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~~Speaker Registration/Testimony~~

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Meeting Date (*)	2016-04-05
Council/PH Committee (*)	Budget
Agenda Item (*)	5
Your position on the matter (*)	Support
Representing (*)	Organization
Organization	Tantalus Community Association
Do you wish to speak at the hearing? (*)	Yes
Written Testimony	
Testimony Attachment	20160331153302_Testimony Bil 14.pdf
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April 5, 2016 Budget Committee Agenda Item 5 Testimony of Mark D. Bernstein

Re: Fukunaga's proposed amendment to **Bill 14**, the City's FY 17 Operating Budget (2016): to add \$150,000 to the Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM) budget in order to supplement the State's ***Tantalus-Round Top Drive Master Plan*** by developing more beautification and maintenance partnerships

To the City Council Budget Committee,

Honorable Members of the Committee;

On behalf of Tantalus Community Association (TCA) which I currently serve as President and the entire Tantalus Community that TCA serves, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Council Member Carol Fukunaga's proposed amendment to **Bill 14**, the City's FY 17 Operating Budget (2016): to add \$150,000 to the Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM) budget in order to supplement the State's ***Tantalus-Round Top Drive Master Plan*** by developing more beautification and maintenance partnerships.

This may seem to be a matter of minor importance, but let me assure the council that it is not. The Tantalus-Round Top Drive area is an important, if not essential proving ground for State-City & County cooperation and partnerships. These types of partnerships are required in our state wherever roads that are owned by the City & County and are thus the responsibility of the City & County run through State land. However, achieving these partnerships has not been easy.

Simply put, in the Tantalus-Round Top corridor, the City & County is responsible for the road, its condition and maintenance while the State is responsible for its lands which abut the road. However, we all know that the fauna and natural conditions present on state lands make maintaining the

road in a safe and passable condition more expensive and more challenging than other roadways for which the City & County is responsible.

But let me be blunt, this is not an insurmountable challenge and we, the residents do expect that City and State officials can and will sit down together and not only agree as to their respective responsibilities for the care and maintenance of Tantalus but more importantly systematically discharge those responsibilities. I do not doubt that state and city officials share the goal, but it's not a secret that they have been unable to reach an effective agreement to accomplish it.

One major obstacle to achieving such an agreement, or partnership, as it is referred to, is having the funding necessary at both levels to tackle the issue. The State has appropriated \$450,000 for a Tantalus-Round Top Drive Master Plan and therefore the time is right and indeed ripe for the City & County to step up to the plate and provide funding so that the City & County can do the work necessary to develop the essential maintenance partnerships.

My wife and I first moved to Tantalus in 1974 and I am confident that all of the committee members realize that Tantalus is a magnificent resource for all of the residents of the City & County of Honolulu as well as the State of Hawaii. For all of that time, the challenge of integrating State and City & County responsibilities and fulfilling them has remained unmet. The City says it's the State's fault/responsibility and the State says it's the City's fault/responsibility and all the while the roadway deteriorates as the fauna and natural conditions of Tantalus overwhelm it. Maintenance of the roadway and forestry management are deferred until they are done on a "can't wait anymore" basis. This, of course the most expensive and least effective way to discharge these responsibilities to the public.

In the face of this unmet challenge the Tantalus Community has stepped up and continues to do so. For two decades TCA has conducted regular work days to help keep the roadway safe, passable and free of the amazingly diverse garbage that is illegally dumped on the mountain, be it City & County roads or State land. This year TCA has increased its workdays from 4 to 5 annually. TCA is assisted by City & County workers and that assistance has been increased lately for which TCA is extremely grateful, but we all know how important it is that there be long term solutions for long term challenges such as the maintenance of the Round Top-Tantalus corridor.

The forthcoming Tantalus Master Plan can result in such a long term solution, but I would be less than forthcoming if I didn't say that we have been down this road before. I recall and have read the 1976-77 Draft Master Plan and the Final Investigative Report on Makiki-Tantalus Area Phase 1. It is all good work that did not amount to much in dealing with the issues that we

continue to face today. Nonetheless, TCA is anxious to work with and provide its experience based knowledge about the conditions on Tantalus and, frankly, the community expects the opportunity to do so.

As the planning process unfolds, consultation with the community is critical, but it's not the only important aspect of the planning process. We have learned the hard way that a plan that can't get funded becomes an incredibly expensive doorstop. Therefore we urge a planning process and a plan that has distinct components that are separately budgeted and thus can be separately appropriated for by the legislature and the city council. To do otherwise will risk the creation of another expensive doorstop. Bottom line, we know how good can be sacrificed on the altar of perfection.

Good effective planning requires effort and budgetary resources. The proposed amendment will provide the funds that are required in order for the City & County to effectively contribute to the creation of a maintenance partnership with the State. Such a partnership will allow the City & County to discharge its responsibilities in a more efficient fashion and cost effective fashion.

For these reasons, I urge the Council to approve proposed amendment to **Bill 14**, the City's FY 17 Operating Budget (2016): to add \$150,000 to the Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM) budget in order to supplement the State's ***Tantalus-Round Top Drive Master Plan*** by developing beautification and maintenance partnerships for the Tantalus-Round Top Corridor.

Sincerely,



Mark Bernstein

President

Tantalus Community Association

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