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Posted: March 17, 2007 05:21 PM

Turtle Bay Project May Ruin Burial Sites

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Native Hawaiian groups, non-native Hawaiians and North Shore residents concerned about future development staged a peaceful march and rally today at Turtle Bay Resort. They're concerned about the impact of a planned expansion by Kuilima Resort Company.

Noelani Dabis, who doesn't live on the North Shore, was one of those who participated.

"I'm supporting my ohana on this side of the island and making sure that we don't turn North Shore into another Waikiki," said Dabis, a member of the Ilio Coalition.

Eileen Rice of the Hawaii State Bodysurfing Association brought up other concerns.

"We care about all the beaches and access so we can get to the water, and also about traffic, just the whole picture," Rice said.

But the biggest concern is the ancient Hawaiian burial sites in the area.

"We know that the Kahuku Sand Dunes are known burial sites for many ancestors. They're typical burial sites for native Hawaiians," said Vicky Holt Takamine of the Ilio Coalition.

The groups want more extensive testing of the land before the first shovel of dirt is moved.

"There's better science now," Takamine said. "We know that they did an EIS 20 years ago, but 20 years ago, you know, we didn't have a cultural impact statement requirement. There are burial laws, new burial laws that are in place."

In a statement Saturday afternoon, Kuilima Resort Company said: "We care deeply about culturally sensitive areas on our property. Our archeological impact study was approved by the State Historical Preservation Division, of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. We have assembled a team of respected experts to specifically address burial sites."

The march from the entrance to the Turtle Bay Resort to Kuilima Beach was marked with chants. Once at the beach, hula dancers performed as signatures were gathered for a petition. It was a peaceful march and rally. Now, Hawaiians will wait to see if their message was heard.



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