Aloha,

Attached is written testimony on behalf of the North Shore Community Land Trust for the above captioned Agenda item.

If possible I will join the meeting remotely. Should I be unable to do so please fully consider my testimony.

Mahalo,

Adam
Aloha Regents,

My name is Adam Borrello and I am the Executive Director of the North Shore Community Land Trust (NSCLT). I would like to offer testimony in support of the work that needs to be done to preserve and restore the University of Hawaii property at Waiale’e referenced in the Real Property Transaction Update presentation.

The NSCLT has long been a part of the conversation regarding Waiale’e. Though some of the players have changed, the goal remains the same – to provide a community voice regarding the cultural, historical, and environmental significance of Waiale’e and identify strategies for the preservation of this special land. Last year, in furtherance of this goal, the NSCLT organized and executed a three-part community visioning Work Shop Series to better understand the community’s desires related to Waiale’e. The resulting report and community “vision” can be reviewed at our website www.northshoreland.org. We have also leveraged the passions and talents of a “homegrown” product and recent graduate of the NREM Master’s Degree Program to gain in depth historical, cultural, and environmental appreciation for this special property.

The NSCLT has a proven track record of engaging the local community to help preserve and restore environmentally significant land on the North Shore. We have achieved meaningful success just down the road at our Kalaeokauna’oa (Kahuku Point) project. Protected in concert with a Conservation Easement, the NSCLT has engaged volunteers to help restore and steward the land. The removal of invasive plants has made way for native plants to thrive. The result is an intact Coastal Strand Ecosystem that provides critical habitat for threatened and endangered species to return. Examples of such species are the Laysan Albatross and Yellow-Faced Bees.

Subsequent to our workshop series, we have continued community outreach and started the process of building a motivated volunteer base specifically interested in Waiale’e. In fact, a few smaller organizations that support the vision are taking shape. No doubt a collection of organizations that bring unique expertise will be a valuable resource as we work to restore Waiale’e. I am confident that the NSCLT can be a valuable partner for UH throughout the process.

Finally, it is important to relay the community’s general sentiment that UH has not been a very good neighbor with this property in recent years. The lack of any real UH presence on the land and its absent property management have resulted in the establishment of negative presence on the public property. Illegal activity has many in the surrounding area concerned for their safety. It seems prudent to take steps now to engage positive activity on the property in an effort to avoid the issues that have arisen in fallow or neglected land elsewhere. As proposed in the presentation, a partnership with NSCLT as a preservation-focused partner could help UH be a better neighbor to the surrounding community, as well as, start and carryout the restoration of what could prove to be a valuable asset to the local, state, national, and global community.

I am respectfully requesting the UH Board of Regents consider the North Shore Community Land Trust as a partner to help restore and steward Waiale’e, and in turn, we can help improve the overall property.

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