



Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

PO Box 2577, Honolulu, HI 96803
808.538.6616 hawaii.chapter@sierraclub.org

Keep the North Shore Country

News Release

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CONTACT: Gil Riviere 220-2280
Robert Harris 220-4306

Supreme Court Asked to Review Turtle Bay Resort Expansion

*Twenty-four years of developer delay should
trigger a supplemental review of a major
development project*

HONOLULU, HI – Keep the North Shore Country and the Hawai'i Chapter of the Sierra Club will ask the Hawai'i Supreme Court today to decide whether a supplemental environmental review of the proposed Turtle Bay Resort expansion is necessary. The last environmental impact statement (“EIS”) -- *finished in 1985* -- does not take into account significant community and environmental changes that occurred in the past twenty-four years.

“Good decisions require good information,” said Gil Riviere, President of Keep the North Shore Country. “We’re concerned the City and County of Honolulu should not rely solely on a stale 1985 analysis.” Since 1985, significant traffic problems have developed near the Turtle Bay resort and endangered species, like the Hawaiian Monk Seal, have been spotted nesting around the proposed construction area. This information cannot be considered unless a supplemental EIS is prepared.

In early 2006, the City and County of Honolulu’s Department of Planning and Permitting decided the proposed developer, Kuilima Resort Company (Kuilima), would not be required to produce an SEIS for a 20 year old plan to expand the Turtle Bay Resort from less than 500 to 4000 hotel/condominium units.

That same year, Keep the North Shore Country and Sierra Club, Hawaii Chapter, filed suit to compel the DPP to require a supplemental EIS. Both the circuit court and Intermediate Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Kuilima and the City and County of Honolulu and concluded, so long as no change to the project design occurs, no supplemental EIS is required.

Kuilima's legal position could be taken to absurd conclusions. For example, Turtle Bay's 1985 EIS could remain valid for hundreds of years, even if there are major hurricanes, drastic shoreline erosion, or significant changes to the community in the area. This legal precedent could impact numerous other developments that have received some approval, yet have remained dormant for years.

"The purpose of an EIS is to ensure decision makers have the necessary information about the human and environmental impacts of a proposed project," said Robert D. Harris, Director of the Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter. "This lets the community be involved in the process and ensures smart decisions are made," he continued. "Plainly, the City and County of Honolulu cannot rely upon obsolete information to decide on a project that is no longer appropriate for the community."

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Information, links to articles and reference material on the issues surrounding the Turtle Bay Resort expansion is available at www.KeepTheNorthShoreCountry.org

Founded in 1968, the Hawai'i Chapter of the Sierra Club is the state's largest and most active grassroots environmental organization. The Club actively promotes reducing the impacts of global climate change by encouraging the development of clean renewable energy, reducing the use of fossil fuels, and ensuring our fragile native habitat is protected from harm. www.hi.sierraclub.org