

From: [Diamond B Ranch](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] GL 5276
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Aloha board members

I am Brendan Balthazar owner of Diamond B Ranch LLC on Maui. I am submitting written testimony concerning my lease transfer in Kaupo GL 5276 from DLNR to DOA. I would have flown there to be with you in person but we have our annual Hawaii Cattlemen meeting hosted buy us on Maui and as the VP I need to be here.

I am very happy that this will be happening as it is so long over due. Transferring it to DOA just gives us ranchers a layer of piece and security. And after all puts the land under the rightful agency. Ranching is agg and should be managed by that department. I am so grateful that we finally have a gouvemor that understands agg and respects the intent of act 90. Lot of politicians say how much they support agg and food production here in Hawaii when they are running for office. However it is a different story once they get elected. Josh is one that has kept his word in protecting agg and agg lands. For the state to take land that is and has been in agg for many many years out of agg is wrong , sinful ,and against state laws that should protect agg lands , and food production.

Ranchers protect land . If they are not good stewards of the land they will not be able to feed their family, say in business , or feed the community. Even if the land they ranch is leased ,there is a bond, a love and connection to that land as tight as if it is a family member. Ranchers are fixers. They must deal with drought, fire, sick animals ,broken equipment, invasive plants,bugs and animals , family needs, and government issues. What they don't need is to be worrying if they will be loosing their lease , the business they built ,money they have invested over years and the only way they have to support their family. Under DLNR when your lease is up you must bid against everyone on the improvements you paid for and all the labor you put in to develop the land.

I sent lots of photos to Emma showing aerial photos of the ranch with no areas of erosion, unlike when we first got the lease. We spent thousands to put down grass seed, and fenced off 14 paddocks to keep cattle from over grazing. Also photos of the two major gulches on both sides of the property showing when it rains hard all the mud water flows into the ocean which is the reason for the the damage to the coral refs . During the height of the storm we flew the drone over the entire bottom of the property and showed no run off into the ocean. The drone photos shows the ocean brown a mile out due to the water coming down the both gulches. We also installed a well and about 5 miles of piping along with pumps and two 45,000 gallon tanks and one 20,000 gallon tanks , large tire troughs all with concrete around them to prevent erosion. We have two 60KW generators that power the pumps that pump the water up the hill. We have invested well over \$450,000 in this property. Diamond B Ranch also worked with NRCS and received an award from them for being the outstanding producer for implementing its conservation practices.

The only concern I have about the areas DLNR want to take out of my lease is their proposal to put a fence 100 ft off the edge of Pahihi gulch , and a parking area on the bottom so people can go hiking . The rest is not a problem as I have been paying for that land and not using it. There is a lot of people that hike up the gulch because there is an area to park but not up on the edge. Now there will be parking with an invitation to walk up the edge. The lowest height is over 200 ft and almost straight down. At the upper areas maybe 1000 plus foot drop. Some drop offs are so vertical that even goats can't navigate. The danger , and liability exposure is very great. Human beings are inquisitive and will want to get to the edge to look down. Most of the year that area is very windy. There are lots and lots of rocks both fixed and loose all along that area which can cause someone to trip and fall. I don't believe DLNR can justify the cost of putting up two fences to create an alley so people will not fall off. Another thing that is more concerning , is most of the year that area is dry and my concern is having people walk up the whole side of that boundary and some careless smoker ,it will cause an exposure to potential fire and us loosing all our feed and maybe animals. I worked for the fire department for 37 years and went to quite a few fires in that Kaupo area as it was my district. Most fires caused by a careless smoker as they all started at the edge of the road. Now it may start up high where we can't access the fire off the road. DLNR spent a lot of money reforesting that upper area above this property. Why would they create a trail that will give access to people who may cause it all to go up in smoke, and jeopardize my ranch , all of my time and investment.

Again I want to thank all of you for preserving this land and keeping it in agg as it has been over 100 years. May God bless all of you and guide you in your decisions.
Brendan Balthazar