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Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.

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

February 2, 2020

TO: The Honorable Kaiiali'i Kahele, Chair
Senate Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 3, 2020; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO SB 2692, RELATING TO 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 lama 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.