

Name: Brandi Corpuz

Agenda Item: B.2 Goal 2.4 | Mauka to Makai Watershed Management

Date Received: 3/13/23 via email

Aloha CPAC members and planning department,

I would like to add to my testimony concerning the acquisition of several wetlands in Kihei. These wetlands including the kulanihakoi and waipuilani gulches are in great danger from development. Your policy and action plans will have an effect on the future of South Kihei communities, businesses, tourism and quality of life for all who live or visit South Maui.

As a homeowner, business owner, nonprofit executive, taxpayer and registered voter in close proximity to the Waipuilani and Kulanihakoi Gulches, I am a stakeholder of Kula Kai. As an individual community member I have a kuleana.

This kuleana leads me to have many concerns for the future of my home. I have been a witness to over 15 years of the devastation to our community and natural resources. I have volunteered hundreds of hours to try to protect what is important to me, my ohana and my community. I have found that even the tourists that visit our south shores are concerned about the same things our community is concerned about.

Why would anyone want to come here if our natural resources and beautiful historical and cultural sites are destroyed? What will be left for our children and future generations? We must protect what wetlands we have left. They in turn, will help to protect our environment. We are a part of this land, we are aina! From mountain to sea and from trees to marine life, our ahupua'a system functions as one. We are aina.

I have been told by developers and planning department employees that our Waipuilani Gulch is not a wetlands. The fact that all of our Maui county gulches should now be protected by Bill 91 is all you need to know when considering the relevance of the county acquisition of these wetland parcels. No matter how many times it may be said, we all live in what once was or still is the wetlands of Kihei and we must consider the benefits and consequences of all of our actions.

We only have 30% of our wetlands left in South Maui. Every one of them is worth more than any visitor accommodation, business or development project. They have historical, cultural, community, financial and generational value that supersedes all other proposed development in South Maui.

I beg you to read the wetlands protection bill that was made into law in 2022. If you are

unsure if our wetlands are worth protecting. Please realize that wetlands are not just swamps of stagnant water. They are complete ecosystems that work naturally to protect our environment which includes; our owned and shared properties, our wildlife, our beaches and our marine life. We depend on all and we need help to protect our precious resources from extinction.

We are a part of this land, this land is part of us! We are aina! Please protect what we love!

It is not your kuleana to decide whether this land should be acquired by the county or the Mayor. Your job is to decide whether your “community” would like to support the protections of these wetlands and whether these wetlands are worth protecting? As a stakeholder in this community I say every one of them are worth every penny of what the County may have to pay. These remaining wetlands are priceless!

I am personally working with many community organizations in South Maui, the County Council and Mayor Bissens’ administration to ask for the acquisition of the parcels mentioned in my previous email, including the Kulanihakoi and Waipuilani Gulches. If you also believe they deserve protection then put it in our South Maui Community plan.

Support or dont support the purchase of these lands but don't ignore the facts. We need to do something and the time is now! Support the protection of our wetlands or they will die before the next 20 year plan is considered. Developers will find a way to use your unwillingness to protect our wetlands to develop every last open space and wetlands and take advantage of what you leave up to interpretation. You are our community's voice? Please use strong language to protect our wetlands for at least the next 20 years.

Sincerely, Brandi Corpuz
Rooted kekahi Me Ka Aina

On Tue, Feb 28, 2023 at 3:41 PM brandi corpuz wrote:

Aloha South Maui CPAC members,

My name is Brandi Corpuz and I am writing to you today to testify on behalf of my ohana and Rooted Kekahi Me Ka Aina. We need your consideration and help in protecting our wetlands right now so that further destruction does not occur in these sensitive areas.

Although this letter and testimony is about our 2 South Kihei Gulches they should also be considered in other action plans that you are working on right now. Our gulches and watersheds move from mountain to sea so they affect

everything from Mauka to Makai and should be considered in all action plans that you are discussing.

These action plans include;

4.02- kihei drainage and master flood plan

4.03- stormwater quality management

4.04 and 4.04a- regularly monitor and maintain gulches and sediment

4.05- green infrastructure and natural infrastructure, 4.06- provide resources for upland to reduce downstream flooding

4.06a- identify and returning streams that have been diverted

4.06c- implement Southwest Maui watershed plan

4.06d- establish a watershed advisory group

4.06e- establish watershed water monitoring to measure runoff

4.06f- require department of planning and DPW to comply with watershed plans

4.07- create and implement a wetland preservation and restoration program, 4.08- continue to support and fund wetlands restoration projects

4.09- develop and implement a dune restoration program

4.11- create a South Maui Ridge to Reef initiative

4.12 Obtain funding and implement a program to monitor all South Maui nearshore waters.

I believe that the Waipuilani and Kulanihakoi Gulches (wetlands) must be protected in order to make any real change that addresses flooding, ocean, reef and infrastructure. It is a fact that water flows from Mauka to Makai, waters go straight down to the ocean every single time.

We can not continue to ignore the facts that we are facing by diversions and long distance solutions. We must act now! Protect our wetlands so that they can do their jobs of protecting us.

I have attached a letter that I would like to submit for testimony along with a support letter from former County Councilwoman Kelly King and some pictures.

Thank you for your consideration and valued opinion.

Sincerely, Brandi Corpuz

Executive Director- Rooted Kekahi Me Ka Aina