

PUBLIC HEARING

AUGUST 3, 2022

A public hearing of the Council of the County of Kaua'i was called to order by Luke A. Evslin, Chair, Finance & Economic Development Committee, on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, at 8:37 a.m., at the Council Chambers, 4396 Rice Street, Suite 201, Historic County Building, Līhu'e, and the presence of the following was noted:

Honorable Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Honorable Mason K. Chock
Honorable Felicia Cowden
Honorable Bill DeCosta
Honorable Luke A. Evslin
Honorable KipuKai Kuali'i
Honorable Arryl Kaneshiro

The Clerk read the notice of the public hearing on the following:

“Bill No. 2875 – A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 5A, SECTIONS 5A-6.4, 5A-8.1(g), 5A-9.1, AND 5A-11.23(a), KAUA'I COUNTY CODE 1987, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO REAL PROPERTY TAX,”

which was passed on first reading and ordered to print by the Council of the County of Kaua'i on July 6, 2022, and published in The Garden Island newspaper on July 14, 2022.

The following communications were received for the record:

1. Chang, Lincoln, dated July 25, 2022
2. Kallai, Hope, dated August 2, 2022

The hearing proceeded as follows:

Committee Chair Evslin: We did receive written testimony. Is there anyone in the audience or on Zoom wishing to testify? Lonnie. You know the drill. Please state your name and you will have three (3) minutes. Then we will see if there is anyone else wanting to provide testimony. If not, you can have an additional three (3) minutes.

LONNIE SYKOS: For the general public, in the past I was a farmer on Maui. I am an ex-President of the Maui Flower Growers Association. When I read this Bill, which I have read four (4) or five (5) times now, I agree with the early portion of it, in which you get rid of the onerous requirements that were placed upon farming decades ago. Those onerous requirements are part of the reason why you do not have the diversified agriculture industry on Kaua'i. As someone who

is not from here or from the political culture of this island, the last part of this Bill is going to guarantee that there will not be the development of diversified agriculture. What you need to do is get rid of all this stuff about a new Agricultural Dedication Program and focus first on cleaning up the mess that exists from the past. Now, the problem with this is none of you have any experience in agriculture, except Councilmember DeCosta. How much experience in export agriculture do any of you have? The answer to that is probably zero (0). What this does is it creates venue to land bank. This is not going to promote people actually farming. My question for all of you is where did the second part of this document come from? You are going to tell me that it was written by Council, because only Council is allowed to write the text of these things. My question is, where did the Council get this text from? This reads to me like it is a blueprint document printed or created by somebody's political action group. This new Agricultural Dedication Program does not address the issues facing agriculture, which cannot be addressed in a single silo. Every aspect of the environment that you farm in is against you. Until you start addressing these issues holistically, all you are doing is digging a bigger hole that your blind leaders led you into decades ago, which is where you are today in agriculture...in a ditch.

Committee Chair Evslin: Thank you, Lonnie. Does anyone else in the audience wish to testify? None. Is there anyone on Zoom? None. Just to briefly answer your question, Lonnie, the Bill was written by the Department of Finance in coordination with the Council Services Division and the Office of the County Attorney. There were certainly no political action committees involved in writing the Bill. We will talk more about it at Committee. If there is no further testimony, this public hearing is now adjourned.

There being no further testimony on this matter, the public hearing adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk

:jy