REQUESTING KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS/BISHOP ESTATE TO KEEP KAMILO NUI VALLEY IN AGRICULTURAL LAND USE IN PERPETUITY AND TO ESTABLISH AFFORDABLE LEASE RENTS TO ALLOW FARMERS TO CONTINUE TO PRODUCE AGRICULTURAL CROPS AS A NATURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRY WHILE PROTECTING THE ESTABLISHED WATERSHED AND MINIMIZING THE FLOODING AND CONTAMINATION OF KUAPA POND.

WHEREAS, the constitution of Hawaii sets forth the goal of preservation of agriculture lands in the State of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, land ownership in Hawaii is dominated by a small number of large land owners who exercise large amounts of influence on the overall social and economic fabric of the islands, especially upon those who are dependent upon lease rents particularly at times of lease readjustments; and

WHEREAS, Kamilo Nui Valley is the last large parcel of undeveloped land in East Honolulu, and is owned by Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate; and

WHEREAS, the farmers of Kamilo Nui Valley have been working the land for decades, raising many different types of agricultural products from vegetables to nurseries and are now entering a period of rent adjustments; and

WHEREAS, the farmers of Kamilo Nui Valley wish to be able to afford to remain on their farms and that the agriculture lands of the valley remain in such usage; and

WHEREAS, the City Council on August 11, 2004 unanimously adopted a resolution to maintain Kamilo Nui's agricultural designation until at least 2020, the time period called for under Honolulu's East Oahu Sustainable Communities Plan; and
WHEREAS, the farmers held their leases since the 1970's, and the leases run until 2025 under the condition that the use of land remain agricultural, however, the lease rents are due for readjustment this year; and

WHEREAS, a local developer and Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate reached an agreement in 2005 to buy the 87 acres of Kamilo Nui Valley for an undisclosed amount of money, under the condition that the developer convince the leaseholders to sell him their lease interests; and

WHEREAS, most current and future farmers want to continue to work the land and conduct their business as afforded under their leases; and

WHEREAS, a community group, Livable Hawai‘i Kai Hui, submitted a petition to the City Council that was signed by 3,500 Hawai‘i Kai residents demanding no change in the current urban/agricultural boundary; and

WHEREAS, Kamilonui Farmers’ Co-op sponsored, "A Day on the Farm" Open House event, which featured games, live entertainment, ono food, door prizes, community booths, farm tours, and produce from the 12 farms. The event was attended by over 500 people, including Governor Linda Lingle who gave remarks, and was instrumental in letting the public know about this agricultural oasis in the midst of an urban development; and

WHEREAS, Kamilo Nui Valley is part of the natural watershed for Hawai‘i Kai, the first line of defense in a system of flood control of which the marina is also a part of; and

WHEREAS, development of Kamilo Nui Valley could lead to a situation similar to the New Year's Eve flood of 1987, when flood water turned Hahaione Valley into a river complete with floating cars and trees; and

WHEREAS, Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate already stated that they will continue to base rents on the agricultural zoning of the land, but also observed that the value of agricultural
land has skyrocketed but is primarily driven by urban land values; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that this body requests Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate to keep Kamilo Nui Valley in agricultural use in perpetuity for its crucial role in sustainability and for its key role in its watershed abilities to prevent flooding and to protect water quality; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate is encouraged to exercise fairness, reasonableness and discretion in its readjustment of lease rents in July of this year based on affordable lease rents for the farmers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Kamilo Nui Valley Farmers Cooperative, Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate, the members of the Honolulu City Council, the Hawai‘i Kai Neighborhood Board, and Livable Hawai‘i Kai Hui.

OFFERED BY:

[Signatures]

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