

October 15, 2011

Regional Director Pacific West Region
National Park Service
111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607
Attention: Concession Project Manager

To Whom It May Concern:

After a thirty-five year career in the National Park Service, it has been my happy opportunity to spend the winter months in Hawaii, where my wife and I had the pleasure of meeting David Donald and Anne Lee.

Over the seasons we also had ample opportunity to observe the operation of Volcano House from the point of view of the taxpayer/visitor.

The defects were many: food so consistently bad, that it was actually mentioned in one guide book, Andrew Doughty's "Hawaii The Big Island Revealed". The staff was surly and even antagonistic. Volcano House could have been any seedy rundown motel and restaurant on the outskirts of Tulsa, Oklahoma. For whatever reason, management had clearly given up.

After a career that involved observing and inspecting some of these operations, I have often thought things could go better with the park concession reflecting the ecology and culture of the park environment, rather than a strip mall.

Clearly, with its setting, Volcano House could be one of the flagship lodges of the NPS. Educating, as well as serving the public.

After many hours of discussion over many months with David and Anne, I found myself in total agreement with their philosophy of a local, organic, park and neighborhood centered operation rather than a corporate, one size fits all, could be anywhere type of operation.

I was particularly impressed with the depth of their research and their grass roots approach to the community, particularly the Hawaiian community. They have been able to attract top flight people who also have the dream of a locally based, non-corporate operation.

As the Big Island is economically depressed, I was particularly taken with the idea of a Culinary Institute that would train future chefs for employment throughout the Islands and the mainland.

David and Anne have proposed an innovative and visionary program that could change the way we view park concessions. I hope you will decide in their favor.

Sincerely,

PJ Ryan
2011 Hermitage Ave
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-933-6931