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January 31, 2017

TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Mike White
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 2, 2017; TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO
HB 1410, RELATING TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **opposition** to this measure. The purpose of this measure is to transfer the regulation of ambulance services from the state Department of Health to the counties and allocate a portion of the transient accommodations tax to the counties for ambulance regulation and operation.

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

I strongly oppose this measure for the following reasons:

1. Transferring the operation, maintenance, and regulation of ambulance services from the state to the counties, with no adjustments to the counties' respective portions of the TAT, will put an unreasonable financial burden upon local government. As the counties have repeatedly explained to the state legislature, the counties' current share of the TAT is inadequate to pay for the ever increasing costs of county provided services such as water and sewer, police, fire and ocean safety protection, and road maintenance. I stand in opposition to this proposal that seeks to shift the cost of ambulance services to the counties, requires those services to be paid out of TAT funds, and fails to allocate any additional TAT revenues to the counties to pay for the services.
2. As we face negotiations for all 14 bargaining units this year, which may mean millions of dollars in salary increases and payments to the ERS that the counties will have to fund in the near future, this proposal is unconscionable and shows a deep lack of concern regarding county operations.
3. The current relationship and partnership in services the counties have with the state Emergency Management System should be maintained where ambulance services fall under the DOH.

For the foregoing reasons, I strongly **oppose** this measure.