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Consulting Volcanologist  
*Appraisal of hazards --- Reduction of risk*

11 October, 2011

Regional Director --- Pacific West Region  
National Park Service  
111 Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Oakland, California 94607  
Attn: Concession Program Manager

*To whom it may Concern:*

I am a professional volcanologist who has lived on the slopes of Kilauea Volcano for almost 40 years, and am writing in support of the Volcano Project application to operate the Volcano House concession in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii. I worked as a volcanologist for the USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory for over 20 years, and now continue my work as a private consultant. I have studied volcanoes worldwide during my career, and know the active volcanoes of Hawaii to be unique in the world, as sources of artistic stimulation for visitors and as temples of religious reverence by native Hawaiian peoples.

The Volcano House has a long history in its several forms over the past 140 years or so as the focal point for visitors to Hawaii Island. I have known the present building as a customer and admirer for the last four decades, and have seen its ups and downs as to the quality of the services provided guests. During all of this time the concession has been owned and operated by businessmen and corporations who considered profit as their primary focus, with secondary focus on service to their tourist clients.

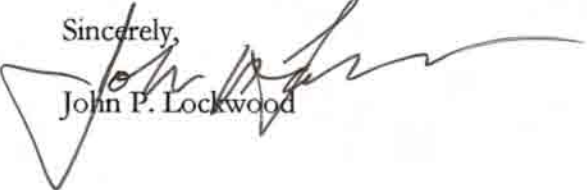
The proposal by the Volcano Project to operate the Volcano House is a complete break with the past, and involves a paradigm shift to change the operational focus of this historic facility from the seeking of profits, to focusing on the provision of quality visitor comfort while providing educational opportunities for visitors and staff alike. The vision of the Volcano Project, as I have come to understand it during the past two years of public outreach within our Volcano community, is to focus on the spiritual and artistic "ambience" of this very special place, so that visitors will not simply have "bed and board", but will have opportunities to learn about the Park both through privately-arranged tours, as well as through better integration with educational efforts of NPS professionals.

I understand that another focus of the Volcano Project will be to use revenues to support more opportunities for local culinary and hotel management students for "on-the-job training" with the professional staff. Opportunities are also envisioned for local community experts in Hawaiian culture, biology, and geology to interact with Volcano House guests to enrich their appreciation for this most special place. I have personally offered to help with designing volcanological opportunities for visitors to compliment NPS-HAVO efforts.

The Volcano House has the potential to once again be the premier focal point for visitor accommodations and spiritual renewal within Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (as it once was during the "Lycurgus years" from 1941-1960).

I urge you to award the V-House concession to the Volcano Project, so that this historic facility can be soon re-opened and perhaps serve as a new model for operation of private facilities within US National Parks, a model that focuses primarily on local and visitor needs, and not on maximization of private profits.

Sincerely,

  
John P. Lockwood