

P.O. Box 683
Volcano, HI 96785

14 October, 2011

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

To whom it may Concern:

I am pleased to recommend the THE VOLCANO PROJECT applicants, Mr David Donald, and Ms Anne Lee, who have diligently pursued the contract bid to manage the Volcano House concession at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

I have been a resident of the Volcano community for 32 years. I know this community intimately. As a former employee of the National Park, 1979 – 1994, I am quite familiar with the operations of the park. I have witnessed Volcano House management since 1979, and was a personal friend with the Sheraton Corp manager at that time, Mr Walter Liebetrau. I witnessed, with much disappointment, the deterioration of hotel operations under the stewardship of the successor manager, and finally felt despair as Volcano House ceased to operate three years ago.

The Volcano House enjoys a rich history in our community. Until the end of the Sheraton Hotels concession, in the early 1980s, it had enjoyed a continuous history of providing hospitality and entertainment to local people, as well as, visitors. It was a frequent gathering place for festivals, holiday events, conferences, and meetings. Hotel managers and staff were members of our community and were loved and respected as participants in our lives here. The Volcano House was renowned as a center of hospitality. It was an integral part of community life.

A cause of concern among those of us in the community who care about concessionaire-community relations, is the possibility that a concession manager will be selected who does not place a high value on the importance of the Volcano House to the local community. Indeed, from a community perspective, the success of the national park is a reflection of the success of the concessionaire.

The VOLCANO PROJECT applicants have demonstrated an unusual devotion to the Volcano community. Not only have they taken up residence here, and become involved in several community affairs, they have indicated their ability to bring high quality benefits to the community through various proposals for concessionaire activities. It is understood they would continue the long tradition of superb hospitality and community service. Beyond that, they would bring to this concession a creative and unique commitment to profit sharing and training in culinary and hospitality service. They would blend their exceptional food and accommodation service to documented and *bona fide* technical training for the benefit of local people. They would build a secure employment base for local residents, and as well provide a training venue upon which many of them could build into future work and careers.

Mr Donald and Ms Lee have shown a good understanding of the unique natural environment and how it would be impacted by the Volcano House operation. They support the designation of

the national park and the community as integral parts of International Biosphere Reserve, and they would cooperate in the many endeavors to promote the area for its conservation, scientific, and educational values.

It is not often that the National Park Service has such an opportunity to engage a creative and forward-looking concessionaire as the one THE VOLCANO PROJECT offers. I cannot urge you strongly enough to consider the bid from this applicant. There is the certainty here that engaging this bid would help to transform concessionaire operations into a significantly better future than what we have recently witnessed at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Most of all, you would likely set a course for more exciting, creative, and beneficial USNPS concession operations in other National Parks.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to hear more details about my recommendations for Mr. Donald and Ms. Lee. They are dedicated, resourceful, and fine people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel Taylor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Daniel Taylor, Chief of Resources Management (ret) Hawaii Volcanoes National Park