

Resolution

No. 22-171

URGING THE MAYOR TO CONDUCT OR AUTHORIZE A COMPREHENSIVE FEASIBILITY STUDY OF THE EMI WATER SYSTEM

WHEREAS, a Charter amendment to establish a countywide water system with regional community boards is under the Council's consideration; and

WHEREAS, concerns have been raised as to how this Charter amendment would impact the East Maui Irrigation Company, LLC ("EMI") water system and issues relating to ownership, operations, and costs, including possible adjustments to the low water rates afforded to the County; and

WHEREAS, the EMI water system is one of the largest privately built and operated water systems in the nation and represents an engineering feat of historic proportion; and

WHEREAS, the complex network of ditches, tunnels, and flumes were constructed between 1876 and 1923 to capture water on Maui's Windward side and deliver it to sugar cane fields planted in the island's dry Central Valley; and

WHEREAS, the EMI water system served as a model for planning, engineering, and constructing water systems throughout the County, State of Hawai'i, and Western United States; and

WHEREAS, Maui County pays a low rate for the water supplied by the EMI water system for domestic and agricultural use; and

WHEREAS, a feasibility study has not been conducted to determine the costs and challenges of the proposed Charter amendment for the affected regions and the County as a whole; now therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it urges the Mayor to conduct or authorize a comprehensive feasibility study of the EMI water system and

Resolution No. 22-171

the impact of a countywide water system with regional boards that includes an analysis of the following: ownership of the system; ownership, location, size, and value of applicable land parcels; operation, maintenance, and capital improvement costs; water usage and rates charged to the Department of Water Supply; and possible changes in the cost of water for Upcountry Maui and other users;

2. That it requests the feasibility study include an analysis of the State Commission on Water Resource Management's role and authority with respect to the EMI water system and prospective countywide waters;
3. That it urges the Mayor to make the results of the study available for public review prior to November 8, 2022; and
4. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, and the Deputy Director of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Commission on Water Resource Management.

INTRODUCED BY:

Yuki Sei K. Sugimura

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