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**County of Hawai'i**  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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November 14, 2011

Mr. Niels Christensen, LPLS  
The Independent Hawai'i Surveyors, LLC  
P.O. Box 577  
Hilo, HI 96721

Dear Mr. Christensen:

**SUBJECT: VARIANCE VAR 11-037**  
**Applicant: THE INDEPENDENT HAWAI'I SURVEYORS, LLC**  
**Owner: KA'AKEPA, LLC**  
**Request: Variance from Chapter 23, Subdivisions,**  
**Article 6, Division 2, Improvements Required,**  
**Section 23-84, Water Supply, (1)(2)**  
**Tax Map Key: 2-8-012:015 (SUB 11-001051)**

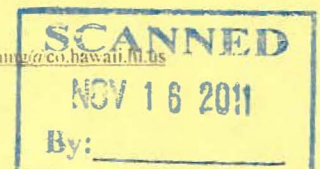
After reviewing the subject variance application, the Planning Director certifies the **approval** of VAR 11-037 to allow proposed three (3) lot subdivision (SUB 11-001051) without providing a water supply system to the additional proposed building lots. The variance is from Hawai'i County Code, Chapter 23, Subdivisions, Article 6, Division 2, Improvements Required, Section 23-84, Water Supply, (1)(2).

The Planning Director has concluded that the variance from the minimum subdivision water system requirements be **approved** based on the following findings:

**BACKGROUND**

1. **Location.** The subject property contains approximately 61.653 acres, situated in the Mālamalamaiki 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd, South Hilo, Hawai'i.
2. **Zoning.** The subject property is zoned Agricultural – 20 acres (A-20a) by the County and designated Agriculture ("A") by the State Land Use Commission (LUC).

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3. **Subdivision Request/PPM.** The applicants/owners submitted a subdivision application (SUB-11-001051) and Preliminary Plat Map (PPM) dated January 17, 2011, proposing to subdivide the existing property into three (3) lots.
4. **Variance Application.** The applicant submitted the variance application on or about July 15, 2011. The variance request proposes to utilize individual private rainwater catchment systems for each of the 3 lots in lieu of a water system as required by Hawai'i County Code Chapter 23 Subdivisions.
5. **Agency Comments and Requirements.**
  - a. The State Department of Health (DOH) memorandum dated August 9, 2011 (Refer to memorandum in Variance file).
  - b. The Hawai'i Fire Department memorandum dated August 16, 2011 states:  
"In that the catchment system will also be used for fire protection, it is recommended that the fire department connection to the tank be located in an area accessible by fire apparatus with approved fire connection." (Refer to memorandum in Variance file).
  - c. The Department of Water Supply memorandums dated May 12, 2011 and September 9, 2011 (Refer to memorandums in Variance file). The Department of Water Supply states, in part, that the subject parcel is not within its service limits and that the existing line is approximately 1,100 feet from the property. DWS further states the property is eligible for one water meter (as it is an existing lot of record), but does not oppose use of individual private catchment systems.
6. **Public Notice.** The applicant has submitted a copy of the notice, a list of surrounding property owner(s), and other submittals. Pursuant to these submittals, it appears that the applicant's notice was mailed to the surrounding property owners by USPS on July 25, 2011 and August 26, 2011. In accordance with Ordinance No. 05-135, the applicants submitted a notarized affidavit, dated October 24, 2011, and photographs to confirm posting of required sign. Notice of this application was published in the Hawaii Tribune Herald and West Hawaii Today on August 12, 2011.
7. **Comments from Surrounding Property Owners or Public.** No other agency comments were received and no objections were received from surrounding property owners or the public.



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### **SPECIAL AND UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

After considering the variance application and background information, including rainfall information provided by the applicant, and agency comments, the Planning Director has determined that there are circumstances applying to the subject property which exist either to a degree which deprives the applicant or owners of property rights that would otherwise be available or to a degree which obviously interferes with the best use or manner of development of the subject property.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

There are no other reasonable alternatives in resolving the difficulty of the applicant. The first alternative requires the applicant to construct extensive improvements and additions to include storage, transmission, booster pumps, and distribution facilities.

The second alternative would be to design, drill and develop private wells and install the necessary water system improvements in accordance with DWS standards.

As such, the imposition of improving the existing public water system or providing an approved alternative water system for the proposed subdivision would be putting excessive demands upon the applicant when a more reasonable alternative is available.

### **INTENT AND PURPOSE**

The intent and purpose of requiring a water system for and within the proposed subdivision is to assure that adequate water is available for human consumption and fire protection.

Section 23-84 of the Subdivision Code requires that all new subdivisions have a water system meeting with the minimum requirements of the Department of Water Supply. The State Department of Health has no specific rules or regulations relating to the utilization, construction, or inspection of private roof or rain catchment water systems for potable or emergency uses.

An alternative to a public water system would be the approval of a water variance to utilize privately-owned individual rain water catchment systems for the proposed 3-lot subdivision, which can meet the intent and purpose of the Subdivision Code according to Planning Department Rule 22-Water Variance, effective February 25, 2006. Generally, Rule 22 is both a rule and statement of criteria to be used so that consistent decisions can be made on water variance requests. Section 23-84 of the Subdivision Code requires a



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water system and Rule 22 limits subdivisions requesting a variance from water supply to six (6) lots. Rule 22 also specifies a requirement for minimal rainfall as follows:

“22-4 Minimum rainfall.

Except as provided in Rule 22-6, all lots to be served by catchment shall have an average annual rainfall of not less than 60”. The annual rainfall can be proven by rainfall records at comparable rain gauges, or by the USGS rainfall map.”

The analysis of variance information and rainfall data submitted by the applicant indicates the subject property and surrounding areas receive adequate rainfall to support individual or separate private rainwater catchment systems for potable and emergency uses. The information submitted by the applicant compared with isohyet maps in the Planning Department denotes the subject property and surrounding areas receive 160+ inches of annual rainfall. The analysis of the rainfall information submitted by the applicant compared with rainfall data and maps in the Planning Department indicate the proposed 3-lot subdivision will receive approximately 120 to 160 inches of rainfall annually. Therefore, proposed subdivision meets Rule No. 22-Water Variance.

Based on the foregoing findings, this variance request would be consistent with the general purpose of the zoning district and the intents and purposes of the Zoning Code, Subdivision Code and the County General Plan. Furthermore, the variance requested will not be materially detrimental to the public’s welfare and will not cause substantial adverse impact to the area’s character and to adjoining properties.

The subject variance application was acknowledged on August 4, 2011. Additional time was requested by the Planning Department to complete the variance background report requirements. The applicant granted an extension of time to render a decision on the variance application to November 15, 2011.

#### **PLANNING DIRECTOR’S DECISION AND VARIANCE CONDITIONS**

The variance request to allow a proposed 3-lot subdivision of the subject property without providing a water system meeting DWS standards is **approved** subject to the following variance conditions:

1. The applicant, owners, their assigns, or successors shall be responsible for complying with all stated conditions of approval.



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2. **Water Variance.** The owners, their assigns, or successors shall file a written agreement or approved written document with the Planning Department prior to receipt of final subdivision approval of SUB 11-001051. This written agreement shall contain the following deed language, being covenants, conditions, and restrictions affecting the lot not serviced by a County water system of the pending subdivision application and shall be duly recorded at the Bureau of Conveyances of the State of Hawai'i by the Planning Department at the cost and expense of the owners:
  - a. The owners agree and accept the fact that a County dedicable public water system is not now able to service the proposed subdivision SUB 11-001051. Should the Council adopt a Unified Impact Fees Ordinance setting forth criteria for the imposition of exactions or the assessment of impact fees, conditions included herein shall be credited towards the requirements of the Unified Impact Fees Ordinance.
  - b. The owners agree and accept the fact that the County will not, at this time, bear the responsibility of supplying public water to the proposed or affected additional lots created by SUB 11-001051 not serviced by a County water system. No further subdivision of the lots created by SUB 11-001051 will be permitted unless county water system requirements and other requirements of Chapter 23, Subdivisions, are met.
  - c. Any lots created by SUB 11-001051 may not be made subject to a condominium property regime.
  - d. Any dwelling constructed on a proposed lot not serviced by a County water system shall be provided with and maintain a private potable rain catchment system which includes a minimum 6000-gallon water storage capacity for domestic consumption or potable uses. This private water catchment system shall adhere to the Department of Public Works, Building Division's "Guidelines for Owners of Rain Catchment Water Systems" as well as the State Department of Health requirements related to water testing and water purifying devices.
  - e. Each permitted dwelling shall be provided with and maintain a private water supply system which includes an additional minimum 3,000 gallon water storage capacity for firefighting and emergency purposes. The location and capacity of the emergency water supply system, including the necessary compatible connector system, shall meet with the approval of the Hawai'i County Fire Department. The Hawai'i County Fire Department also advises



as a precautionary measure for other uninhabited agricultural structures that consideration be given to the provision of a similar water storage system for firefighting and emergency purposes.

- f. In the event that there are any amendments or changes to the subdivision after the agreement is signed, the applicant shall be responsible for informing the County Planning Department of such amendments or changes so that the agreement can be amended concomitantly. Further, the written or recorded agreement shall be binding upon the owner(s), their successors or assigns and shall be incorporated as an exhibit and made part of each agreement of sale, deed, lease, or similar documents affecting the title or ownership of the existing property or approved subdivided lots.
  - g. In the event that the County notifies the owner(s) of the lot(s) created by SUB 11-001051 that the County Water System has been upgraded or an improvement district initiated to enable service to these lots, the owner(s) of the lot(s) shall participate in such improvement district or shall pay their pro-rata share of the upgrade and installation of laterals, as determined by the Department of Water Supply.
  - h. The subdivider and all grantees, successors, and assigns acknowledge that the parcel was created by a variance from the normal subdivision requirements of Hawai'i County, and that there are no special or unusual circumstances applying to the property which deprive the owner of substantial property rights or to a degree which obviously interferes with the best use or manner of development of the property, and hence, no grounds exist or will exist for a variance from the subdivision code to permit further subdivision of the property, and that changes in the owner's personal or financial situation after acquiring the property also will not constitute grounds for a variance from the subdivision code to permit further subdivision of the property.
3. The subdivision application's final plat map shall meet all the requirements of the Hawai'i County Zoning Code and the Subdivision Code not covered by this variance. No other variance from Chapter 23, Subdivisions, shall be granted to permit subdivision application SUB 11-001051.
  4. The subdivider, owner(s), their assigns or successors shall pay any outstanding real property taxes and comply with all other applicable State statutes and County ordinances pertaining to building improvements and land use.

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Should any of the foregoing stated conditions not be complied with, the Planning Director may proceed to declare the subject Variance Permit null and void.

Sincerely,



BJ LEITHEAD TODD  
Planning Director

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xc: Real Property Tax Office (Hilo)  
Manager-DWS  
DPW - Engineering Division  
SUB 11-001051