

My name is Lee A. Cuccia and I wish to address Bills 12 and 30, which are due to have a second reading on April 4th. These bills have been put forward to rectify Bill 44, which passed last year and which excluded horse businesses from dedicating the land upon which they operate as agricultural land, and which would therefore now carry such a high tax burden that they would most likely be forced to close.

I was one of many concerned people who met with Ikaika Anderson in Waimanalo last month and listened to his assurances that Bill 44's exclusion of horse related business was an 'oversight' that the City Council was anxious to fix. I have been hearing rumblings from various places that as of yesterday, this may no longer be the feeling, and that the Agricultural Development Task Force (ADTF) is now withdrawing its support for Bills 12 and 30. If true, this is extremely alarming for the majority of horse owners. The most alarming aspect is that the ADTF says one thing to our faces and then when we have left the building, so to speak, their true colors come out. I really hope that these rumors are false, and am hoping that our local government system really does work and that the people really can have a say in the outcome.

I beseech the Committee to pass Bills 12 and 30 in order to avert a horrible travesty, for if horse businesses can no longer stay in business, not only will that have a negative impact on the employment of many people and families, but also hundreds of horses on Oahu will become homeless. What will ultimately happen to them? It's not like we owners can put them in our backyards. If Bill 44 remains as is, then truly only the very wealthy will be able keep these wonderful animals. Is that really what we want here, more and more life aspects attainable to only a privileged few?

Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,

Lee A. Cuccia
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