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January 29, 2020

TO: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF JANUARY 31, 2020; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2555, RELATING TO THE NA WAI EHA WATERSHED.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate money out of the land conservation fund for the acquisition of 11,020 acres of the Na Wai Eha watershed in Wailuku, Maui.

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 measure for the following reasons:

1. The Na Wai Eha watershed in Wailuku, Maui, provides significant ecological, cultural, and hydrological value to the island of Maui. It is composed of native koa, ohia, and luma forests, hidden valleys and mountains reaching 5,000 feet, the habitat for over 45 endangered species, and the principal source of Maui's drinking water.
2. An 11,000-acre portion of this critical watershed is up for sale, which presents a rare opportunity to preserve an enormous section of the West Maui Mountains in perpetuity for public recreation and other benefits.

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

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