

From: pau [mailto:whitehorse@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 03, 2012 6:13 PM
To:
Cc:
Subject: Budget Committee Testimony

I am testifying in regards to the amended bill 12 and proposed bill 30, taxation of real property in regards to horse boarding and stabling. I have been a horse owner for over 30 years. Most horse people are dedicated to the love of the horse. It is not just a sport, or recreational pastime. This is a chosen lifestyle. Most of us are not wealthy people. We barely make ends meet but that is okay because the horse is so much a part of our life. This bill penalizes us and goes against our constitutional rights. It is discrimination.

Horses are a part of history. They have served us well and still continue to do this. Raising the taxes for people who own or keep horses on Ag zoned property whether for business or pleasure is not much different than saying anyone who owns dogs will pay a higher tax. Yet, as a horse owner we are not allowed to keep our horses on a residential zoned property like you can with dogs. There is no alternative but to keep them on an AG zoned property. For this we are penalized. This is wrong.

If the exemption is not allowed this can cause a major problem for Oahu's horse community. There are several thousand horses on Oahu. Over the years the available properties to house them have become more and more extinct as city development moves in on rural areas. There are many professions that make their living from the equestrian community. This includes veterinarians, farriers, feed stores, trainers, employees of the stables, therapeutic horsemanship programs, pony club, 4H club, polo, transportation services such as trailering, airlifting and shipping, farmers and nurseries who use the manure and many others.

With the economic situation, this type of taxation would be disasterous for many small businesses and individuals. It is unreasonable to expect someone with equestrian acreage to be able to afford to pay the higher tax rates. This could force people into foreclosures and bankruptcy. I find it hard to see how this can help people. This bill can have some severe impact and damaging effects on Oahu's Agricultural community. With higher taxes the stable owner could never afford to continue doing business and to raise the board to pay the taxes is out of the question as this would not be affordable for the horse owner.

Targeting the equestrian community is unfair. Is there a hidden agenda?? An individual should be able to purchase one or two acres of AG land to live on and house their animals, such as horses, donkeys, mules, llamas, cows, goats etc, without being penalized and without having them income producing. It is our right to do this and the zoning codes permit this.

Please consider all the consequences of such a severe penalty without justification. The equestrian community has done nothing wrong. Look at the bigger picture and save Oahu's horse community from this injustice. **SAVE** the equestrian properties and keep them affordable.

Mahalo,
Pamela Au
45-516 Pahia Rd. #101A
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
808-781-9752