

## **Measure A and the spirit of kokua**

By Jim Moore

I wish I understood what was behind the repeated assertion by opponents of Measure A that it was constructed in secret, behind mysterious closed doors, as Selena Rowan argues in her My Word piece (Vote no on Measure A, Feb. 3, Page A4). Having been to a large public meeting on the issue at Kneeland School in 2021, with county representatives including John Ford, Mike Wilson and Rex Bohn attending, I know that the process leading to Measure A started off very openly with requests for input from the public (I think I heard about it on Nextdoor).

Speculation: most growers are abiding by the rules and are just trying to navigate the difficult economic landscape created by legalization. Some of the bad apples running lights and generators and drawing down streams and aquifers are their friends, desperately struggling to make a go of their dreams. Some of the bad apples are criminals and have guns.

Either way, there wasn't a lot of incentive for growers to respond to a community call for help devising a response to the abuses, so they didn't. The alleged lack of grower input into Measure A might be real, but whose fault is that?

Ms. Rowan's words support this interpretation when she suggests that "the proponents (of Measure A) could have focused on cleaning up abandoned, unlicensed grow sites, ... consistently flagged as a critical issue." EXCUSE ME? Neighbors afflicted by noise, light, loss of water and other byproducts of growers violating existing rules, instead of trying unsuccessfully to get those rules enforced and eventually having to resort to the initiative process, should have been the ones cleaning up the mess left by illegal growers? What sort of entitled fantasy world is this? Ms. Rowan seems to expect the general public to help her out, but offers nothing in return. I doubt she speaks for the entire cannabis community on this, but still ...

The Hawaiian word "kokua" means to help out as a community, caring about each other and trying to attain an outcome that works for everyone. I hope Ms. Rowan and other opponents of Measure A consider it, and how much better off we'd all be now if this issue had been approached with the spirit of kokua years ago.

*Jim Moore is a Bayside resident.*

