June 14, 1995
RP:0171

District Engineer (PODCO-O)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Building 230
Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858

Army Permit #PODCO 95-004
Kaupulehu Beach Improvements
Kaupulehu, Hawaii

The referenced project is an application by Kaupulehu Land Company to provide recreational swimming holes along the shoreline fronting Kaupulehu Resort by dredging four tidal pool areas and enlarging a natural rock accessway.

The Environmental Center made earlier comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment on Kaupulehu Resort Beach Safety Improvements to the Department of Land and Natural Resources on September 7, 1994, which we are enclosing for your consideration. The following comments augment our earlier review.

The applicant has not considered the cumulative impacts of the beach excavation proposal and other beach improvements discussed in the EA, including the construction of comfort stations and parking lots and the effect of increased access to the area on marine resources or possible archeological and cultural sites. Furthermore, a sufficient examination has not been made of the relationship between these projects and resort expansion plans considered in a 1994 EIS, nor has the relationship between the referenced project and proposals for the development of a golf course maintenance facility and plant nursery been assessed. Thus, the applicant has not complied with Section 11-200-12 of the Hawaii Administrative Rules (H.A.R.) which specifically requires an assessment of the "overall and cumulative effects of an action." There are also environmental, safety, social, and cultural concerns which have not been adequately identified. We felt and continue to feel that the potential significance of these impacts warrants the preparation of and EIS pursuant to Section 11-200-12, H.A.R.
We would also like to point out that the required land reclassification from Conservation District to Urban District for the purposes of the Kaupulehu Resort development is currently being challenged in a contested case hearing before the state Land Use Commission. A number of community groups from the Big Island have joined forces to draw attention to the lack of developer regard for native Hawaiian cultural and historical sites in the Kaupulehu area. Given that lack of attention to these issues were central to our criticism of the EA released last fall, we feel it is important that these issues be adequately resolved prior to the granting of any permits. For these reasons and for the reasons detailed in our review of the Draft EA, we recommend denial of the permit.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this permit application.

Sincerely,

John T. Harrison
Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure

cc: OEQC
Roger Fujioka
Charles Fletcher
Jacquelin Miller
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