Dr. Marvin Miura, Director  
Office of Environmental Quality Control  
465 South King Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Dr. Miura:

Transmitted herewith are four copies of the Final Environmental Assessment for the Panaewa Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center. This report is submitted in compliance with Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 11, Chapter 200, Section 11(a).

We are filing with this letter a negative declaration, as there are no significant environmental impacts by this project.

Sincerely,

Yukio Kitagawa  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

Enclosures (4)  
c: Hilo Engineering
FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PANAWEWA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT
MARSHALLING AND PROCESSING CENTER

Panaewa Agricultural Park
Walakea, South Hilo, Hawaii

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
STATE OF HAWAII
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE
PANAWEA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARSHALLING & PROCESSING CENTER

Lot No. 29
Panaewa Agricultural Park
Waiakea, S. Hilo, Hawaii
TMK: 2-2-56: 55

Prepared for:
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
State of Hawaii
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96814

April 1990

Prepared by:
Hilo Engineering, Inc.
484 Kalanikoa Street
Hilo, HI 96720
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FIGURES

Figure 1  Location Plan
Figure 2  Subdivision Map
Figure 3  Conceptual Plan
SUMMARY

The proposed project is the development of an agricultural product marshalling and processing center. The project site is on State land within the Panaewa Agricultural Park. The site, 4.415 acres, was set aside for such use in the planning of the Panaewa Agricultural Park. Approximately 1.5-acre will be utilized for the initial construction of the marshalling/processing center. The cost for site preparation and construction is estimated to be $1.23 million.

The area was formerly part of the Panaewa Forest Reserve, a highly disturbed forest. No rare or endangered species have been found to inhabit the project site. No archaeological or historic site is known to exist on the site.

Due to the nature of the project, no adverse impacts to water and air quality are foreseen. The infrastructure of roads, water mains and utility services are available on site as these were installed during the development of the Panaewa Agricultural Park.

The project site is located in the State Agricultural District. The County zoning for the area is A-3a, minimum 3-acre agricultural lots. The project will require a County Special Use Permit.

The project conforms to Section 166-1, HRS, the Agricultural Park Act, which states that important agricultural lands should be preserved and shall include: "... lands with common facilities and activities to encourage farm production and distribution economies."
SECTION 1

IDENTIFICATION OF APPLICANT

The Panaewa Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center is a project of the Department of Agriculture, State of Hawaii, whose address is:

1428 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96814

Phone: 548 7101

The Department is responsible for the Agricultural Park program of the State and its related facilities.

The proposed project is the development of an agricultural product marshalling and processing center on State land within the Panaewa Agricultural Park.

SECTION 2

IDENTIFICATION OF APPROVING AUTHORITY

The approving authority is the Governor of the State of Hawaii, whose address is:

The State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813
SECTION 3
IDENTIFICATION OF AGENCIES CONSULTED

The following agencies, organizations and individuals have been provided copies of this draft document for review and comment:

Federal:
Department of Interior
  Fish & Wildlife Service
  Geological Survey
Department of Agriculture
  Soil Extension Service

State:
  Department of Land & Natural Resources
  Department of Business & Economic Development *
  Department of Hawaiian Homes Lands
  Department of Health
  Department of Transportation *
  U. H. Extension Service
  U. H. H. College of Agriculture

County:
  Department of Planning *
  Department of Research & Economic Development
  Department of Water Supply *
  Department of Public Works *

Others:
  Big Island Dendrobium Growers Association
  Hilo Farmers' Cooperative Exchange
  Hawaii Farm Bureau
  Hawaii Macadamia Nut Association
  Hawaii State Guava Association

* Agencies that responded. See APPENDIX A.
FIGURE 1
LOCATION MAP
PANAEW A AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARSHALLING AND PROCESSING CENTER
WAIAKEA, SOUTH HILO, HAWAII
TAX MAP KEY: 2-2-56:55
FIGURE 2
SUBDIVISION MAP

PANAewA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MAP AND PROCESSING CENTER

WAIAKEA, SOUTH HILO, HAWAII
TAX MAP KEY: 2-2-56-55
FIGURE 2
DIVISION MAP
RURAL PRODUCT MARSHALLING
ESSING CENTER
SOUTH HILO, HAWAII
KEY: 2-2-56:55
CORRECTION

THE PRECEDING DOCUMENT(S) HAS BEEN REPHOTOGRAPHED TO ASSURE LEGIBILITY. SEE FRAME(S) IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING.
FIGURE 3
CONCEPTUAL PLAN
PANAewA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARSHALLING AND PROCESSING CENTER
WAIKEA, SOUTH HILO, ISLAND OF HAWAII, HAWAII
TMK: 3rd Div. 2-2-56:55
HILO ENGINEERING, INC.
484 KALANIKA ST., HILO, HAWAII
SECTION 4

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A. TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTIC:

The project site is owned by the State and located within the Panaewa Agricultural Park, Waiakea, South Hilo, Hawaii. See FIGURE 1, Location Plan. The project site is Lot No. 29 of the Panaewa Agricultural Park and further identified as being Tax Map Key: 2-2-56: parcel 55. The lot size is 4.415 acres. Refer to FIGURE 2. The infrastructure: roads, water, electricity, telephone service - are in place. The area is zoned for agricultural use. A Special Use Permit will be required from the County as described in Section 8 of this document. No other technical problems are anticipated.

For the initial development, the proposed marshalling yard and processing center will occupy 1.5-acre of Lot 29 and consist of a 10,000 square feet building, more or less, to assemble, process, package and ship agricultural products. The facility will be of fabricated steel and provide storage, chill reefer space, office, conference room and restroom on prepared site with paved loading and parking areas. The construction will not entail any special requirements as the facility will be of standard construction materials. Further, since the existing infrastructure is adequate to handle the development, construction and building permits will not require any special consideration. FIGURE 3 is a conceptual plan of the site.

The estimated project cost including site preparation, construction, engineering and inspection is estimated at $1.595 million.

B. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTIC:

The proposed project, while located in the Panaewa Agricultural Park, is expected to service not only the immediate farmers in Panaewa but the general farming community of the island as well. It will be a valuable asset especially to the farmers in South Hilo and Puna. Its location within the Panaewa Agricultural Park is predicated on the availability of State land zoned for agricultural use; its proximity to shipping facilities; and its accessibility to the users of such a facility. The site is of special economic value for these reasons. The Panaewa Agricultural Park and its nearby farm lots - the original 20-acre size Panaewa Farm Lots; the Panaewa House Lots, 1st and 2nd Series, with 2.7-acre lots; and the Panaewa Farm Lots, 2nd Series, with 10-acre lots - can provide a meaningful agricultural base for the proposed marshalling and processing center. Inasmuch as the general area is agriculturally zoned and in intensive agriculture use, the proposed project is in keeping with the area as it is solely supportive of the agricultural industry and its various related activities.

The location of the site, off the State Volcano Highway, a major highway, provides easy access for farmers utilizing the
facility. Being in an agricultural park with scattered homes on 10-acre lots eliminates any intrusion into urban residential areas.

While construction of the proposed facility may generate noise and increase traffic, such impacts will be of temporary nature. The traffic generated by users of the facility will not significantly cause any adverse impact as the existing roads built to County standards can accommodate the traffic. The estimated number of vehicle trips for the initial development is approximately 69 to 77 trips per week-day, or an average of about 10 per hour for a 8-hour work day. Should the entire 4.4-acre site be fully developed at some future date, the traffic is estimated to be 238 trips per day, or average out to 30 trips per hour per 8-hour day. According to State Highway records, Mamalahoa Highway, a divided 4-lane highway, has an average daily traffic count of 20,097 vehicle trips. (Traffic Summary, Island of Hawaii, 1988.) The peak hour traffic for airport-town bound cars in the morning is 1510 vehicles. (DOT unclassified traffic count, 4/20-21, 1988.) Since each lane of traffic theoretically can carry 800 to 1200 vehicles, and it appears that each lane can probably handle 1000 vehicles per hour, the 5 to 10 vehicles that may enter/exit the project site can be accommodated by the existing roads.

Since the project site is vacant land, no displacement of any home or establishment is involved. The absence of known archaeological and/or historic sites within the project area and its vicinity preclude any environmental impacts. Traffic generated by the project will affect air quality; however, this is minimal and with the continued improvement of vehicular fuels and emission control devices, the impact will continue to be mitigated.

C. ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTIC:

Until surpassed by the visitor industry in recent years, agriculture was the backbone of the island. Today, while the visitor industry continues to surge ahead, diversified agriculture is experiencing a steady and remarkable growth. Agriculture, once represented primarily by the sugar industry, started its decline after World War II. From 15 sugar plantation mills to only 3 in operation at present tells the story of the demise of plantation life in Hawaii. However, the agricultural background and tradition of the island have continued by growth of the diversified agricultural industry. On Hawaii, 1981 sugar revenues totalled $76.8 million while other agricultural crops, including flowers, macadamia, vegetables, generated $63.9 million. By 1988, sugar earned $60 million while diversified agriculture (not including livestock) climbed to $105 million, more or less.

The proposed project is to support the agricultural industry by providing facilities for gathering (marshalling yard) and processing agricultural products. A request for use of such a facility has been made. The initial construction of the
marshalling and processing center will encompass a building of
10,000 square feet in size. The prospective user of the site is
expected to generate sales exceeding $1 million. The cooperative,
negotiating to utilize the marshalling and processing center
represents 40 active members who generated sales of $641,800 in
1987. Non-members also utilized the services of the cooperative
and their sales amounted to $413,800. The prospective user, Hilo
Farmers' Exchange Cooperative has been in existence since 1943.
The Hilo Farmers' Exchange Cooperative handles a wide range
of agricultural products, both locally grown and imported. These
include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cabbage</th>
<th>lettuce</th>
<th>onion</th>
<th>eggplant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>carrot</td>
<td>squash</td>
<td>potato</td>
<td>tomato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broccoli</td>
<td>cauliflower</td>
<td>string bean</td>
<td>soy bean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bell pepper</td>
<td>celery</td>
<td>taro leaf</td>
<td>orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apple</td>
<td>lemon</td>
<td>lime</td>
<td>chinese taro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ginger</td>
<td>garlic</td>
<td>persimmon</td>
<td>bamboo shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasu</td>
<td>banana</td>
<td>macadamia nut</td>
<td>watercress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantaloupe</td>
<td>melon</td>
<td>cucumber</td>
<td>daikon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The wide variety of produce is to accommodate the
requirements of the clients served by the Cooperative.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTIC:
The project site was part of the Panaewa Forest Reserve.
Since 1957, this lower area of the Panaewa Forest Reserve has
been converted to agricultural uses. The general area has been
described as being a highly disturbed Metrosideros/Cibotium
('ohi'a lehua and hapu'u) forest. Portion of the project site
appears to have been graded in the past as shown on FIGURE 3.
The project site consists primarily of a disturbed forest of
Metrosideros/Cibotium and Melastoma-Dicranopteris scrubland.
There are numerous exotic plants on the site such as Psidium
cattleianum (guava) and Trem douglasii (gunpowder tree). For
detailed information on the flora of the area, see "Panaewa
Agricultural Park, Revised Environmental Impact Statement – March
1980, Department of Land and Natural Resources."

According to a fauna survey, only exotic species frequent
the area; it is not the habitat for any rare or endangered native
species. Exotic avian species seen in the area include: melodious
thrush, white-eye, cardinal, and housefinches. With the
development of the adjacent farm lots, less exotic birds will be
seen as the area is cleared. No native wildlife mammals have been
recorded. Rats can be expected to be found in the area as well as
mongoose, feral cats and stray dogs from time to time. Even an
occasional wild pig may enter the site from nearby undisturbed
forest areas; however, as development of the area occurs, this
will become a rarity. The endangered Hawaiian bat was thought to
forage the area and possibly use the area for roosting. With the
clearing of the general area for the Panaewa Agricultural Park
farm lots and other earlier subdivisions, the probability of the
Hawaiian bat frequenting the area has been lessened; since little information is currently available on the population, habits and location of this species, any statement at this time would be speculation.

Air quality is not expected to be significantly impacted as the proposed facility is not planned to generate any uncontrolled pollutant. Traffic generated by the project will be sporadic and minor creating little or minimal adverse impact to air quality since vehicles will be equipped with approved exhaust control devices.

Water quality is not expected to be adversely impacted by the proposed project as waste water will be processed by an approved method or equipment in accordance with Department of Health regulations. No County waste water system is available in this agricultural area.

Noise will generally be limited to traffic entering and leaving; and motors installed to operate the chill reefer facility. Traffic noise will generally be limited to daylight hours; motors will be continuous and sound-proofed if necessary to reduce noise levels to acceptable standards.

No known archaeological and/or historic sites are recorded for the project site.
SECTION 5
SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The project site is located in the Panaewa Agricultural Park which was established in 1980. There are 28 other lots within the Agricultural Park varying from 10 to 20 acres. The project site is a 4.415-acre lot created for agricultural support facilities. Refer to FIGURE 2. The project site is located on the east side (makai) of the Volcano Highway.

The general area was part of the Panaewa Forest Reserve. The lower portion of the Panaewa Forest Reserve below the Volcano Highway has been converted to intensive agriculture. Besides the Agricultural Park, other units of the Panaewa Forest Reserve below the Volcano Highway now in agricultural use include the 20-acre lots of the Panaewa Farm Lots and the 2.7-acre lots of the Panaewa House lots designed for part-time or subsistence farming use. Adjoining the Agricultural Park is the University of Hawaii at Hilo College of Tropical Agriculture farm lot of 110 acres. The site is used for pasture purposes for cattle and as an experimental farm laboratory.

On the west side (mauka) of the Volcano Road, is the Panaewa Farm Lots, 2nd Series, with its 10-acre lots off Stainback Highway.

The area has been described as being a disturbed 'ōhi'a lehua and hapu'u forest. Only remnants of the forest now exist due to the conversion of the area to agriculture. The clearing of the area for farming and the resultant infrastructure of roads, water, telephone and electric lines have irreversibly changed the character of the area.

Rainfall averages 140 inches annually, more or less. There are no streams in the immediate vicinity of the project area. The soils to be encountered are the Papai series of extremely stony muck. Soil permeability is rapid, runoff is slow and erosion hazard is slight. The soils are suited for woodland, pasture, orchards and truck crops.
MAJOR IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Air Quality: No significant adverse impact is projected due to the nature of the proposed facility. Traffic emissions will be of limited effect due to the low volume of anticipated traffic. The continued improvement to vehicular exhaust control equipment and reduction of fuel contaminants is expected to further reduce any adverse impacts from this source.

Water Quality: The project site is approximately 1.25 mile in a lateral direction from the Water Department Panaewa Well Site and at the same elevation as the well field. No adverse impact is foreseen as the proposed facility will not be engaged in crop production, therefore no heavy use of fertilizers is foreseen. Monitoring of the Panaewa deep wells is carried out to ensure a safe supply by the County Department of Water Supply. Further, the proposed facility will have an approved type of waste water disposal system or method in accordance with Department of Health regulations - Title 11, Chapter 62: Wastewater Systems. Such an individual wastewater system (IWS) will be designed by a professional engineer in conformity with said Department of Health regulations. The proposed facility will use 20,000 gallons per month, more or less, primarily for sanitation purposes and washing of produce.

Noise: Traffic noise that will be generated will be typical of farm areas, i.e., trucks and farming equipment. Since traffic is expected to occur only during daylight hours, little, if any, impact will occur. Machinery to operate the chill (reefer) room will be muffled to control noise levels.

Traffic: The roads within the Panaewa area have been designed to County Public Works standards and maintained by the County. In this respect, no adverse impacts are anticipated by the traffic generated by the proposed project. The normal traffic in this area is primarily for agricultural purposes and the proposed facility, being supportive of agriculture, is appropriate for the area. No disruption or impact to urban residential areas is foreseen. This Panaewa farming area has been developed in increments or phases; there are four roads that allow traffic access to Makalii or Volcanos Road as it is sometimes called. These are Makalii, Lama and Mamaki streets for the use by residents of the farm and over-sized houseslots; and the UH farm unit road. Probable impacts that may be caused by the project are mitigated by these four roads. The use of large trucks will be limited. The prospective tenant for the initial increment operates two truck-trailers that are used up to three times a week. Customers that will utilize the agricultural product center will use smaller trucks, and present traffic generated ranges from 25 to 50 vehicle trips per day.

Archaeological: Since no known archaeological or historic sites exist in the area, no adverse impacts are anticipated. Should any archaeological item be discovered, the State Historic
Preservation Officer will be notified and regulations adhered to.

Infrastructure: The project site is part of the Panaewa Agricultural Park and as such roads and water mains have been constructed to County standards. Electric and telephone service is available at the project site. No demand for additional service from the County is required. No additional lines for telephone and electric services are required as such service is available at the property line.

Other: Being a business enterprise to support agricultural activities, there will be no demand on recreation or school facilities. Since the road system in the area is under the jurisdiction of the County, police and fire protection services are available.
SECTION 7

ALTERNATIVES

The alternative to the project is to allow farmers to fend for themselves. This would be contrary to the concept underlying the creation of agricultural parks, to wit: combines and concentrates in a common location agricultural activities for the purpose of production and distribution economies.

Successful operations of the vacuum cooling plants at Kamuela, Hawaii, and at Omaopio, Maui, by cooperatives points to the need for such a facility. Under construction in Kona at Honalo is the Kona Marshalling Yard project.

The selection of the site was predicated upon the location within an agriculturally zoned area, State-owned, to reduce development costs. Other sites were not considered as it would be difficult to locate another State-owned site within an agriculturally zoned area with immediate access to a major highway without entering any urban residential areas. Further, the proximity to Hilo Wharf and Hilo Airport are positive points for selection of the present site.

In the development of the Panaewa Agricultural Park, the site had been earmarked for agricultural support facilities such as has been proposed. No additional information has been given to discount this earlier designation of the site.
SECTION 8

GOVERNMENT PLANS AND POLICIES

State:
The Hawaii State Plan contains several statements relating
to diversified agriculture which include the following:
Objective:
* Continued growth and development of diversified
  agriculture throughout the State.

Policies:
* Encourage the formation of cooperatives and other
  favorable marketing arrangements at the local or regional
  level to assist Hawaii's small scale producers,
  manufacturers, and distributors.
* Support research and development activities that provide
  greater efficiency and economic productivity in agriculture.
* Enhance agricultural growth by providing public incentives
  and encouraging private initiatives.

The State Agricultural Functional Plan, 1988, states the
following objectives and policies:
Objective:
* Achievement of maximum public benefit from allocation of
  resources to assist agriculture. One of the need for
government support relates to cooperatives, associations and
marketing.
Policy:
* Encourage the development of agricultural cooperatives and
  associations and promote effective marketing of agricultural
  commodities.
Policy:
* Establish a system for the comprehensive assessment of
  Hawaiian agriculture and the optimal allocation of public
  resources to assist agriculture.

Objective:
* Achievement of productive agricultural use of lands most
  suitable and needed for agriculture.
Policy:
* Provide suitable public lands at reasonable cost and with
  long-term tenure for commercial agricultural purposes.

Objective:
* Achievement of adequate capital, and knowledge of its
  proper management, for agricultural development.
Policy:
* Expand the capital base for agricultural development.

Objective:
* Achievement of transportation services, facilities and

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economically feasible rates to meet agricultural needs. This
covers the construction of marshalling yards, transfer
sheds, and other consolidation facilities as required for
agricultural products.

Policy:
* Provide adequate air and surface support facilities to
meet present and future agricultural needs.

The Hawaii County General Plan states as one of the County's
policy the following:
* It shall be the policy of the County of Hawaii to assist the
expansion of the agricultural industry, especially
diversified agriculture, through the protection of prime
agricultural lands, capital improvements and other programs,
and continued cooperation with appropriate State and Federal
agencies.

The County zoning ordinance allows the processing, storage,
packing, shipping and sale of products produced on the premises;
therefore, a Special Use Permit will be required since the
products that are to be processed at the facility will be
produced elsewhere.

The State Land Use designation for the project site is
Agriculture. The County zoning is A-3a, minimum 3-acre lot size.
SECTION 9

FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION

The proposed project, the construction of the Panaewa Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center, is part of the State’s goal of increasing diversified agriculture. Not only must farmers be able to grow crops such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, flowers and foliage plants - but they must be able to market their produce efficiently to earn a just return to sustain their livelihood.

The marshalling and processing center will be operated by a cooperative, and through bulk purchasing and joint marketing members will be benefited. The site selected was earmarked for such a facility during the development of the Panaewa Agricultural Park. Since the general area has been classified agriculture and zoned for agricultural use, the proposed facility is a compatible use. The proposed facility, with access to a major State highway and a short distance from shipping points, is in an advantageous location. This facility will be the first of its kind for Hilo and East Hawaii.

The project site was part of a highly disturbed forest. There are no rare or endangered species, nor any archaeological feature within the project area. The intended use of the site conforms to existing land use and zoning provisions. Roads, water and other utility services are available on site. No urban residential areas or recreational sites will be disturbed or displaced. No significant adverse impacts are foreseen that cannot be mitigated, if necessary.

In view of the foregoing, it is determined that a negative declaration is deemed applicable for this project.
REFERENCES


Department of Planning, The General Plan of the County of Hawaii, as amended, County of Hawaii.


Department of Transportation, Traffic Summary, Island of Hawaii, 1988, Highways Division in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation.


APPENDIX A

COMMENTS & RESPONSES
April 12, 1990

Mr. Rodney H. Kawamura
President
Hilo Engineering, Inc.
484 Kalainoa Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Dear Mr. Kawamura:

SUBJECT: Draft Environmental Assessment
Panena Agricultural Product Marshalling & Processing Center
Panena, Waikena, South Hilo, Hawaii

The Department of Business and Economic Development has no comments to offer at this time on the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Panena Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

for Roger A. Ulveling

HILO ENGINEERING, INC.

CIVIL ENGINEERS - LAND SURVEYORS - PLANNING CONSULTANTS

April 27, 1990

Mr. Roger A. Ulveling, Director
Department of Business & Economic Development
P. O. Box 2389
Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment
Panena Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center
Panena Agricultural Park, Waikena, S. Hilo, Hawaii

Thank you for your review of the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Panena Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center. We appreciate your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

for Rodney H. Kawamura

cc: State Department of Agriculture
Mr. Rodney M. Kawamura
President
Hilo Engineering, Inc.
894 Kananikoa Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Dear Mr. Kawamura,

Environmental Assessment, Punaewa Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center, Punaewa, Waiakea, South Hilo, Hawaii

THRU: 2-2-89: 55

Thank you for your letter of March 1, 1990, requesting our review of the subject draft environmental assessment.

A traffic assessment should be submitted for our review to determine whether the trips generated by the processing center will result in an undesirable level of service on Kamehameha Avenue.

Note also that the existing Pa'opaloa Street does not have access to Kamehameha Avenue. The project access shall be off of Aue and Hamaki Streets.

Very truly yours,

Edward Y. Hirata
Director of Transportation

Hilo Engineering, Inc.
Civil Engineers - Land Surveyors - Planning Consultants

April 27, 1990

Mr. Edward Y. Hirata, Director
State Department of Transportation
869 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-5097

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment
Punaewa Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center
Punaewa Agricultural Park, Waiakea, S. Hilo, Hawaii

THRU: 3rd Div., 2-2-89: 55

Thank you for your review of the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Punaewa Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center.

In assessing the anticipated traffic to be generated by the project, we find that there will be minimal adverse impact upon the existing traffic pattern. Our reasons are as follows:

1. The highway traffic count near the project site on Hualalaa Highway is approximately 20,097 ADT (Traffic Summary, Island of Hawaii, 1986) for this 4-lane highway. The project, it is estimated, will generate 69 to 77 trips per day. Should the entire project site be developed, the traffic count may reach 228 trips per day. However, we have no prospect for this higher count. According to the prospective first tenant, based on their present experience, trips will average between 25 to 50 per day, including the use of two truck-trailer sets approximately 3 times a week.

2. There are three exits/entrances to the Punaewa farm area; these are Hualalaa, Lame and Hamaki Streets. Traffic generated by the project will utilize Hamaki Street most of the time. Additionally, there is another access to Hualalaa Highway which has been assigned to the UN farm unit. Hamakilo Street, probably the most heavily used of the three streets, registered a 24-hour total of 1180 trips. The morning peak flow was 230 trips and the afternoon peak was a surprisingly low 83 trips. (Traffic Count, April 16-21, 1988.) Hamaki Street, even with the project would register less traffic than Hualalaa Street due to Hamaki Street's location at the
HILO ENGINEERING, INC.

PAGE 2
Mr. Edward Y. Hirata, Director
April 27, 1990

beginning of the Panana farm area and local familiarity due
to its prior existence as compared with Kamaiki Street.

3. The traffic generated by the project will be contra to the
normal peak hour flows. In the a.m., prevailing traffic is
generally heading towards the airport-town area where most of
the jobs and schools for Hilo are located. The few employees
and delivery vehicles to the processing center will be
travelling in the opposite direction for the most part. In
the p.m., the reverse will hold true. Most of the business
functions of the first prospective tenant, Hilo Farmers’
Exchange Cooperative, are carried out after 8:00 a.m., and
before 3:00 p.m.

4. As noted by you, Pa’upalas Street does not have access to
Hualalai Highway. This was brought out during the
development of the Panana Agricultural Park in 1980 (letter
from Mr. Ah Leong Kae, State Transportation Planner, 2/21/80).

We appreciate the assistance received from your department in
providing us with traffic statistics.

Very truly yours,

ROGER H. KAMAHURA

cc: State Department of Agriculture
March 27, 1990

Mr. Rodney Kawanura,
President
Hilo Engineering, Inc.
484 Kaliahina Street
Hilo, HI 96720

Dear Mr. Kawanura:

Panana Processing Center
Draft Environmental Assessment
TDD: 2-7-5615

We have reviewed this draft Environmental Assessment and have the following comments to offer:

1. The project site is located within the State Land Use Commission designated Agricultural District. Thus, your clients must secure a Special Permit from the County’s Planning Commission in order to establish your proposed use. Your assessment incorrectly states that a Use Permit would be required.

2. Your Assessment should identify the kinds of “agricultural products” which will be gathered and processed. The impacts resulting from this project would be directly related to the specific products processed.

3. Similarly, your assessment should identify the methods of waste water processing that are being considered or could be approved by the Department of Health. The impacts to water quality will vary according to the method selected.

4. The kinds of agricultural use in the surrounding area should also be discussed in greater detail. We are not clear if this gathering and processing facility is intended to service Panana or a larger area.

5. One of the alternatives to this project is to “do nothing.” This “do nothing” alternative needs to be discussed especially with respect to how the producers of agriculture are currently operating and are continuing to stay in business.

Mr. Rodney Kawanura
Page 2
March 27, 1990

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We hope these remarks will be of use to you.

Sincerely,

DOANE KAHUNA
Planning Director

RH:IM
Cc: Department of Public Works
ENVIROMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Panana Agricultural Park, Waiakea, S. Hilo, Hawaii

Thank you for your comprehensive review of the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Panana Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center. In response to your comments, we offer the following:

1. Thank you for calling our attention to the need for a Special Use Permit. We inadvertently omitted the word "special" in our report and have made the correction.

2. The kinds of agricultural products which will be gathered and processed are both locally grown and imported crops to service local businesses. As mentioned on page 4 of the EA, Hilo Farmers' Exchange Cooperative is the prospective initial tenant. We will add a description of the produce that is expected to be handled.

3. As to wastewater, it will be disposed of through an individual wastewater system (IWS) meeting the requirements of the Department of Health. We will add a statement citing compliance with Chapter 11-67 of the Department of Health regulations. Since the regulations require the design to be performed by a professional engineer, exact description of the IWS will be available upon completion of the construction drawings.

4. The proposed agricultural center is for the agricultural industry in general and not designed solely for the Panana

5. The alternative to "do nothing" is contrary to the State's goal of concentrating in a common location agricultural activities for the economies of production and distribution. In the present case, economy of distribution is the goal. The successful agricultural product processing centers at Hamula, Hawaii, and Kula, Maui, have encouraged other farmers' cooperatives to seek assistance. The Honalo, North Kona, agricultural product center now under construction is another manifestation of the State's effort to assist farmers. We will add a statement to this effect to Section 5 of the EA.

6. Thank you for pointing out that the General Plan Land Use Pattern Allocation Guide Map designates this area as Orchard. This information will be added to the final assessment report.

Thank you again for your comprehensive and helpful review of the draft assessment report.

Very truly yours,

RODEY H. KAHAMURA

cc: State Department of Agriculture
March 14, 1990

Mr. Robert Yamabe, Division Chief
Department of Public Works
County of Hawaii
23 Aspurn Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

SUBJECT: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PANANA PROCESSING CENTER
S. Hilo, HI
Rev: 2-8-90; S5

We have reviewed the subject document and our comments are as follows:

Access to this site is through the Panana Suburblets. The truck and trailer traffic from the farmers present an unwelcome mix with the residential traffic. The route taken by these trucks is usually Hanaki St./Ave St. The storage space for vehicles entering Hanaki St. from Kanelehu Ave, from the Hilo direction is short. At times there is not enough storage space and vehicles are backed up onto Kanelehu Ave. This exposes these vehicles to a rear-end collision from the through traffic.

Papuan St. could be extended to Kanelehu Ave. In order to separate the truck traffic from the residential area.

The path of the truck trailers on the residential street should be traced and the corner turning radius improved where it is too sharp to accommodate the truck-trailer vehicles.

Investigate the need for an acceleration lane for the large vehicles leaving the area and entering onto Kanelehu Ave.

Bob A. Yamabe
Division Chief

cc: DPW Engineering Division
DPW Traffic Division
Planning Department

HILO ENGINEERING, INC.
CEMTECH ENGINEERS - LAND SURVEYORS - PLANNING CONSULTANTS

April 21, 1990

Mr. Robert Yamabe, Division Chief
Department of Public Works
County of Hawaii
23 Aspurn Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment
Panana Agricultural Product Harshalling and Processing Center
Panana Agricultural Park, Hanakea, S. Hilo, Hawaii

Thank you for your review of the draft Environmental Assessment for the Panana Agricultural Product Harshalling and Processing Center. In response to your comments, we offer the following:

1. In reference to your statement regarding the unwelcome mix with the residential traffic, we wish to point out that the predominance of the area is taken up by farms. The Panana House Lots, also located in this area, is 2.7 in size, and considered farm lots according to the County zoning regulations. True, there are residences in this area as each lot owner is entitled to build his home upon the farm lot. Many of the farmers own trucks, mainly pick-ups. However, from time to time, truck-trailers are used in the area to bring in land-clearing and land-shaping equipment. Therefore, the occasional use of truck-trailers in this area should not be considered as unusual or undesirable.

2. As to the backing up of traffic, we fail to understand how the cars can back up from Hanaki Street to Kanelehu Avenue (which is at the junction of Kilaha Avenue and the State Hamahana Highway). As you are aware, there are four exits to the Volcano Road; Hokuilua, Laka and Hanaki Streets for the Panana residents and a separate access for the OH farm unit. The first three allow residents a choice of access to the Volcano Road.

3. The use of truck-trailers by the project tenant(s) will be of insignificant use on Hamahana Highway (often called the Volcano Road), which according to State traffic records, total
20,000 average daily vehicles (ADT). The prospective tenant, the Hilo Farmers’ Exchange Cooperative, owns two reefers and trailers that are utilized about three times per week to handle shipping cargo. Such intermittent use should result in insignificant effect to the existing traffic patterns. However, we will add this statement to the EA regarding the use of truck-trailers by the prospective lessee and its minor effect upon existing traffic.

4. Since we are unclear as to the observation by you concerning the back-up of traffic onto Kanoeloa Avenue, we will ask the State Department of Transportation for their assessment of this existing condition.

5. The extension of Pa‘uopala Street to the Volcano Road was not considered at this time inasmuch as the State Highways Division did not approve such action when the Panama Agricultural Park was developed in 1980. (Reference: Final EIS Panama Agricultural Park, Environmental Impact Study Corp.) Being a State Highway, access to the Volcano Road is restricted. The access to the Volcano Road to the Panama Agricultural Park was assigned to the University of Hawaii for its 110-acre farm parcel. However, should conditions warrant, this extension of Pa‘uopala Street can be taken up with the State at a future date. This statement will be included in the final EA.

6. Your recommendation relating to the truck-trailer turning radius was checked during the development of the Panama Agricultural Park and no special requirements were found to be necessary.

7. The need for an acceleration lane will be taken up with the State Highways Division. As you are aware, being a farming area, occasional large vehicles are not considered unusual for this area. Further, the two truck-trailers operated by the prospective tenant (see note 2 above) are used only on an intermittent basis and would hardly be noticeable. Should it become necessary, trips by the large trucks could be scheduled to avoid peak hours.

Thank you for your review and helpful comments.

Very truly yours,

RODNEY H. KANAHUA

cc. State Department of Agriculture
    State Department of Transportation
March 15, 1990

Hilo Engineering, Inc.
484 Kalanikoa Street
Hilo, HI 96720

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PANAeva AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARSHALLING AND PROCESSING CENTER
TAX MAP KEY 2-3-36655

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the subject draft environmental assessment. Water is available from Pa'upalae Street.

R. WILLIAM SAWAHE
Manager

HILO ENGINEERING, INC.

CIVIL ENGINEERS-LAND SURVEYORS-PLANNING CONSULTANTS

April 27, 1990

Mr. R. William Sawah, Manager
Department of Water Supply
County of Hawaii
23 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment
Panaeva Agricultural Product Marshalling and
Processing Center
Panaeva Agricultural Park, Waikane, S. Hilo, Hawaii

Thank you for your review of the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Panaeva Agricultural Product Marshalling and Processing Center. As stated in your letter, water services will be drawn from the water main on Pa'upalae Street. The service lateral was installed for this use during the development of the Panaeva Agricultural Park.

Thank you for the assistance received from your staff in the preparation of the assessment report.

Very truly yours,

RODNEY M. KAWAHURA

cc: State Department of Agriculture

... Water brings progress...