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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 OPPOSITION TO HB 2600, RELATING TO WATER RATES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **opposition** to this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to transfer water ratemaking authority from the counties to the State Public Utilities Commission.

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 oppose this measure for the following reasons:

1. This measure would significantly limit county authority and discretion when setting water rates. The financing of water supply is an inherently local issue.
2. Currently, each county charter establishes the process and authority for water rates. There is no basis for transferring this power to an unelected, three-member, Oahu-based entity with no accountability to residents throughout the State.

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

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