape includes over 5500 acres and six miles of coastline. ATA

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also holds conservation easements for an additional 2000 acres of land in the District of Ka'ū.

Our tenant, Crown Castle, is the largest telecommunications tower owner and operator in the country. These towers provide the network infrastructure for many nationwide wireless service providers such as AT&T, Verizon, Dish and T-Mobile. Crown Castle currently owns and operates over 300 telecommunication facilities in Hawaii. These two towers at Waikapuna provide a critical link for wireless services in the communities of Naalehu, Waiohinu and Discovery Harbor.

The proposed amendments will allow our tenant to continue providing telecommunication services for another twenty-five (25) years. Our request also includes the addition of an antenna for Federated Wireless. It is our understanding that this technology will assist with prioritizing E911 calls over shared spectrum in support of public safety and emergency response. There will be no increase in the existing footprint of these facilities and no modifications to the existing telecommunications tower structures.

We are extremely grateful for the support of the Legacy Land Program. Over the years, these properties were threatened with all kinds of development including luxury gated subdivisions, a space port and a marina. The Ka'ū community worked for years to purchase Waikapuna in order to conserve, preserve, and perpetuate its conservation values which include its historic, cultural, agricultural, natural, marine, scenic, open space, fresh water, and native habitat importance. The property is presently used by local fishermen, Native Hawaiian descendants and gatherers of various natural and marine resources for subsistence, recreational, and cultural purposes. The entire property falls within the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail corridor. Monies received from our existing license agreements are crucial for supporting our ongoing stewardship activities, some of which include working with community to monitor coastal resources, marine debris/ghost net retrieval, restoration of sand dune ecosystems, invasive species removal and protection of dryland forests.

We appreciate your consideration.

Thank you,

Keoni Fox
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