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COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

March 20, 2017

TO: The Honorable Tom Brower, Chair
House Committee on Housing

FROM: Mike White
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike White".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 21, 2017; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HR 63, OPPOSING THE CONVERSION OF THE FRONT STREET APARTMENTS IN LAHAINA, MAUI, TO MARKET-RATE HOUSING AND URGING THE HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO EXPLORE WAYS TO PRESERVE THE FRONT STREET APARTMENTS AS AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this resolution is to urge the legislature to oppose the conversion of the units of the Front Street Apartments on Maui to market rate, and urge the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to explore ways to preserve its affordability.

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 **support** this resolution for the following reasons:

1. This resolution supports Senate Bill 1299, SD 2, which would initiate negotiations by the state to keep the units of the Front Street Apartments on Maui affordable, or to acquire the property via HHFDC. This bill is an opportunity for the legislature to directly impact the lives of low-income residents in West Maui.
2. Current residents of the complex include seniors on fixed incomes, people with disabilities receiving support, and low-income families with children. Should the Front Street Apartments be allowed to convert to market-rate rentals, more than 250 people are at risk of losing their home.
3. The loss of affordable units will have an unfortunate ripple effect on the demand of affordable housing programs and service providers to meet the needs of displaced residents. This measure needs the legislature's support before it is too late.

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

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