

Cam Muir Ph.D.
Associate Dean
UHH Sustainability Chair
Co-Owner Big Island Tea
808-974-7300 (office)
808-938-9926 (cell)
cmuir@hawaii.edu

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Re: selection of Hawai`i Volcano National Park Concession

Aloha e National Park Concessions Selection Committee,

I am writing to assert my strongest possible support for the Volcano House Project proposal to operate the Volcano House concession in Hawai`i Volcano National Park. I have familiarized myself with the Volcano House Project proposal over the last three years. I find their proposal to be innovative, culturally sensitive, environmentally aware, and integrated with community needs.

As an educator, I am very excited that the proposal has such a strong emphasis on community development and education. I cannot think of any more appropriate activity for a US National Park concession to engage than educating the public. As a Biologist and cultural practitioner, I am impressed by the work The Volcano House Project has done to support cultural and energy sustainability. The placement of cultural, economic, community, and environmental sustainability in their operational mandate shows a commitment to the needs of the community as well as the National Park. This dedication is a necessary and respectful approach to take in a small, tight knit, and extremely isolated community.

The Volcano House Project has made heroic efforts to inform, and be informed by, our community. For almost three years, The Volcano House Project has provided an information and feedback center in our Sunday market (they have not missed a single week): perhaps provincial by city standards but necessary in rural settings. In contrast, I have seen nothing from any other proposer. There have been no attempts by any other entity to reach out to, and receive feedback from our community. To shun our community by ignoring opportunities to work with our community is very telling and, frankly, I believe alienating the host community should disqualify their proposals.

I urge you to select the Volcano House Project proposal to operate the HVNP concession. The Volcano House Project is the right approach for this Island, our community, our visitors, and the National Park.

Sincerely,

Dr. Cam Muir
Associate Dean & Sustainability Chair
University of Hawai`i, Hilo, HI