

EXHIBIT T

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A federal judge rejects letters asking for the release of a Big Island minister before trial

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Two Hawaii County Council members wrote letters in favor of releasing outspoken Big Island marijuana advocate Roger Christie from custody pending his trial in federal court for conspiracy, marijuana manufacture, possession and distribution.

The two are Kelly Greenwell, who represents North Kona, and Emily Naeole-Beason, who represents Puna Makai.

U.S. District Judge David Ezra appeared unimpressed by the letters from Greenwell, Naeole-Beason and others.

"They're from people who like him and believe in him," he said Friday.

Naeole-Beason and Greenwell were the only two Council members to vote in favor in January of a failed resolution Greenwell introduced asking the state Legislature to decriminalize the cultivation, possession and use of marijuana.

Ezra denied Christie's request for release pending trial next April.

Two other judges and the 9th U.S. Court of Appeals had previously rejected Christie's request for release.

Other people who submitted letters in support of Christie's release include Honolulu lawyer Jack Schweigert and Hilo



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David Ezra
U.S. district judge, dismissing letters from two Hawaii County Council members written on behalf of jailed marijuana advocate Roger Christie

lawyer Steven Strauss, who represented Christie in a 1992 state criminal case and a 1995 federal civil case against the county prosecutor.

Ezra said he cannot be sure Christie will not continue the activities that got him in trouble with the law while on release, especially since Christie believes what he did is not wrong.

Christie has said he is a minister who administers marijuana as part of a religious sacrament at his The Hawaii Cannabis (THC) Ministry in downtown Hilo.

The government said Christie continued to operate what it calls a major drug trafficking operation even after federal investigators raided Christie's Hilo

apartment in March and seized marijuana and cash from the home and a safe deposit box.

Greenwell wrote his letter on official county stationery.

Naeole-Beason said her support of Christie's release is as a private citizen. She did not use county stationery.

County Clerk Kenneth Goodenow said the county Ethics Commission can decide whether it was OK for Greenwell to use his office to advocate Christie's release, if someone files a complaint or asks for an opinion.

Greenwell said he has been associated with Christie since they both ran for mayor in 2004. He said he believes the government is punishing Christie for something the people of the Big Island have directed police to enforce with the lowest priority.

Big Island voters approved a ballot initiative in 2008 directing county law enforcement agencies to give the cultivation, possession and use of 24 marijuana plants or its dried equivalent the lowest law enforcement priority. The ordinance defines the dried equivalent as 24 or fewer ounces of usable cannabis.

County and federal law enforcement officers arrested Christie and 13 other Big Island residents in July.

A federal grand jury identified the 13 as Christie's partner, two of his employees at the ministry and 10 people who supplied marijuana for the ministry. All 13 have been granted release pending trial.

Honolulu Star-Advertiser Oct. 26, 2010