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February 23, 2022

TO: Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair

DATE: February 23, 2022

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB 1635, RELATING TO HEALTH CARE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure, with proposed amendments. The purpose of this measure is to establish the rural health task force within the Department of Health to make recommendations on registered nurse recruitment and retention in rural areas of East Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

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 would like to request your consideration in amending the bill to include representation on the rural health taskforce from Maui County's four federally qualified health centers (FQHCs): Malama I Ke Ola Health Center, Molokai Community Health Center, Lāna'i Community Health Center, and Hana Health.

I **SUPPORT** this measure, with proposed amendments, for the following reasons:

1. There is a vital need for healthcare workers in rural areas of East Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.
2. These communities will benefit from the implementation of the task force's solutions and recommendations regarding the recruitment and retention of registered nurses in rural areas.
3. The task force will be composed of health experts from the related communities.

For the foregoing reasons, I **SUPPORT** this measure, with proposed amendments.