



2020 Hawai'i Island Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Holeka Inaba



Candidate Race: Hawai'i County Council – District 8

Candidate Website: www.voteinaba.com

1. In 2018, the Hawaii County Council passed Bill 108 (now Ordinance 2018-114), which regulates un-hosted short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) in Hawaii County. What policies would you implement to further regulate or deregulate short-term vacation rentals on Hawaii Island, whether hosted or un-hosted, and what will be the economic impact(s) of those policies?

At this time, I would not propose any policies that work to change regulation of short-term vacation rentals on Hawaii Island. Having only gone into effect recently, I believe our county and rental owners need the time to adjust and adapt to the new ordinance.

2. In 2019, the Real Property Tax Office implemented policies to assess properties at their “highest and best use”. This changed the real property tax classifications for many residents, mainly those on agricultural-zoned parcels smaller than one-acre in size, increasing their real property tax bill. What are your thoughts on the County real property tax and how revenue may be increased without negative impacts for residents?

I support the increase of taxes on luxury homes of non-residents in Hawai'i County. In addition, I would be open to discussions regarding increases on non-resident owned hotel/resort properties.

3. Hawai'i County residents generate over 200,000 tons of solid waste each year. In 2019, the County closed the Hilo landfill and is now hauling solid waste across the island to a landfill in Pu'uuanahulu. Additionally, due to significant decreases in the global market for recyclables, the County of Hawai'i is no longer accepting some of the types of materials collected at the County recycling & transfer stations. What solutions would you propose to resolve the County's solid waste dilemma?

I believe the county needs to committ its resources to better public education regarding the benefits of reduce, reuse and recycle to achieve the goals set forth in the Zero Waste Initiative (<https://www.hawaiizerowaste.org>). Beyond education, however, I would also be open to discussions of a pay to dump system. Funds from the implementation of this sysrtem could help the county in improving its waste management facilities across the island.

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4. Median home prices in Hawaii County continue to rise with shrinking inventory and increasing demand. Since 2011, the median sales price for a residential home in Hawaii County has increased, year to year, by as little as 0.38% (2015-2016) up to 13.46% (2012-2013) per year. What are your top three (3) actionable items to address housing affordability?

1. Supporting modular and quick-build template homes that can get our residents into safe, reliable, and affordable spaces they can own.
2. Providing considerable tax breaks for developers of low income and affordable housing projects.
3. Improving our permitting process to ensure a more efficient process in the building of affordable housing.

5. The Hawai'i state legislature recently proposed legislation that would put the responsibility on the counties to research and provide data on topics such as energy, coastal zone/sea level rise, etc. as they relate to climate change, without addressing funding for any related expenses. What three (3) specific solutions would you propose to address climate change, and how would these proposals be funded?

Three solutions include funding nonprofits who have reforestation/'aina based efforts, committing to increasing renewable energy sources, and reducing our waste. Funds for these changes could come from a variety of sources including "green" fees for all tourists entering Hawai'i, payment for non-residents to enter county parks, increased taxes of secondary non-resident homes, and a pay-to-dump program.

6. In 2015, the state legislature adopted a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) of 100 percent by the year 2045, positioning Hawai'i to become the first U.S. state to produce all its electricity from local renewable energy sources and establishing interim targets of 30 percent by 2020, 40 percent by 2030, and 70 percent by 2040. What is your position on expanding geothermal and/or other forms of renewable energy on Hawai'i Island?

I support the expansion of renewable energy initiative such as solar, especially here in Kona. I look forward to working with NELHA and other leaders in the renewable energy community to find the most environmentally friendly, culturally concious, and fiscally responsible initiatives we can pursue as a county.

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7. What are two (2) things you like about the Community Development Plan (CDP) in your district that are working well? What are two (2) things in your district's CDP that are not working and why? How would you suggest those issues be addressed/fixed?

Pros:

Requiring that maintenance and expansion of existing infrastructure occur simultaneously with the development of new projects.

Proper revisions and updating of the CDP to ensure that it is a living document that holds to its principles while being open to improvements.

Cons:

The lack of community knowledge regarding what the CDP stands for. Effort needs to be made by the county to share the findings and recommendations of the CDP to the greater community.

While the CDP recommends that “truly affordable rental and ownership housing close to places of employment is available for all residents”, I feel that we need to commit more resources and out of the box thinking to this area. See answer to Question #4 above for potential ways to address this issue.

8. The appearance of COVID-19 has brought the world economy to a halt and has exposed major faults in local government's blatant reliance on tourism for revenue. What are your plans to jump start and/or diversify the island's economy?

I want to see Hawai'i return to a set of islands that are self-sustainable and environmentally in-tune. I would like to see stronger support of small businesses and local food producers so that they have the means to compete with big box stores and mass food importation to Hawai'i. If this means decreased taxes on small business, mentoring, business incubators, and forgivable/no interest loans, I am all for it. As public servants, we must be open to challenging the status quo and working with our constituents who have experience and expertise in areas that can transform the status quo into something progressive and forward-thinking.

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9. Many municipalities across the country are exploring bond sales to raise capital for improvements to infrastructure, like road and wastewater improvements as an example; things that are sorely in need of attention on Hawaii Island. The County Council just this year advanced a \$103 million bond issue for road projects with Bill 145. What is your view on expanding municipal bond issuance to finance infrastructure while interest rates are historically low?

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