

To: Honolulu City Council

From: Derek Scammon
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Subj: Koko Head Shooting Complex

Ladies and Gentlemen:

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I am an avid shooter, and thoroughly enjoy having the opportunity to hone my skills. Koko Head Shooting Complex (KHSC) does a fair job of meeting my needs, but there are some glaring problems there, as well.

Before launching into the problems at the range, I would like to say that KHSC, even in its current state of disrepair, is absolutely vital to the safety and enjoyment of the shooting public on Oahu, a group which is growing daily. More than a pleasant pastime for families and friends, training one's self in the responsible, safe use of firearms is a natural right, guaranteed by our state and federal Constitutions. For those firearms which are kept in a state of readiness for defense of our homes and families, being able to hone our speed and accuracy may well be a matter of life and death. A strong statement, to be sure, but it is certainly the truth. Maintaining a public range, accessible by citizens from all social and economic levels, is simply that important.

The KHSC suffers from two maladies, maintenance and schedule. I would love to see the Complex open seven days per week, but that may be a bridge too far. Currently the range is open five days per week, with three of those being half days. This should be regarded as the bare minimum number of hours that a public range should be open and available for use. Having served on various boards, I am familiar with budget constraints, so I understand that for the time being we may be stuck with the current hours. However, I implore the council to not even consider reducing the current days/hours of operation from their present arrangement.

The maintenance problems at KHSC are of much greater concern than the schedule, although it does seem that the two go hand-in-hand lately. For example, the roof has suffered wind damage, which led to the entire range being closed to effect repairs. This should be regarded as unacceptable. The shooting public understands that if repairs must be carried out, the affected portions of the range will not be available for use, but there is no reason that repairs being made on the pistol side, for example, should cause the rifle side to be unusable. That assumes, of course, that the City and County intends to disregard any necessary upkeep until such time as it becomes a hazard to the public. Obviously, the facility should be properly maintained, allowing *preventive* maintenance to be carried out on days that the range is closed anyway. This would avoid having the range shut down in the first place, and should be the way upkeep is done. There are a number of items other than the roof which are in dire need of attention, as well. The biggest one is probably the bathrooms; they are currently in such poor shape that when I take a female shooter to the range I tell her to use the bathroom before we leave, because the ones at the range are almost unusable.

The final topic that I would like to mention is the potential for charging a user fee for the use of the range. The range should remain free to the public, until such time as the budget for subsidizing jogging paths, dog parks, and golf courses is exhausted. The City and County provides money for a

number of public parks, but these parks do nothing but provide a venue for leisure for the public. As mentioned earlier, the need for a shooting range far exceeds the need for a round of golf or a place to play with the family dog.

If it is absolutely necessary to charge a fee, it should not exceed ten dollars for the entire day, and the proceeds from that fee should be used for the maintenance and upkeep of the range only. To effectively place a tax on the exercise of a Constitutional right is bad enough, but for that tax to be dumped into the general fund and used for projects unrelated to the range would be a complete travesty.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments, and I look forward to having some of these problems fixed.

Sincerely,

Derek Scammon