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COUNTY COUNCIL

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MEMO TO: CARE-55 File

F R O M: Kelly Takaya King, Chair  
Climate Action, Resilience, and Environment Committee

*Kelly T. King*

SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL RELATING TO  
WETLANDS RESTORATION AND PROTECTIONS** (CARE-55)

The attached legislative proposal pertains to Item 55 on the Committee's agenda.

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Attachment

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

BILL NO. 91, CD1 (2022)

A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLES 2, 18, AND 19, MAUI COUNTY CODE, RELATING TO WETLANDS RESTORATION AND PROTECTION

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI:

SECTION 1. The purpose of this Ordinance is to conserve and protect sensitive ecosystems and the natural environment, mitigate climate change, and work toward building environmental resilience by establishing a policy for wetlands restoration and protection in Titles 2, 18, and 19 of the Maui County Code.

The Council finds that the Maui County General Plan provides the following directives:

- “Restore and protect . . . wetlands . . .” (Countywide Policy Plan, page 46.)
- “Preserve existing wetlands and improve and restore degraded wetlands.” (Maui Island Plan, page 2-31.)
- “Support the protection and restoration of natural systems, such as wetlands and dunes, for flood mitigation and climate change adaptation.” (Molokai Island Community Plan, page 55.)
- “Natural landscape features and environment, such as . . . wetlands, will be protected and restored.” (Lāna‘i Community Plan, page 2-12.)

- “Protect all wetland resources . . .” (Kīhei-Mākena Community Plan, page 21.)

Despite these directives, which were enacted in ordinances from 1998 to 2016, Maui County did not have requirements for wetlands restoration and protection prior to this Ordinance.

A Maui County policy is necessary because the Clean Water Act does not regulate certain isolated wetlands or reflect County-specific goals for protecting and enhancing environmental resilience by preserving environmentally sensitive ecosystems, such as wetlands.

The Council’s intent is to protect all wetlands in Maui County, including those that are not adjacent to navigable waters.

This Ordinance amends the following Titles of the Maui County Code:

- Title 2, Administration and Personnel, to require the Conservation Planning Committee to review wetlands for possible acquisition.
- Title 18, Subdivisions, to allow for wetlands restoration and protection in the subdivision process.
- Title 19, Zoning, to update the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to establish the Wetlands Overlay District.

SECTION 2. Section 19.04.040, Maui County Code, is amended by adding the following definitions:

““Overlay district” means an area where certain additional requirements are superimposed upon a base or underlying zoning district and where the requirements of the base or underlying district may or may not be altered.”

“Protective buffer” means an area that surrounds wetlands and is established to avoid significant negative biological, physical, or chemical impacts to wetlands.”

“Wetland” means those areas that are under normal circumstances (e.g., no filling or introduction of invasive plants) or were inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support—and that under normal circumstances do support—a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and estuarine systems; flowing, intermittent, or ephemeral streams and associated drainages; and similar areas; but do not include agricultural ditches or reservoirs.”

SECTION 3. Article II, Title 19, Maui County Code, is amended by adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**“Chapter 19.47**

**WETLANDS OVERLAY DISTRICT**

Sections:

- 19.47.010 Establishment.
- 19.47.020 Policy.
- 19.47.030 Report.
- 19.47.040 Decisions consistent with the policy.
- 19.47.050 Permitted uses.
- 19.47.060 Prohibited uses.
- 19.47.070 Mapping.
- 19.47.080 Interpretation.

**19.47.010. Establishment.** After receipt of the wetlands inventory map under section 19.47.070, the council may establish, by ordinance under section 19.510.040 or section 19.510.050, wetlands overlay district zoning, including protective buffers and grading and grubbing restrictions, on any real property for the purpose of restoring or protecting a wetland on the property. The wetlands overlay district overlays the base or underlying zoning district so that any parcel of land in the wetlands overlay district will also be subject to both its base or underlying zoning and the wetlands overlay zoning. Land within the wetlands overlay district is subject to the requirements established in this chapter and restrictions and requirements established by other applicable

ordinances and regulations of the County. The department may adopt administrative rules to administer this chapter.

**19.47.020. Policy.** It is the policy of the County of Maui that wetlands be restored or protected. The council's intent is to identify, restore, and protect wetlands beyond what is required by the Clean Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, or any other law to protect environmentally sensitive ecosystems and their services, including flood control, water quality enhancement, species protection, and climate adaptation and mitigation benefits. All discretionary permits issued by the County must be consistent with this policy.

**19.47.030. Report.** A. The director must produce, or cause to be produced, a report by a qualified environmental professional on the feasibility and advisability of wetlands restoration or protection on the property prior to approval of any of the following in the wetlands overlay district:

1. Community plan amendment under section 2.80B.110.
2. Subdivision approval under section 18.08.100.
3. Change in zoning under section 19.510.040.
4. Conditional zoning under section 19.510.050.
5. District boundary amendment under chapter 19.68.
6. Special use permit under section 19.510.070.

B. Any report required by subsection A must be provided to the approving agency for the actions noted in subsection A and any relevant advisory agency. The report must outline ecosystem values, determine any potential impacts to wetlands, provide how wetlands may be maintained and enhanced, and include information and conclusions on the following:

1. The ability of the wetland to filter harmful toxins, nutrients, and sediment from surface and stormwater runoff.
2. The ability of the wetland to store floodwaters and reduce the magnitude of flood events.
3. The ability of the wetland to provide valuable habitat for a diverse array of flora and fauna, including any existing native, rare, threatened, or endangered species.
4. The ability of the wetland to maintain surface-water flow during dry periods.
5. The prior or potential future impacts of any excessive siltation resulting from surface runoff from construction sites and lack of erosion control on steep slopes.
6. The prior or potential future impacts of pollution by garbage, litter, and refuse.

7. The prior or potential future impacts of a reduction in the flow of watercourses, including groundwater, due to destruction of wetlands.

8. Any potential significant adverse impact on natural drainage patterns, the destruction of important habitat or the discharge of toxic substances.

9. Measures to ensure that wetland functions and habitat are maintained and, where possible, enhanced to increase the potential for survival of native, rare, threatened or endangered flora and fauna.

10. Identification of public lands in or adjacent to the wetland so that they can be identified for maintenance and possible hazard mitigation.

11. Proposed protective buffers—with a minimum requirement of fifty feet and a maximum of two hundred feet—based on the report's assessment of wetland functions, valuation, and the need for protection.

12. Areas that formerly had wetlands characteristics or functions but have been altered or degraded by channelization, filling, draining, dredging, grading, grubbing, deep ripping, groundwater pumping, hardening of surfaces, or introduction of non-native or aggressive-invasive plant and animal species.

**19.47.040. Decisions consistent with the policy.** A. The approving agency on an application referenced in subsection 19.47.030(A) must make decisions consistent with the policy in section 19.47.020, unless the agency notifies the council in writing of the reasons to make a contrary decision.

B. Before the council approves any action under subsections 19.47.030(A)(1), (3), (4), or (5), the council must first find that:

1. The property does not include any wetlands for which restoration or protection is feasible or advisable; or

2. The property owner has executed a unilateral agreement, to be recorded with the bureau of conveyances or land court, for wetlands restoration or protection sufficient to fulfill the purpose of this chapter. No ordinance is effective until the unilateral agreement, properly executed, has been recorded.

**19.47.050. Permitted uses.** The following uses are permitted in the wetlands overlay district:

A. Conservation of soil, vegetation, water, fish, and wildlife.

B. Scientific research and educational activities teaching principles of ecology and conservation.

C. General outdoor recreation and leisure activities that are consistent with the purpose of this chapter.

D. Uses permitted in the base or underlying zoning district that are not inconsistent with the purpose of this chapter.

E. Traditional and customary plant cultivation.

F. Restoration and management activities, including removal of invasive species, restoration of previously altered or impacted hydrology, and planting of native and beneficial noninvasive vegetation.

G. Exercising those rights customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes by persons who are descendants of native Hawaiians, kānaka maoli, who inhabited the Hawaiian islands prior to 1778, as protected by article XII, section 7, of the Hawai'i State Constitution.

H. Agriculture, recreation, education, public open space, and other compatible uses that would not degrade ecosystem functions and productivity.

**19.47.060. Prohibited uses.** If a protective buffer is established by a change in zoning or conditional zoning ordinance, any use that creates significant negative biological, physical, or chemical impacts to wetlands is prohibited in the wetlands overlay district.

**19.47.070. Mapping.** A. Within three hundred sixty-five days after the effective date of the ordinance establishing this chapter, the planning director must prepare, or cause to be prepared, and transmit to the planning commissions, council, conservation planning committee, and director of public works, a map that shows the approximate location of wetlands throughout the County and likely migration areas reflected by passive flooding data. The boundary of wetlands is determined by the presence of two or more of the three wetland indicators listed in the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and the 2012 Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Hawai'i and Pacific Islands Region. These indicators are hydrophytic vegetation, the presence of hydric soils, and evidence of hydrology. For flowing systems, the boundary must extend to the ordinary high-water mark, determined using the 2005 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Guidance Letter on the Determination of Ordinary High Water Mark Identification.



B. The map must be updated at least every five years and when new information is available and must be made publicly accessible. These updates must include delineations and site-specific information contained in the report required by section 19.47.030.

C. The director or council may initiate changes in zoning or conditional zoning ordinances as needed to ensure wetlands depicted in the map are placed in the wetlands overlay district.

**19.47.080. Interpretation.** A. Nothing in this chapter is intended and may not be interpreted to conflict with State or federal law on the same subject matter.

B. Conflicting provisions of this chapter must be abrogated to the extent of the conflict.

C. The provisions of this chapter must be construed, if possible, to be consistent with and in addition to relevant state or federal regulations and statutes.

D. The provisions of this chapter must be construed liberally in favor of wetlands restoration and protection.”

SECTION 4. Subsection J of Section 2.82.040, Maui County Code, relating to the Conservation Planning Committee, is amended to read as follows:

“J. 1. The committee must assist with and oversee the creation of the countywide greenprint and provide recommendations to the mayor, council, and agencies related to this chapter's purpose.

2. The committee may advise the mayor to authorize the County to:

a. Acquire real property containing wetlands either by negotiation under chapter 3.44 or by eminent domain.

b. Seek execution of a conservation easement to restore or protect wetlands.

3. Wetlands include the following areas:

a. Areas where water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated animal and plant life; where for any duration of time, at a frequency including nonconsecutive years:

i. The water table is at or near the surface and the land is saturated by subsurface water, including the water table, subsurface kahawai, or springs; or

ii. The land is covered by water.



b. Areas of marsh, fen, peatland, or water.  
The waterbody can be:

i. Natural or artificial.

ii. Permanent, temporary, intermittent, or ephemeral.

iii. Static or flowing.

iv. Fresh, brackish, or salt.

v. Above or below ground.

vi. Groundwater, precipitation, or surface water-driven hydrology.

c. Areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters, including fishponds and coral reefs, if within county jurisdiction.

d. Areas of riparian zone and floodplain, including flowing, intermittent, or ephemeral streams and streambeds.

e. Areas of coastal zones adjacent to wetlands, islands, or bodies of marine water deeper than six meters at low tide lying within the wetlands.

f. Areas where hydric soils are present.

g. Areas where there is surface or subsurface water that is hydrologically connected to wetlands.

h. Areas described by one of the six wetlands classifications:

i. Marine: coastal wetlands, coastal lagoons, rocky shores, seagrass beds, coral reefs, and anchialine pools.

ii. Estuarine: muliwai, deltas, tidal marshes, mudflats, and mangrove swamps.

iii. Lacustrine: wetlands near natural lakes or ponds.

iv. Riverine: wetlands near rivers, streams, and gulches.

v. Palustrine: marshes, swamps, and bogs.

vi. Human-made: Loko i'a (Hawaiian fish ponds), Lo'i kalo (Hawaiian wetland taro fields), shrimp ponds, farm ponds, paddies, and dams.

i. Areas that provide wetland functions, including:

i. Conveyance of stormwater.

ii. Flood attenuation and storage.

iii. Sediment attenuation and reduction.

iv. Nutrient and chemical attenuation and reduction.

- v. Plant community abundance and diversity.
- vi. Fish and wildlife habitat.
- vii. Groundwater recharge and discharge.
- viii. Shoreline or stream bank stabilization.
- ix. Carbon sequestration.
- j. Areas that formerly had wetland characteristics or functions but have been altered or degraded by channelization, filling, draining, dredging, grading, grubbing, deep ripping, groundwater pumping, hardening of surfaces, or introduction of non-native or aggressive-invasive plant and animal species.”

SECTION 5. Section 18.08.100, Maui County Code, is amended to read as follows:

“18.08.100 Approval. **A.** [Director's review period.]**Review period.**

1. Within thirty days after submission of the preliminary plat of a subdivision to be processed as an affordable housing project, the director [shall] must review the plan and may [give approval of] approve the preliminary plat as submitted, or as it may be modified, or [may disapprove] disapproved, [the same] and [shall] must express [the disapproval and] the reasons [therefor] for the disapproval in writing.

2. Within forty-five days after submission of the preliminary plat of a subdivision for a long-term residential development [which] that is not to be processed as an affordable housing project or after submission of the preliminary plat of a subdivision [which] that is outside of the scope of subsection [18.08.100.A.1] 18.08.100(A)(1), the director [shall] must review the plan and may [give approval of] approve the preliminary plat as submitted, or as it may be modified, or [may disapprove] disapproved, [the same] and [shall] must express [the disapproval and] the reasons [therefor] for the disapproval in writing.

B. The director may also defer consideration of the preliminary plat pending receipt of additional information, in which case the running of time is suspended.

C. Approval of the preliminary plat [shall] must indicate the director's directive to prepare detailed drawings on the plat submitted, [provided] as long as there is no change in the plan of

subdivision as shown on the preliminary plat and there is full compliance with all requirements of this chapter. The action of the director with reference to any attached documents describing any conditions [shall] must be noted on two copies of the preliminary plat. One copy [shall] must be returned to the subdivider and the other retained by the director. At such time, the director [shall] must stamp the two preliminary plats[;], as follows:

1. "Subdivider authorized to prepare detailed drawings on plat as submitted including corrections noted."

2. "Recordation with the Bureau of Conveyances, State of [Hawaii] Hawai'i, or State Department of Taxation, not authorized until approved for recordation at a later date."

D. If no action (approval, disapproval, modification, or deferral) is taken by the director within the review period identified in subsection [18.08.100.A] 18.08.100(A), or [such] a longer period [as may have been] if agreed upon in writing, the preliminary plat [shall] will be deemed approved, and it [shall be] is the duty of the director to endorse [his] approval of the preliminary plat. [upon the face thereof. Such] The director's approval [by the director shall] does not exempt the subdivider from compliance with the mandatory requirements of this [ordinance.] chapter.

E. In the wetlands overlay district, the director must make decisions on applications that are consistent with the policy in section 19.47.020, unless the director notifies the council in writing of the reasons to make a contrary decision."

SECTION 6. Section 19.06.010, Maui County Code, is amended to read as follows:

**"19.06.010 Districts designated.** 1. The County [shall be] is divided into the following [use] base zone districts:

- A. Open space districts:
  - 1. OS-1.
  - 2. OS-2.
- B. Residential districts:
  - 1. R-1.
  - 2. R-2.
  - 3. R-3.
- C. R-0 zero lot line residential district.
- D. Two-family districts:
  - 1. D-1.
  - 2. D-2.
- E. Apartment districts:
  - 1. A-1.
  - 2. A-2.

- F. Hotel districts:
  - 1. H-1.
  - 2. H-M.
  - 3. H-2 and hotel.
- G. Business districts:
  - 1. SBR service.
  - 2. B-CT country town.
  - 3. B-1 neighborhood.
  - 4. B-2 community.
  - 5. B-3 central.
  - 6. B-R resort commercial district.
- H. Industrial districts:
  - 1. M-1 light.
  - 2. M-2 heavy.
  - 3. M-3 restricted.
- I. Park districts:
  - 1. PK.
  - 2. GC.
- J. Airport district.
- K. Agricultural district.
- L. Rural districts:
  - 1. RU-0.5.
  - 2. RU-1.
  - 3. RU-2.
  - 4. RU-5.
  - 5. RU-10.
  - 6. County rural.
- M. Public/quasi-public districts:
  - 1. P-1.
  - 2. P-2.
- N. Kihei research and technology park district.
- O. Maui research and technology park district.
- P. Napili [Bay] bay civic improvement district.
- Q. Urban reserve district.
- R. Interim.
- S. Maui County historic districts.
- T. Project districts.

2. The County has the following overlay zone districts:

- A. Wetlands overlay district.
- B. Planned development.”

SECTION 7. Material to be repealed is bracketed. New material is underscored. In printing this bill, the County Clerk need not include the brackets, the bracketed material, or the underscoring.

SECTION 8. This Ordinance takes effect on approval.

care:misc:055abill09:jbf

INTRODUCED BY:

*Kelly T. King*

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KELLY TAKAYA KING