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Mayor Kenoi urges BOE to abandon West Hawai'i school impact fee plan

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Tags: board of education, boe, mayor billy kenoi

MEDIA RELEASE

Mayor Billy Kenoi today urged the state Board of Education to scrap a plan to impose school impact fees on property owners in West Hawai'i when they seek a building permit, calling the proposal burdensome and unfair to residents. The fees would apply to both individual lot owners and larger developers.

"This plan in effect discriminates against all lot owners in West Hawai'i by imposing a large new cost on them that is not imposed anywhere else in the state," Mayor Kenoi said. "This proposal will further depress the ailing construction industry in West Hawai'i at a time when many of our construction workers have already been laid off."

"It is a poorly thought out plan that is being imposed on the community at the worst possible time," Mayor Kenoi said.

Mayor Kenoi stressed that large developers already pay to offset the impacts that their large home construction projects have on the public school system. Large developers today are subject to a "fair share" formula that requires them to contribute cash or land to support the school system when the developers obtain rezoning from the County Council or reclassifications from the state Land Use Commission.

The concern with this new Department of Education proposal is it would impose burdensome new fees on individual families that own a single lot in West Hawai'i, and want to build their own home there, Mayor Kenoi said.

"We certainly support public education and understand the need for the Department of Education to raise money for new schools or to expand existing schools, but this proposal is punitive," Mayor Kenoi said. The additional fee would add to the already high cost of housing in West Hawai'i, which would further burden working families from Waimea to Kealakekua, he said.

The Department of Education selected West Hawai'i to be a pilot project to test out the school impact fee program, citing high rates of growth projected for the area over the next 25 to 30 years. The proposal will be considered by the Board of Education's Committee on Administrative Services at its Aug. 10 meeting in Honolulu.

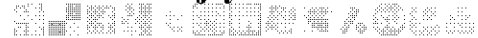
The proposal for West Hawai'i impact fees is based on a consultant's report that proposed \$3,359 be charged for the construction of each single family home in West Hawai'i to help cover the cost of construction of new schools.

In addition, the report outlines another fee to be charged to help cover the cost of land needed for new schools. That land fee would be tied to land values, and examples provided in the report indicated the land fee could range from \$4,110 to \$6,850 per single family home depending on land values in the area.

Mayor Kenoi said that if the Board of Education intends to impose this impact fee, it should be imposed uniformly across the state so that it does not discriminate against a single region such as West Hawai'i.


“This is the wrong plan being imposed in the wrong way at the wrong time,” Mayor Kenoi said.

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1.  [margaretwille](#) says:
[August 9, 2009 at 3:04 am](#)

I disagree with my dear Mayor on this. Essentially this West Hawaii school impact fee program is an pilot project and is consistent with the applicable West Hawaii CDPs. Contrary to Mayor Kenoi's understanding, the fair share system does not provide for school impact assessments.

There are plenty of existing homes and business properties for sale. New homes and business developments should not be excused from paying “their fair share” of the impact from those developments. If any financial preference is given — I suggest existing development's needs be addressed first.

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