

On Tuesday, April 3rd, 2012 the KCA Board voted unanimously to oppose BF-70 with this motion:

"The (KCA) Kula Community Association opposes BF-70 (Budget Finance), and proposes that the (RPT) Real Property Tax Division of the Finance Division Office enforce existing regulations while work on the AG dedication bill continues."

Aloha.

Every spring I email information about veterinary preventative medications for parasite control. You can visit <http://www.AardvarksToZebrasInc.com> to learn about and order products for your pets. But this time there is an unrelated issue to address that affects all of us in Maui County.

The County Council meets (tentatively) April 16th at 9 a.m. to consider Bill BF-70 (attached) which will increase taxes for owners of agriculturally zoned properties with homes.

The intent of the BF-70, to correct perceived tax inequities, is good. However the Bill simply increases tax rates for all homes on Ag land. BF-70 does not take into account how homes are used as part of agricultural operations by the farming and ranching community. It does not take into account the county's historic support for agriculture.

In medicine we try, above all else, to do no harm. BF-70, if passed, will harm the Agricultural Community.

Farmers and ranchers have been told this Bill will become law. While the Agricultural Community wants to pay its fair share, it should not be further burdened while operating under long established for just cause regulations. While an increase of several hundred dollars/year in property taxes may be a nuisance for some, for others BF-70 will create real hardship. Farmers, ranchers, their friends and those who understand agriculture need to speak loudly, clearly and repeatedly if their voices are to be heard.

Agriculture has been affected by both drought and recession. Making ends meet is more than a full time job. Do not be too busy to help your friends and neighbors. ***Call and email*** each of our nine council persons. All council members are responsible for representing each of us. Then ***attend*** the 9 a.m. April 16th meeting of the Council on the 8th floor of the County Building and be prepared with 3 minutes of testimony.

What to say? Simply speak about how passage of BF-70 will affect you. Make your Council representatives aware of your concerns with BF-70. It is possible to change minds if logic and heartfelt testimony can be heard.

Below find my concerns with BF-70. Perhaps you share these concerns. Perhaps you have others. Let the County Council (phone and emails below) know how you think and feel about this bill.

- The recession may be receding. While hotels, tourism related business and

real estate all see improvement, agriculture has not. Many livestock herds are up to 50% reduced in size from prolonged drought. BF-70 requires the weak link to carry a greater burden.

- Tax inequities exist. Those inequities exist between similarly zoned properties, not between properties with different zoning. BF-70 does not address the issues it was intended to correct.
- BF-70 does not take into account that Farm Dwellings are not simply residences but an integral part of the farm enterprise. Homes are also Ag offices, hospital pens for sick and injured livestock, packing and sorting areas for produce and headquarters for operational security. Even more Ag theft would take place if farm dwellings were not on farm land.
- Zoning determines both use and tax rates. With BF-70 tax rates become use based rather than zoning based. If BF-70 makes sense, will Council then tax land under residences in hotel and commercially zoned areas at residential rates? Probably not as that would reduce tax revenue.

Veterinarians provide essential services to our island's agricultural community. We work with farmers and ranchers on a daily basis and are attuned to the needs of agriculture. If BF-70 would accomplish the intended purpose, to reduce taxation inequities, it would have my support and the support of the Agricultural community. BF-70 misses it's target and should be withdrawn or defeated.

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