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April 6, 2015

TO: The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Mike White
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike White", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF APRIL 8, 2015; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1075,
HD2, SD1, RELATING TO HEALTH**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important bill. The purpose of this measure is to 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 Maui County 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. Our local economy also depends on the perception and reality of high-quality health care being available in Maui County for local residents and the visitor industry. However, 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.
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 healthcare 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.