EAST OAHU COUNTY FARM BUREAU
910 CALIFORNIA AVE., WAHIAWA, HI 96786

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
BOARD OF REGENTS

September 12, 2017

SEP 18 P12:46

Ms. Jan Sullivan
Chair, University of Hawaii Board of Regents
Bachman Hall 209
2444 Dole St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

The East Oahu County Farm Bureau, which represents approximately 420 farmers and supporters of agriculture from Waimanalo to Kahuku, **opposes the proposed location of a charter school**, Malama Honua, on ten acres of the University of Hawaii's Waimanalo agricultural experiment station. Placing a school, with its buildings, parking lots, and other facilities, in this location will conflict with the intended use of the land as an agricultural station, and with the neighboring farms within one of Oahu's last remaining agricultural communities. Waimanalo is one of the few areas on Oahu where small- to medium-sized farm lots are still available for lease or purchase, and where much of the land zoned for agriculture is still actively being farmed.

The proposed site at the corner of Ahiki and Waikupanaha Streets is in the middle of an active agricultural zone. In addition to the activities at the U.H, experiment station, the neighborhood includes many farm families trying to make a living despite continual encroachment of non-agricultural activities into the area. Normal farm operations involve pesticide spraying, noise, dust, and odors. If school activities are disrupted by these operations, typically the farmers will be blamed – they may even be fined or sued – and their ability to farm will be disrupted. The roads near the University site are narrow, with overhanging vegetation, and there is no public transportation to the site. Teachers will have to drive in, and parking will have to be provided. Parents will have to drive their children to school in the morning and back home in the afternoon, creating a major influx of traffic twice a day in this otherwise rural community.

In addition to its likely disruption of the neighboring agricultural community, the proposed school will have negative impacts on the ability of the University of Hawaii (a Land Grant institution) to use the land for its intended purpose: to support the improvement of farming techniques for the benefit of Hawaii's agriculture. On the ten acres that would be leased to Malama Honua, the school would have to construct classroom buildings and other facilities as well as roads and paved parking areas. Once these facilities are constructed, it is unlikely that the land will ever be returned to its original state; soil compaction and residue from asphalt are liable to render much of the site unsuitable for agriculture. Activities within the experiment station, like farming activities outside, will raise dust, create noise and odors, and perhaps involve spraying. Either these activities will interfere with the school's operation, or the school will interfere with

the research activities of the University, or both. Finally, if the school should fail before its lease expires, the University will presumably be responsible for the upkeep of the (no longer useful) school facilities, or their removal.

The Waimanalo Agriculture Association (WAA) also opposes the proposed location for the charter school, citing many of the difficulties we mention above. Like WAA, we have no problem with Malama Honua's concept, but we agree with WAA that the U.H. experiment station is a highly inappropriate location for a school. We would like to suggest that Malama Honua explore an association with Waiahole School or Hope Elementary School; in our opinion, these schools could benefit from the increased enrollment and improvement of facilities that Malama Honua could provide. Further, if the University really sees no immediate need for ten acres of its Waiamanalo experiment station, wishes to lease these acres in order to help support its research operations, and has the legal authority to do so, we suggest that the land be leased to legitimate farming operations. Such operations would be far more compatible with the stated purpose of the experiment station to support agriculture in Hawaii, would be consistent with the Governor's call to double food production, and would help in a small way to relieve the shortage of affordable farmland rather than removing more farmland from the small agricultural community of Waimanalo.

Sincerely yours,

Grant Hamachi, President
East Oahu County Farm Bureau

cc: Herb Lee
David Lassner
Rachel Novotny