



2020 Hawai'i Island Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Ikaika Rodenhurst



Candidate Race: Hawai'i County Council – District 5

Candidate Website: www.ikaikarodenhurst.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?

The current ordinance adequately regulates STVRs. I will continue to monitor the effects of STVRs on the communities they operate in to ensure they do not take away from the quality of life experienced by residents, confirm adequately available affordable housing for residents in the community, and allow residents who adhere to the guidelines of this ordinance to operate their STVRs.

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?

Property tax should be equitably applied to the varying property classifications. I will take a look at property taxes to ensure rates are fair and reasonable.

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'uānāhulu. 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?

The most effective method to reduce our solid waste is to reduce the amount of waste generated. Education is paramount to community participation and we need to provide our people with the tools to help. In Puna, we are blessed with an abundance of agricultural land. Incentives to raise chickens and other livestock on property and feed them with biomass (food, grass, leaf, and yard waste) are a creative way to address the problem at a community level with minimal effort in the community.

Another option to deal with the solid waste is to explore a refuse burning operation for energy, similar to the system implemented at H Power on Oahu. This provides a partial solution to two issues we face in excess solid waste and limited renewable energy within our county.

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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?

Three items to address housing affordability are construction of new homes, infrastructure improvements, and employment opportunities. Supporting construction of new homes to add supply to the market will help to keep housing costs down. Infrastructure improvements, primarily in mass transit and implementing the hub and spoke system, will go a long way in providing residents with access to jobs. Finally, supporting opportunities in the fields of agriculture and construction will directly improve the ability of residents to afford these homes.

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 to address climate change are preparing emergency response plans, infrastructure improvements, and support of alternative energy systems. Emergency responses are best planned ahead of time. While emergencies come with a level of uncertainty, being proactive reduces the impacts to life and livelihood and will help keep emergency recovery costs down. We have experienced many natural disasters from hurricanes to earthquakes to lava flows and I will take the lessons learned to prepare a plan in collaboration with the rest of county leadership. Improvements to infrastructure ranging from an improved communications system to well-maintained and accessible roads will provide access by emergency services to those in need of help or evacuation. In an effort to reduce our negative impacts on the environment, I will support alternative renewable energies such as geothermal, solar, and biomass fueled energy. PGV, Honua Ola, and the various solar projects will diversify our energy grid and reduce our dependence on energy outside our county and imported oil. These proposals are significant efforts and will cost a fair amount. The county will need to partner with the State and Federal government to obtain funds and grants to offset the costs.

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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?

As previously mentioned, I am for expanding geothermal and other forms of renewable energy on Hawaii Island. Geothermal energy is a readily available source of energy that can be accessed day and night with minimal environmental impacts. We need to take advantage of the sources we have available within our county like geothermal, solar, and biomass fuel to become more self-sufficient. Support to other alternative energy systems such as Honua Ola and upcoming solar projects will reduce our energy cost, reduce our negative impacts on the environment, and provide for our community within our community.

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?

The efforts to meet the CDP and address mass transit with the efforts to implement the hub and spoke system and the efforts by community planning to keep our agricultural lands affordable and available are beneficial to our community. I do believe we need to push harder in the transportation aspects of the CDP. Puna is the fastest growing area in the state and that means an aggressively growing need for transportation. We are currently behind the CDP schedule for enacting the transportation improvements, and we are even more behind due to the CDP not accounting for the accelerated increase in population. I will engage with local communities and community leadership to address the needs and plan the adjustments necessary.

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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 will support agriculture, shovel ready construction projects, and alternative energies. It is vital we look at what can be done within the county to become more self-sufficient. Agriculture provides us with the ability to feed ourselves directly and generate goods to sell outside our county. Shovel ready construction projects will provide jobs and support our transportation and community services with broad benefits to multiple industries. Alternative energies will reduce our dependence on shipped in oil for energy and reduce our energy costs.

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?

I support the efforts of Bill 145 and believe it will benefit the county in its ability to finance these infrastructure projects.

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