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March 18, 2015

TO: The Honorable Josh Green, Chair
Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

FROM: Mike White
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 19, 2015; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1075, HD 2, RELATING TO HEALTH**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important bill. The purpose of this measure is authorize the Maui Regional System to enter into an agreement with a private entity to transition one or more of its facilities into a new private Hawaii nonprofit corporation.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this matter. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. Maui Memorial Medical Center, Kula Hospital, and Lanai Community Hospital are the only facilities in our County that serve the healthcare needs of more than 11,000 inpatients and more than 45,000 emergency room patients per year.
2. The demand for healthcare services is outpacing hospital operating budgets. There is only so much streamlining that can be done without having a negative impact on public health and the local economy. Decreases in State subsidies and health insurance reimbursements threaten the reliability of our medical facilities. Potential cuts also threaten the job security of more than 1,500 employees. Please consider these public employees and the potential opportunities this legislation can offer to them and their families.
3. I also respectfully urge the Legislature to carefully consider the consequences of the options before them: maintain the current direction of the hospitals as a public system with a higher risk of losing jobs and healthcare services, or act on legislation that can guarantee the continuity of healthcare services throughout Maui County.

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4. Strengthening healthcare services is a core value for Maui County residents, as reflected in the 2030 General Plan. For example, the Countywide Policy Plan states the following goals for the County of Maui: (a) cooperate with the State and Federal governments and nonprofit organizations to broaden access to healthcare services; (b) encourage the State and Federal governments and private sector to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare services; (c) encourage the expansion and improvement of local hospitals; and (d) support broadened access to affordable health care and recognize the economic challenges posed to families when healthcare services are only available off-island. I respectfully urge you to help us meet these goals.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.

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