



## Golf Course Policy

### Policy Statement

It shall be the policy of Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, that golf course development be comprehensively scrutinized to address the following areas of concern, and, that on the basis of such concerns some golf courses may be approved.

#### *Areas of Concern*

1. LAND USE – Because the required infrastructure is essentially urban in nature, golf course construction in other than state urban land use districts will have adverse impacts on agricultural and conservation lands and their attendant uses.
2. LAND SPECULATION – Private golf course construction, use, and sales lead to inflated land values and real estate speculation in areas not otherwise subjected to such urbanized development.
3. TAXATION – Golf courses artificially elevate real estate tax assessments of lands in the area. The restriction of golf courses to urban land use districts will maximize the county tax base with minimum impacts on nearby lands.
4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES – Rural lifestyles, agricultural activities and “affordable” land and housing are adversely affected by the intrusion of golf courses into rural landscapes.
5. ECOLOGY – Ecological consequences of golf courses can include the introduction of foreign grasses and associated organisms (from the “seed” turf) and the destruction of original bio habitats. Biocide treatment of golf course grassways can harm native and migratory birds which forage there.
6. HEALTH – Nutrient enrichment of coastal waters near golf courses has been cited by the State Department of Health as a contributing cause of ciguatera poisoning in Hawai'i. Irrigation of golf courses with sewage effluent, if not carefully tailored and controlled, can expose people and groundwater to elevated levels of many detrimental organisms. Studies have shown that such organisms can survive in

coastal waters receiving effluent runoff. Chlorination treatment also may be detrimental.

7. WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY – The large deleterious quantities of irrigation water required by golf courses, combined with rain water, can leach biocides and fertilizers through the thin golf course turf to the groundwater below. Consumption of potable water by golf course irrigation threatens water availability for domestic and diversified agricultural uses.

8. COASTAL WATER QUALITY – Biocides and fertilizers leached from golf courses into groundwater can discharge into anchialine ponds and coastal waters. As a result, these chemicals enter the food web and degrade water quality, thereby threatening animal and human health.

9. FLOODING – Poor drainage characteristics of golf course turf and inadequately designed drainage ponds contribute to occasional flooding of adjoining lands and waters.

10. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ISSUES – Golf course construction and landscaping causes destruction or serious degradation of archaeological resources. Cultural practices and access to important sites and trails may be curtailed.

*This Golf Course Policy was approved by the Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter Executive Committee at its quarterly meetings held July 26-28, 1991.*