

# Commission defers glamping bill

By [Sabrina Bodon The Garden Island](#) | Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 12:05 a.m.

LIHU'E — A bill intended to squash the dreams of luxury camping developments in open- and agriculture-zoned areas has been further deferred by the Planning Commission.

Bill No. 2822, originally introduced by County Councilmember Luke Evslin and Vice Chair Mason Chock in April, garnered at least 145 letters of written testimony for Tuesday's commission meeting, primarily in support of the bill.

However, the Planning Department recommended the deferral to Sept. 14, which the commission opted to do on the item. Commissioner Helen Cox was the only no vote.

"This is an island-wide policy that is looking at whether or not transient accommodation, particularly as they're proposed in the campground fashion, be permissible or prohibited on either agricultural and open zoning districts," Planning Director Ka'aina Hull said.

"The elephant in the room, of course, and was spoken to somewhat during public testimony, is that this is being introduced in the shadow of a proposal in Princeville."

Starwood Capital Group, which in part owns the Makai Golf Course in Princeville and the forthcoming 1 Hotel Hanalei Bay, proposed a luxury glamping development in Princeville on the course last summer, and has faced harsh community resistance.

The 50-tent glamping proposal is outlined to be on a portion of the Woods Course, holes one through three, located west of Lei O Papa Road and south of Ka Haku Road.

Since this proposal came to light, Hull said there has been an influx of glamping proposals on the island. In a year the department would normally receive four or five, and is now receiving about four to five a month.

Recently, Starwood Capital filed its use permit application with the county, and has received pre-review comments, Jason Cruce, head of hotel development for Starwood Design and Construction Services, said Tuesday.

"It is in the process of completing the required updates for final submission," Cruce said.

Hull, to the commission, said that he's reviewed the

Starwood Capital draft, and it's likely it will be submitted before an appropriate bill to amend the county's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance would be passed through the commission, council and signed into law.

"Our analysis, our assessment, is done on an island-wide approach," Hull said. "We are not doing it specifically to a particular application that may come before (the commission) at a future date."

Hull said this bill should be better-focused on open- and agriculture-zoned districts, and that it could get "stuck here for some time because we're going to have to figure out how you implement a non-conforming use-certificate program for the" Visitor Destination Area.

Hull said Chock and Evslyn raised no objection to remove references to Transient Vacation Rentals in the bill.

The proposed legislation defines undeveloped and developed campgrounds. The bill defines an undeveloped campground as one used by property owners and guests for non-commercial camping. This campground would lack permanent structures and not generate compensation.

A developed campground would allow permanent structures and bathrooms, and would need to be designed to be "used, let or rented for temporary commercial

occupancy by campers."

During public testimony Tuesday, Councilmember Felicia Cowden asked the commission to consider allowing campgrounds on agriculture zoning in this bill.

Cowden said she and another councilmember are working on a bill that is focusing on village frameworks, one to support farm workers and another for culturally-based agriculture communities.

"We are in a housing crisis on this island right now. We're in need of a solution, and this can be one more tool in our tool box for helping housing and also bringing our farms up to better code," Cowden said.

*This article was updated at 1:40 p.m. on Wednesday, July 14 to clarify Planning Director Ka'aina Hull's comments on Transient Vacation Rentals in reference to Bill No. 2822.*

*This article was updated on Thursday, July 15 to correct Commoissioner Helen Cox's vote.*

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