

TESTIMONY #2

After more than a decade of delays, the state Department of Consumer Affairs (DCCA) is finally seeking public input from Maui residents on a proposed 15-year Cable TV Franchise Renewal for Spectrum. However, the proposal under review wasn't even created by Spectrum—it was drafted 11 years ago by Oceanic Time Warner.

The DCCA's plan is deeply concerning. As they've already done on Kauai, the DCCA intends to divert nearly 20% of Akaku's 3% franchise fee revenue—amounting to millions of dollars over the next 15 years—and hand it back to Spectrum to fund a secret, state-run internet project. They propose to do this without sufficient study or meaningful public engagement.

Adding to the issue, the DCCA also plans to allow Spectrum to charge Akaku additional fees to provide the High-Definition (HD) signal Maui residents deserve, effectively preventing Akaku from broadcasting on a level playing field with other networks.

This is unacceptable. If Spectrum is to receive a franchise renewal, Maui residents must demand guarantees that:

1. Akaku will continue to receive full funding at 3% of cable gross revenue for the duration of the franchise term.
2. Akaku will be permitted to broadcast in HD without additional costs or barriers.

These protections are essential to ensuring Maui's public access media remains independent, well-funded, and equitable.