

Tim Tunison  
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Regional Director—Pacific West Region  
National Park Service  
111 Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Oakland, California 94609  
Attn: Concession Program Manager:

To Whom It May Concern:

I enthusiastically recommend The Volcano Project applicants, Mr. David Donald and Ms. Anne Lee, in their diligent efforts to be awarded the Volcano House concession contract. David Donald and Anne Lee are committed to transforming the Volcano House into a concessions operation that focuses on enhancing the park experience for the visitor and benefitting the surrounding communities.

As a National Park Service career employee, I transferred nearly 30 years ago to Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Memories of my first days are vivid; the Volcano House was central to those memories. As a "fresh-off-the boat" Park Service employee I was treated by the park staff, per park custom, to spend my first night in the national park as a guest in the "V-House." The next morning I was greeted by my new supervisor and the Park Superintendent at a delicious V-House breakfast. These were honors because of the quality of the food, service, and the Volcano House experience. For the next year or so I frequented the Volcano House for Sunday brunches and evening dinners with friends because the Volcano House was not only a high quality, welcoming destination for park visitors, it was then a center of hospitality for the surrounding communities.

I found resource management work at Hawai'i Volcanoes to be challenging and rewarding and spent the next 23 years working first as a Resource Management Specialist and then Chief of Resource Management. I retired six years ago and continue to live in Volcano, the gateway community for the national park. My experience working at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and as a Volcano community resident provides me a perspective on the role of Volcano House in the park visitor experience and the role of V-House in the surrounding communities.

David Donald and Anne Lee have dedicated the last three years of their lives to the Volcano Project. They moved to Volcano and immersed themselves in park and community environments and issues. They have worked diligently to communicate their

vision for the Volcano House operation to Volcano and the broader community and are supported by many prominent citizens, community leaders and organizations including Hawai'i State Governor Abercrombie, State Senator Kahele, local County Council Member Smart, and Volcano Community Association and Cooper Center Council, the umbrella organizations for the Volcano community. I am very impressed by endorsements of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Royal Order of Kamehameha, Alu Like, and local kumu hula, indicating the benefit of their vision to the Hawaiian community and local youth. Volcano House sits on the rim of Kīlauea Caldera, considered by many Native Hawaiians to be a sacred site. A concessionaire operating a cultural sensitive operation in this crucial location is highly welcome. The Volcano Project's proposed culinary training program is also especially appealing. Strong support in the community is based on sensitivity to local needs and culture as well as the realization that, as a local concessionaire, all of the revenue and profit from the Volcano House operation will stay in the community, rather than move out of state.

Broad, strong community support is also based on the realization that a not-for-profit such as the Volcano Project may have greater flexibility to use their revenue for programs benefitting the park visitor and communities. I have spoken directly David Donald about two valuable programs to benefit the visitor experience. They propose to help support the park and local community volunteer efforts to keep the invasive Coqui frog from becoming established in the park and surrounding community. If established, this noisy pest would be detrimental to the visitor experience in the park. The Volcano House would also provide interpretative opportunities, utilizing expertise in the local community, to complement educational opportunities provided by the park staff. I personally offered to help with designing programs on local natural history and leading longer, guided hikes for small groups.

I urge the National Park Service to award the Volcano House concession contract to the Volcano Project. I look forward to the reopening of the Volcano House and the restoration of the V-House as a center of hospitality for the park visitor and community. I also look forward to reestablishing a family tradition of delicious Sunday brunches and evening meals at the Volcano House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Tunison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Tim Tunison