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April 9, 2010

The Honorable Nestor Garcia, Chair
and Members of the Budget Committee
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Garcia and Councilmembers:

Re: Executive Budget Bill 15 CD1

My name is Jon McKenna and I am the President of the West Oahu Economic Development Association, a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization that was conceived in 2001 as a means of re-energizing the region's economy. Today WOEDA is comprised of over 70 businesses and organizations which seek to be an influential force in the growth of the area through the creation of more jobs.

We understand that the City Council is proposing to eliminate a number of programs from the Mayor's Office for the next fiscal year, including the Office of Economic Development (OED). We ask that OED *not* be eliminated.

As the "voice of West Oahu," WOEDA has lobbied hard for projects that will enhance the West Oahu region and provide for the creation of more jobs. WOEDA also sponsors other activities, including luncheons, workshops, and an annual West Oahu Conference in which up-to-date information on the fastest growing region in the State is shared. We have worked in partnership with OED in co-sponsoring some of these activities, and have forged a good working relationship with employees of this agency.

As the only conference which focuses on economic development in West Oahu, WOEDA's annual conference has provided an informational venue for the general public to learn more about what's happening in West Oahu and the types of businesses and jobs that can be anticipated to be available in the near future. The conference also provides general information about the region, as well as updates on major projects coming to town, such as the Disney resort, the State Judiciary complex, Easter Seals, the Kroc Center, DHHL's East Kapolei development, etc.

Approximately 250-275 persons attend the conference, representing a wide spectrum of businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, community leaders, and elected officials. The conference also provides an opportunity for some of the area businesses and nonprofit organizations to set up display booths to showcase their latest products and/or plans for development in West Oahu

OED is important to WOEDA and to the businesses, organizations and residents of West Oahu. Please retain funding for this office.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Jon McKenna, President
West Oahu Economic Development Association

MISC. COM. 427

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