

AGRICULTURE, DIVERSIFICATION, ENVIRONMENT, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

March 12, 2026

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 9:04 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Chair
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Vice-Chair (Out 10:48 a.m.) (In 11:59 a.m.)
Councilmember Kauanoe Batangan, Member (Out 10:20 a.m.) (In 10:34 a.m.)
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member (Out 12:33 p.m.)
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member

STAFF: Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst
Jarret Pascual, Legislative Analyst
Criselda Paranada, Committee Secretary
Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Offices

Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office
Keomailani Hirata, Council Aide, Molokai Residency Area Office
Christian Balagso, Council Aide, West Maui Residency Area Office
Council Aide, Makawao-Ha‘ikū-Pā‘ia Residency Area Office
Bill Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

ADMIN.: Rogerene “Kali” Arce, Director, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(2))
Koa Hewahewa, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(2))
Mya Hunter, Agriculture Advocate, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(2))
Lauren Nelson, Food Access Coordinator, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(2))
Jeannine Rossa, Agriculture Conservation Liaison, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(2))
Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos, Grant Coordinator, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(2))
John Stufflebean, Director, Department of Water Supply (ADEPT-1(5))
Eva Blumenstein, Planning Program Administrator, Department of Water Supply (ADEPT-1(5))
Robert de Robles, Planner VI, Department of Water Supply (ADEPT-1(5))
Michael Petersen, Deputy Director, Department of Environmental Management (ADEPT-1(3))
Cecile Powell, Environmental Protection & Sustainability Manager, Department of Environmental Management (ADEPT-1(3))

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Diane Yogi, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation (ADEPT-1(4))
William Haney, Program Specialist III, Department of Transportation (ADEPT-1(4))
Neil Nakamoto, Program Specialist III, Department of Transportation (ADEPT-1(4))
Adrian Reifsnnyder, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation
Counsel (All)

OTHERS: Testifiers

Jasee Law (All)
Johann Lall (ADEPT-1(5))
Testifier 1 (Royal House of Hawai‘i) (ADEPT-1(3))
Testifier 2 (ADEPT-1(3))

(25+) additional attendees

PRESS: *Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.*

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Aloha. Will the Agriculture, Diversification, Environmental [*sic*], and Public Transportation Committee meeting of March 12, 2026, please come to order. The time is now 9:04 a.m. Good morning, Members. Members, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, if you’re not in the Council Chamber, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today. Minors do not need to be identified. Also, please see the last page on the agenda information on meeting connectivity, and remember to silence all cell phones, please. Good afternoon...good morning, everyone, and aloha. I look forward to chairing a productive meeting. I’m Gabe Johnson, your Committee Chair. Also joining us today is Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci. Aloha, Councilmember.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Aloha kakahiaka kākou. Happy to be here. Just a quick report on the East Side. No big rain or wind events just yet, but very overcast. No testifiers in Hāna. And Chair, I do have a schedule conflict at 11:00 that I’ll just have to step out for a little bit. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. All right. Let’s move on to Committee...Committee Member Kauanoe Batangan. Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Aloha. And followed by that, Chair Lee. I see her on the cable. Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aloha. And all the way from Africa, Angola, we say olá.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Olá.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Olá to all of you, and I'm home alone in my workspace, looking forward to your meeting. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair Lee. Olá. And from the Kihei District Office, we have Councilmember Tom Cook. Olá.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Olá. Alohá, olá, and happy rainy day. It's going to get really green. I'm looking forward to your meeting, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for that. Moving on to Committee Member, Councilmember Tamara Paltin. Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou. Streaming live and direct from the Council Chambers.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. And finally, we have Councilmember Nohelani U'u-Hodgins. Aloha, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Aloha and olá, Chair and Members. I'm at my private residence. I do have two adults in the house with me. The first is my son, Makoa U'u, and the other is my husband, William Koa Hodgins. To report, too, on the weather, behind me you can see it's dark enough, but not too much rain. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you for the update. And of course, our Non-Voting Members are always welcome, that would be Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez and Councilmember Sugimura. From the Administration, we have, first up, the Department of Agriculture. We have Director Kali Arce, Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa, Ad...Advocates Mya Hunter, Ag Conservation Liaison Jeannine Rossa, Food Security Coordinator Lauren Nelson is online. From...and then we have, for the Department of Environmental...Environmental Management, we have Corporation Counsel Adrian Reifsnnyder...yeah? And then we have Deputy Director of Environmental Management, Environmental Protection and Sustainability Manager. From the Department of Water Supply, we have the Planning Program Administrator, Planner de Robles. Department of Transportation Deputy Director. We have Program Specialists Nakamoto and Haney. From the Committee Staff, we also have...good...good morning for all the Committee Staff joining us today. Now, we have a big agenda, Members, four items on the agenda. We...that's...and I'll go through them right now. Operational and Budgetary Review of the Department of Agriculture ADEPT-1(2). Operational and Budgetary Review of the Watershed Protection Grants Administered by the Department of Water Supply, that's ADEPT-1(5). Operational and Budgetary Review of the Environmental Protection and Sustainability Division of the Department of Environmental Management, which is 1(3). And finally, Operational and Budgetary Review of the Department of Transportation, 1(4). These items are informational only and no legislative action will be taken. I plan to take up three departments...up...take up three departmental operation and budgetary reviews before lunch...the Department of Ag, watershed protection grants administered by the Department of Water Supply,

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the Environmental Protection and Sustainability Division of the Department of Environmental Management, and then the...and then the review of the Department of Transportation will be done in the afternoon, Members. Thank you, Members and Administration personnel, for being here today, and let's begin with public testimony on all items on the agenda. Staff, do we have any testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, there's no individual signed up at the beginning of the meeting, but I do see one individual approaching the podium.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, Jasee Law, commonly know...he probably knows our...our script here, so I'll skip it for Jasee.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING . . .

MR. LAW: Yeah, you don't have to read all that stuff.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you.

MR. LAW: Welcome. Welina mai kākou. Jasee Law, Moku o Kula, Waiakoa Ahupua'a. That's Kula Uka. So, the rain's coming down to your area, Mr. Cook. We miss you over here, Mr. Cook. I don't have nobody to pick on today. Thank you, Mr. Chair. When I got up this morning, I had a...like a hopeful feeling because I knew you'd be here doing the agricultural stuff, and I would really like to work on...help one of the farmers Upcountry. It's been very difficult trying to...I have no transportation except for the bus, and the one farm that the bus goes by, the lady was crazy, and I...I tried ten times to get a job there, but she...she...they weren't having none of it. I did see...I did hear of there was this one veteran...disabled veteran farmer up there somewhere, and he's...hopefully he's paying attention today. And it's kind of frustrating because I get different answers from the government. I haven't been over to the Ag Department very much. I know they're just getting started, and so I didn't want to bother them too much, but it's...it's frustrating because sometimes I don't want to put my ro...my own roadblock in there, but sometimes the government says, well, that's confidential information. We can't help you with that. So, it's like, I'd...I'd like to work somewhere, only part-time though, so if maybe Lāna'i...I mean, I know it's going to be...your farm is going to be...need some help here after all this rain. So, thank you for your time, and as usual, I save my time for the people of Hawai'i.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Jasee Law. Any clarifying questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Thank you once again. At...at this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this it...these items, please use the raise-your-hand function and you will be called on to testify. Staff, do we have anybody else wishing to testify?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, there's no individual signed up to testify at this time. Would you like me to do a last call?

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, please.

MR. PASCUAL: This is the last call for oral testimony. Please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams and Staff will unmute you. Here's a countdown...three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, seeing there's no one else wishing to testify, I'll now proceed with the agenda.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING . . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: With the FY '27 Budget deliberations around the corner, I have invited the various departments under the ADEPT Committee's jurisdiction to present today on administration of the FY '26 budgets, and to let us know their priorities in FY '27.

**ITEM 1(2): OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (Rule 7(B))**

CHAIR JOHNSON: Our first agenda item is Operational and Budgetary Review of the Department of Agriculture. I'd first like to hear from the Department of Ag, whose important task is to supply...support the development and continued management of the sustainable regional agricultural model, promote resident and ecosystem health and well-being, and create a circular agroeconomic system that can be a thriving example for the rest of the world. Oh, lofty goals. Love it. Director Arce and Deputy Director Hewahewa, thank you for being here today. Please proceed with your presentation.

MS. ARCE: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair Johnson and ADEPT Committee Members. The County of Maui Department of Agriculture is ready this morning to share the Fiscal Year 2026 operational budgetary review, Department's accomplishments for this fiscal year, our projects in progress, and our 2027 priorities. Presenting with me is Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa and our subject-matter experts, our program leaders...some virtually, and we have two here. Thank you for inviting the Department. We'll proceed with our slideshow. Slide number 2, please. The Department of Agriculture's total budget of \$16,421,152 is a 99.5 percent increase from Fiscal Year 2025. The Department's total salaries and wages budget reflects a 3.6 percent increase approved by the union, as well as the raises for the Department heads as approved by the Salary Commission. The Department's operations budget increased by 118.10 percent. Of the total Department budget grant subsidy funds that the Department administers is 14,356,000. No equipment was needed this fiscal year except for the annual lease of the Xerox copier, and is reflected in the 95.9 percent decrease in equipment budget. This fiscal year, the Department was approved an additional 3.5 expanded positions. The positions include one Secretary III, one Information and Education Specialist, one Value Chain Coordinator, and one half-time

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Park Project Coordinator. Each of these positions were approved funding for eight months. The Department is developing PDs for two and a half expanded positions. One is the Value Chain Coordinator position, which may require creating a new class unless an existing class has relatable tasks for this position. The second position is the Secretary III. This position will be reallocated to a Boards and Committee [sic] secretary because the Department administers the Kula Ag Park Committee and with the transfer of the Maui Humane Society grants, the Department is now assigned the Animal Board Committee. Additionally, the newly-hired Agriculture Conservation Liaison is vice-chair for the Conservation Committee, which may require the Department's assistance for committee work. The half-time expanded position for the Park Project Coordinator is being reallocated to a half-time Program Specialist. It was intended that the Park Project Coordinator would facilitate the ag park CIP projects, but I have been doing so since Feb...Fiscal Year '23, the first year of the Department's establishment. The PD for the half-time Program Specialist is currently being developed. This position will collect crop and economic data from the ag park, which we did not have upon the transfer of the program from the Office of Economic Development. The data will establish a baseline for the Department to compare over time how much food and other ag products are produced on County land...County-owned land, which is directly contributing to Maui's food security, Maui's landscape, and flower industries. The Department hired the Education and Information Specialist, who is onboarding on April 1st. This position will work closely with our leaders, the subject-matter experts on developing educational materials, outreach flyers, and share about the Department's programs and activities through social media and through the Department's website. Another update regarding funded positions is the ISA-certified arborist position will be transferred to the Parks and Recreation Department, who has the need for inspection and inventory on park and beach trees, as well as the equipment and other personnel. With the Agriculture Liaison...Agriculture Conservation Liaison on board, the total positions established in the Department are 15. Slide 3, please. We will now share the Department of Agriculture programs. Slide 4. Starting with our Food Security Division--next slide--under the leadership of Food Access Coordinator Lauren Nelson, program accomplishments of the Food Security Division includes the following accomplishments. The 2025 Maui Food Summit took place on Friday, October 10th. It included an agriculture resource fair, a keynote presentation from kalo producer Jerome Kikiwi, Jr., a presentation of the Food and Nutrition Security Plan, breakout group discussions, which focused on implementing the objectives in goal number 2 of the Food and Nutrition Security Plan. Also, a panel discussion on the barriers food producers face that limit production, a panel discussion on the future of agriculture education, the launch of the Eat Local Maui challenge, and a close keynote...a closing keynote talk from the farmer and rancher Karyn Kanekoa. Through the Farm to Family Grant Program, five Maui County-based organizations were awarded the Farm to Family grant to purchase or enter into purchasing contracts for...or to establish consumer subsidy programs for foods grown or harvested in Maui County. Developed in partnership with the Parks Department and Councilmember Johnson, the Lānaʻi Farmers Market launch...launched in October 2025 with the purpose to expand economic opportunities for producers and to improve healthy local food access for residents. The market is managed by the Hawaiʻi Farmers Union, and nine vendors are

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currently signed up to sell at the market. The Lānaʻi Food Stimulus Program codeveloped with...again, with Councilmember Johnson. This program provides food vouchers to 350 low-income Lānaʻi households to purchase locally-grown meat, fish, produce, eggs, poi, to improve food security and community health while su...supporting economic growth for local farmers. MEO was contracted to administer the program, and they successfully launched the program at the Lānaʻi Farmers Market in January. Working with Councilmember Gabe Johnson again, the Food Access Coordinator utilized the Food and Nutrition Security Plan's goal and actions to draft, an addition to the Countywide Policy Plan, developing the goal to strengthen food systems and food access to add to the County...Countywide Policy Plan to strengthen food systems and expand food security. A collaborative effort of the Food Access Coordinator and the Department of Human Services Office of Aging and Kaunoa Senior Services, the Locally Grown Healthy Food for Kūpuna program was developed. A vendor was selected to administer the program, which aims to expand the availi...availability of healthy locally-sourced food at senior congregate dining sites across Maui County. Next slide. The food security programs in progress include the following. This April, the Food Access Coordinator will launch a...an RFP for food as medicine programs in Maui County to support health centers' and care providers' ability to purchase local food for produce...for produce prescription programs and medically-tailored meals. The Food Access Coordinator is also currently developing a meat processing need survey and assessment to support workforce development and the creation of a butchery and meat processing program in Maui County. Following the Lānaʻi Farmers Market six-month pilot, the Food Access Coordinator, in partnership with HFU, will implement the Lānaʻi Farmers Market vendor survey to assess opportunities for improvement of the market's frequency, advertising, and management to improve the market for future years. The Food Access Coordinator is also working with the Management Department's GIS team to develop our Maui County Farmers Market story map, sharing the location, opening hours, and photos of each farmers market in Maui County with information about each market's available food access programs. The Food and Nutriti...Nutrition Security Plan annual update requires the Food Access Coordinator to compile data from each action lead in the Food and Nutrition Security Plan to provide an update on the plan's progress and identify areas of need and the local impacts caused by shifts in Federal funding. This update will be shared on the Department's website when it is complete. Last week we presented the Kaiahahui [sic] Foundation's congressional earmark request to develop a produce stand at Hawaiʻi Taro Farm to expand market access for their cooperative of over 30 farmers and ranchers and to expand food access in Waikapū. Next slide. The food sys...the fiscal year priorities of the food security programs for 2027 include the following. Expand the Fiscal Year '26 Local Food for Kūpuna Program pilot project to include additional sites across the County, and expand the length of the program and number of elders served. Expand the Fiscal Year '26 Food as Medicine pilot program to include health center host sites across Maui County, and to expand the length of the program and number of patients served. The Meat Processing Program will train the future generation of slaughterhouse workers, managers, and butchers in Maui County, partnering with our existing ranches and meat processing operations to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities and robust food safety training. This program will utilize the meat processing needs

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assessment data to design the course around the labor needs for Maui County's slaughterhouses, ranchers, grocery stores, and delis. The program will utilize the Hawai'i Community College's Kō Education Center in Honoka'a's six-week noncredit butchery course which started in spring '25 as the model. Funding for the Eat Local Maui Challenge would provide funding to organize their annual challenge, including developing new educational materials for classrooms and families online...families, online services for where to source local, and funding for printing materials. Funding for the middle school Ag Field Day will enable STEMworks to conduct their programs, including middle school agriculture career fair for students in sixth to eighth...tenth grade, and expose students to agriculture aiming to have these students involved in high school agriculture classes and programs, and later pursue agriculture careers. By continuing the pilot Fam...Farm to Family Program, it will increase local residents' access to locally-produced and harvested food. Lastly, Farmers Market Food Access Manager Stipend Program will provide farmers markets across Maui County with a stipend to compensate their food access managers' time spent on administering food access programs, including the SNAP, the DA BUX program to double SNAP purchasing power on local produce, and the WIC program. This pilot program would fund up to five farmer markets across Maui County for ten hours per week at 20.22...at \$22 per hour. Next slide.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Check, check. I'll jump in. Welina mai kākou. Aloha. We will transition now over to our Grants Program that is led by our Grants Coordinator Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos and her wonderful grants management specialist team. Slide 9, please. The Grants Program awarded a total of 61 grants in FY '26, with a total amount of \$14,286,391...28 percent of grant funding for competitive opportunities while a larger percentage, 72 percent, was appropriated to line items including the Maui Humane Society, transitioned over from DHC. The funding, 14.2 million was distributed to all Maui County islands. Funding for each island is specified in the middle pie chart...Maui with 52 percent, Molokai 6 percent, Lāna'i 2 percent, and projects consisting of multiple islands Countywide was 40. The pie chart to the right shows the distribution between the types of entities that were awarded. The majority of grants were nonprofits, covering 87 percent, followed by our for-profit businesses 6 percent, sole proprietors at 4 percent, and the State at 3. Okay. Okay. Move over to slide number 10, and then I'll share grant programs and process. The Grants Division is currently managing 136 active grants with our team of three. This includes 61 in FY '26, 58 in FY '25, 12 in '24, and 5 in '23. The team is diligently working with grantees and Finance Department to complete final payments on the grants from '23 and '24. The Grants Division made over 1,000 contacts with community members and grantees with general grant inquiries and technical assistance during FY '26. Approximately 50 meetings were provided to grantees for one-on-one technical assistance for reimbursement requests. The division is working on improving guidance materials to assist grantees through their reimbursement process. And currently at this time, the division is working on releasing the grant application for the Lāna'i Food Stimulus Program. Next slide, please. Right here, we'll briefly go over our FY '27 priorities...anticipated priorities. So, there's a need for a financial literacy workshop for ag producers, and it has become evident as grants team provide one-on-one technical assistance to grantees. These workshops will be

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designed in collaboration with our ag community. To dis...to distribute grant funding in a more equitable manner to our underserved communities, the Grants Division will be mapping...developing mapping of the geographical areas where funding has been distributed and identified underfunded locations as well. Outreach events will be planned to target those areas. The division strives to streamline the grants process, but we need continuous feedback from grantees. Our survey will be developed and distributed to grantees upon grant closure to provide feedback for continuous improvements. Another area we continuously hear from our grantees is that it is difficult to find upfront capital to purchase or pay for goods and services upfront, then submit and wait for reimbursements. So, our division is working on gathering other funding resources that could help and other supporting agencies that could help grantees obtain capital for the grant or other more suitable grant or loan opportunities that have different payment methods and schedules. Resources will be made available on our Ag Department's website. Okay. Next slide. Thank you. Now we will share our Advocacy Division led by our Agricultural Advocate, Mya Hunter, who's sitting with us today. Next slide. Our agri...advocacy legislative priorities during our opening of the legislative season, Advocacy Division was able to share Department of Ag's 2026 legislative priority list with senators and representatives on O'ahu. Using the Department of Agriculture's strategic plan as a guide, four major themes surfaced, revolving around agricultural infrastructure, invasive species and environment, food security for residents, and agricultural workforce. Beneath these four categories, we identified great need for advocacy around expansion of food hubs, commercial kitchens, and meat processing facilities. We advocate for advanced prevention of CRB and invasive pests to safeguard our agricultural production, as well as protect and expand access to agricultural land. We aim to support the procurement of Maui County-grown food, supply the community, and support programs that will increase food security and resiliency to natural disaster. And finally, we advocate for enforcement of agricultural theft in our Maui County, and support the expansion of our local butchery programs for next generations. Slide 4...14, please. Now I'll speak on the progress of our department of advocacy, our division. Mya, our Ag Advocate, is tracking County and State legislation related to ag. This helps us to stay informed about new bills, funding opportunities, and regulations. When relevant, we identify where Maui Depart...Department of Agriculture should submit testimony to represent the needs of our farming community. The Department has a list of 14 bills so far that testimony has been drafted for, and will be presented after the cross on March 12th. Next, we are collecting stories and data from local producers, real experiences and numbers from the field to help make our testimonies stronger. These stories show decision makers the real impact of agricultural policies, both the challenges and the success. Finally, we are coordinating with existing partners like our farm bureaus, nonprofits, and other agencies. Collaborations help us avoid duplication of efforts and stren...strengthen our joint advocacy. Working together ensures unified messages that supports the entire agricultural sector. Next slide, please. These are our priorities for our Advocacy Division. The first initiative is a farmer GAP certification workshop, which means good ag practices. The workshop will help farmers meet safety and quality standards required by buyers. We'll provide hands-on guidance, checklists, connections, incentives, and resources to make certifications easier. That's what we aim to do. Also, we aim to incentivize farmers in the FSMA

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certification workshops, which is the Food Safety Modernization Act. It focuses on food safety from farm to table. This incentive will help farmers comply with Federal requirements and reduce risk of contamination. Planning to also review and revise some County codes to better support our agricultural operations. This includes zoning updates, water use policies, and simplifying permits that often slow down farm projects. Axis deer continue to damage crops and pastures. We are advocating for dedicated funding to support deer management through research, fencing support, and coordinated control efforts. Another effort is improving the...oh, we'll skip that one. Lastly, we are promoting subsidies and incentives for farmers, covering costs like water, feed, fencing, and transportation. The goal is to keep farming financially viable to strengthen our local food systems.

MS. ARCE: Next slide, please. Now we will share about the Agriculture Park Program led by our new Agriculture Maintenance Specialist and Ag Park Manager Kai Thielk and his crew of park caretakers. Next slide. Daily activities of the Agriculture Park Program include the Ag Park Maintenance Specialist coordinating work that are carried out by the caretakers...park caretakers that include keeping culverts clean, removing large trash, and weed whacking the sides of the interior roads and along the fence lines as part of the weed management. The team also assists Department of Water Supply in keeping eyes on the reservoir through intermittent inspections and cleaning filter systems as needed, reporting any issues to Department of Water Supply. One CIP that is about to break ground end of this month is the replacement of the booster pump station, which will be constructed by PB Sullivan. It cost the County \$433,472 for the design, and \$3,957,532 for construction. Funds were encumbered in Fiscal Year '24 and '25 from the CIP funding. The booster pump is required per an agreement between Mahi Pono and the County in order to supply the water allocations determined by CWRM, which are currently 1.5 million gallons to the ag park and in the future, 1.0 million gallons to the new Upper Maui Ag Park that is planned as a second agrip...agriculture park developed for organic production. Next slide. Having a larger reservoir is a priority for the agriculture park. This past January, Goodfellows was awarded a \$17.375 million contract to construct the 2.4 million gallon concrete reservoir. The reservoir will provide additional water storage for the agriculture parks, water for fighting fires, and water for drought amelioration. Next slide. The Agriculture Conservation funded...Program is funded by a grant from the USDA NRCS Strategic Partnerships Pathways Program and managed by our Conservation Liaison, who is here this morning with us. Her name is Jeannine Rossa. Next slide. The Agriculture Conservation Program goals are to improve communication and collaboration between conservation and agriculture sectors, to strengthen disaster resilience, restore the environment, and support local food production and culture. The three objectives are the pro...of the program are to promote innovative land management solutions for fires, floods, and erosion, promote cultural and science-based vegetation and restoration management strategies, and to cultivate science-based conversations through outreach and education. Next slide. Projects in progress under the Agriculture Conservation Program include developing an axis deer resource webpage that will be on our website, coordination with watershed working groups, coordination with MEMA land management, coordination with Department of Water Supply and partners on water

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conservation and access, protection of agriculture lands, developing outreach and education materials, and going into the community, and one-on-one meetings with farmers and ranchers. Next slide. The Agriculture Conservation Program priorities include participating in the axis deer working group, support watershed restoration projects as a resource person, assist MEMA with County land management after fuel hazard reduction activities, support water conservation projects as a resource person, ag lands support for the imperiled agriculture mapping, and biosecurity outreach and education. Next slide. Due to the passing of Senate Bill number 2401 in 2024, which says the counties are to develop a feral chicken control and education program, the calls and inquiries about control options increased, and residents had no assistance from other government agencies. The \$50,000 funding for Senate Bill 2401 was vetoed, which the counties would have to match, leaving counties to decide...to determine if they want to fund their own program. Through my research, it was found that the State Department of Ag and Biosecurity only addresses agriculture communities. DLNR will only address wildlife concerns. Department of Health will only step into...edu...will only educate on the effects of feral chicken and birds toward someone's health. At the time when I approached Humane Society with the previous executive director, she was not wanting to participate and stated their focus was on domestic animals, although they would occasionally trap loose rabbits and guinea pigs. USDA Animal Wildlife would assess residents' and businesses' feral chicken issues and are willing to develop a control program, but it will be with...it would be...all the expenses would be on the resident and businesses. With prompting from Mayor Bissen to look into the feral chicken issue, the Department initiated a ten-week pilot program, trapping feral chickens on County park facilities using a contracted animal control company. This program was between December...sorry, October and December of last year. The purpose was to determine the cost of trapping. A total of 451 chickens were trapped. The total cost came out to \$30.55 per chicken. A second round will start to get more cost data. Although the Department does not have enforcement or regulatory powers, this pilot will help the Department advocate for funding, and may lead to an incentive program to reduce the cost for community members, providing funding is secured. Next slide. This concludes our presentation. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much...thank you so much, Director, Deputy Director, and all of your Staff for joining us, and thank you for that great presentation. Okay. We're going to move on to public testimony. At this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise-your-hand function from...and you will be called upon to testify. Staff, is there anyone wishing to testify?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, there's no individuals wishing to...signed up at this time to testify. Would you like me to do a last call?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, please.

MR. PASCUAL: This is the last call for oral testimony. Please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you would like to testify. The countdown is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Members, seeing there are no more individuals wishing to testify, are there any objections to closing oral testimony for this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(2) . . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. I'll now close public testimony for this item and get into the deliberations on Operational Budgetary Review of the Department of Agriculture, ADEPT-1(2). I propose three minutes per...per Councilmember for each round of discussion, starting with Vice-Chair Sinenci. Before we get into that, I just want to...first off, shout out for the slides on Lānaʻi. Thank you. We...you guys have been doing such great work there, and boy, that chicken slide, right? I bet...I saw the Members' faces. Everybody's eyes lit up, and we're going to probably talk a lot about that, but we're going to turn this over to the...to Vice-Chair Sinenci.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo for that presentation. Yeah, my first was, what are you doing with the chickens?

MS. ARCE: The contractor collects it and takes it from there.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Like to a chicken farm? Chicken...

MS. ARCE: There's disposal and he has other outlets.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, okay.

MS. ARCE: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: All right. And then my other question was, I did...was there any State funding allocations, or is that coming up next year?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. So, when that bill had passed, they had proposed 50,000 for each County. After it passed, the funding got vetoed.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, that was for the chickens.

MS. ARCE: Right. So, we're taking our own money and implementing the pilot program, so we're going on round two.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: I thought I heard some monies for...from the Legislature for the park?

MS. ARCE: I'm not sure about...oh, the CIP? Oh, yeah.

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VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah.

MS. ARCE: Yeah. So, the CIP funding that was encumbered was from, you know, previous funding --

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Got it.

MS. ARCE: -- but the one upcoming for the reservoir is using the remainder of all the funding that was re...was sourced from other government periods, like Fiscal Year '20...and it's all the balances that's left over from the previous secured funding.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah, okay. Thank you. And Chair...Chair, right, the Lānaʻi...the focus on Lānaʻi was very inspiring. So, I mean, just hearing all the different stories and how we can affect our County residents. Of course, we're...we're getting...a lot of people are getting cut with SNAP...the SNAP benefits, so...including the kūpuna. So, how...how this Department can help get some freshly sourced foods to our vulnerable community is...I'm glad that's one of the Department's priorities. For the grants, you mentioned underfunded locations. So, when grants come in, are you guys...is that one of the objectives to see that some of these locations that need more freshly sourced food get some of this?

MS. ARCE: Yes, the team are using that to develop the baseline. Now, I also wanted to add, Councilmember, that the Department secured 2.5 million for Hāna to --

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: For the aggregation...

MS. ARCE: -- congressional earmark --

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah.

MS. ARCE: -- yeah --

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

MS. ARCE: -- to...for your...your community kitchen.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Yes, thank you for that. And then I know you mentioned some partnerships with some water advocates, including the DWS. But for the East Maui Water Authority, we did currently add Uncle Bobby Pahia onto the board as...as the Upcountry farmer position. So, I don't know if working with him as far as getting water from East Maui would...because he would represent the park area Upcountry. . . .(timer sounds). . . Okay. Thank you for that. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Vice-Chair Sinenci. We're going to move to Councilmember Batangan, followed by Councilmember U'u-Hodgins,

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Councilmember Cook, Chair Lee, Councilmember Paltin. That's the order. So, Councilmember Batangan.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director, Deputy, and Staff. Can I ask you to go to your organizational chart? Can you bring it back on the slide? It just seems...

MS. ARCE: Oh, I don't...

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Okay. So...

MS. ARCE: Thank you for reminding me about that.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: If you can't --

MS. ARCE: We...

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: -- if you can't bring your presentation back up, that's okay. But I...I guess I just had a question on the org chart.

MS. ARCE: I don't think we had the org chart in there.

CHAIR JOHNSON: I think Staff, can you help with the...

MS. ARCE: Our...

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. ARCE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: It's in the version that's posted to Granicus.

MS. ARCE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Anyway, okay.

MS. ARCE: Oversight on that.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: But it seems like an odd organi...organizational chart. One, because the Mayor had always said that he wanted his deputies to oversee operations. And two, because when I was a department head, we were told that we didn't...they did...DPS didn't want director...reports to the director. How...how is it that there are certain divisions that are split under the Director and certain divisions that are split under the management of the Deputy?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

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MS. ARCE: Thank you for asking that question. So, in...in...early on, I...I knew that Deputy Director was just coming on and was not, you know, experienced with executive management. So, we're slowly transitioning over programs to him as he...you know, now he has more time. And a lot of time, a year and a half was spent in recovery. And it was difficult for him to manage, you know, recovery because he was co-leading natural resources. So, that was also another factor for me to step in to help with the management of the...of the Department's divisions. And we're also creating new divisions at this...concurrently.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, point of information.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That org chart is from their 2025 presentation.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So...

MS. ARCE: Yeah, that's...that's an old one.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Sorry, I was confused, Chair.

MS. ARCE: I...I forgot about including that. So, my oversight. I can get that to you later, though. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: If you like, we can ask for that in writing if you need a reminder, Director.

MS. ARCE: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Staff --

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- you got that written down?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And the other point of information --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- today's slideshow wasn't uploaded to Granicus yet. So, maybe that's why he was looking at last year's one.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, okay.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. So, Director, you mentioned the pilot program for trapping feral chickens. You have data on how much it costs to trap a chicken. Do you have any data to measure success in other ways? Like how effective were you in population control or, you know, decreasing the nuisance to the communities or to the different agri...well, other ag?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. We just initiated and implemented that one just to develop the baseline to understand the cost of trapping. As time goes on, we'll determine what other factors that might contribute to the cost. It...it's kind of expensive, I feel, for an individual family, \$475 for two weeks...for a week for four traps, or \$117 for two traps for one week. That's...you know, that's a expense out of the family's budget.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you. Has there been consideration for piloting any sort of animal control for other species, like say feral cats near, you know, nature preserves?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. So, regarding feral cats, no. That is already done by conservation...other conservation organizations. And our main focus, we want to keep it on agriculture, and that is more a conservation-related issue. As far as feral pigs, if that's what you're referencing, no, we haven't looked into that. But I do know that USDA animal wildlife, they do have a division that handles that.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you. And last question has to do with enforcement. I think you mentioned that there...the Department does not have any enforcement authority on any sort of feral animals. Would the Department be looking for some from this Council?

MS. ARCE: Well --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

MS. ARCE: -- so that's a...that's a interesting question, because we were developed to not have enforcement and to not regulat...regulate. So, some of these issues that have come up are floating. There's...like the feral chicken, there's no agency that's going to touch it. So, it just kind of falls with no one. So, we're just, you know, taking the...taking the initiative to see what the County can do.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Director.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for that line of questioning. Let's move on to Councilmember U'u-Hodgins, followed by Councilmember Tom Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. Aloha, everyone. Thank you so much for your presentation. I appreciate all the work that you folks do. Last time I ran into Deputy Director, and I see he just left, but we had a quick conversation about ag crimes. And in recent months, I've seen a couple ranchers and farmers deal with some poaching issues, which I know necessarily isn't in your purview, but...but more particularly, ag crimes. What can we do to help you folks reduce the amount of ag crimes, or increase the fines, or increase the penalties on ag crimes? Because I...there's been, I think, a mini spike.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. So, it kind of connects with Councilmember Batangan's question about anything that you can do. So, our advocate is working on tracking those bills, and is advocating for the State to look into expanding their enforcement into Maui County. Because currently, they only have it focused on O'ahu. But maybe that's something that the County could work together with the Department so that it's Maui County-focused, and that we take care of our own pilikia rather than waiting for, you know, the...the State. But although we don't want to be redundant, so it has to be crafted in a...in a manner that, you know, doesn't overlap other agencies.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. ARCE: We also have --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MS. ARCE: -- Mya who wants to add in.

MS. HUNTER: Testing.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah.

MS. HUNTER: Mahalo for the question, Councilmember. So, tomorrow, our Department will be providing testimony in support of a bill to pass the pilot program that is happening on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island to come to other islands, including Maui County. So, we've been in communications with HPD and Maui Police Department. So, our Department will be providing testimony and support tomorrow for that measure.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: What measure is that? Can you tell me the bill number?

MS. HUNTER: SB2798.

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COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: SB2798. Okay.

MS. HUNTER: Relating to law enforcement.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MS. HUNTER: Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. I saw that you had a blip in your slide in partnering with MEMA and wildfire reduction. I’m wondering if you can expand on that a little bit.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: I’ll...I’ll have our Agriculture Conservation Liaison respond. Thank you for the question.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MS. ROSSA: Thanks for the question, Councilmember. It’s such a big topic that it’s hard to write it all out in the slide, hence the little blip. But that...you know, obviously MEMA is our agency that’s leading that effort. And specifically, when I was talking with Amos, they have a whole team right now where they’re looking at reducing fire hazard and intensity on County lands. My job is more that I would work with them on what we do with the lands after their fuel reduction work. But I would also like to just let you know that I actually used to fight wildfire back in the day when I was much younger and stronger. . . .*(laughing)*. . . Not recently. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . And so, I do have some background in that and lots of other places. So, thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Awesome. Thank you. Thank you so much for your answers. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Councilmember, for that line of questioning. Let’s move on to Councilmember Tom Cook, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Well, thank you...thank you, Director and all of Department for your work and the presentation. I had a...I had...first had a question on the update on the deer fencing. The Council did a grant for, I think, 1-1/2 million with allocating a certain amount maximum. Is there...do you have an update on how that’s going?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Councilmember Cook. I believe Ana is online right now. I see her. And I also wanted to just really quickly add for Councilmember U‘u-Hodgins that the Department is also looking into...we’re developing

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the grazing application working with...with Corp. Counsel. So, Ana, are you on? Can you please respond? Thank you.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Hi. Good morning. Thank you for the question. Yeah. So, we have the \$1.5 million grant that was granted to Lokahi Pacific, and I did get an update that the application will be coming out in the next week or so. So, it...it's forthcoming, and we'll let all of our community know about that opportunity.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you very much. I...I was in contact with Lokahi Pacific also, and I'm glad to hear that your...the Department's working with them. They have a track record for managing the grants, and hopefully that'll lighten the load for the Department because you folks shared young department and the difficulty of being saddled with doing multiple tasks when you don't have the Staff for it. I want to compliment you on the presentation today. I think the Department's getting traction and your wings. I had one question about...if you could bring up the slide about the...the grant funding, and there was a percentage for sole...the part that was for sole provider and a profit. I was curious the difference between for-profit and sole provider is...sole proprietor.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes. So, the sole proprietor would be an individual that doesn't necessarily have a registered business, whereas the for-profit is a business that would be, for example, under an LLC. So, they're incorporated in some form, have a business structure. So, that would be the...the primary difference between both of them.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Oh, okay. Thanks. And basically, is the criteria for qualifications similar for all applicants?

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, it is.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you for that clarification. I don't have any more questions now, Chair. Thanks to Department for your service.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Councilmember Cook, for that line of questioning. Let's...let's move on to Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hi. Good morning, everyone. And thank you, Director Arce, for your presentation. It's clear that all of you are very dedicated and hardworking. I am concerned, however, that you seem to be expanding a lot of little programs, and our thought when we created your Department was to make a difference with the over-reliance on out-of-state food production and purchases. And I...my understanding is that it's at 90...in...in the area of 90 percent. So, have any of your programs that you have assisted or created made a dent in that 90 percent?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

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MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question, Chair Lee. I understand what you're asking, and the way the programs have been developed, those small programs, is generated by the need from the community. As far as the dent in reducing the 90 percent, we haven't...did any work on measuring if it has been done, but I know our Food Access Coordinator is online. She may have a more comprehensive answer. Lauren, are you available to speak on that, please?

MS. NELSON: Yes, of course. Councilmember Lee, thank you for the question. So, we have had a really difficult time tracking down that imported statistic. How do we displace imported food with food grown here? It's something that we're focused on with each of our programs. In communities like East Maui, Lānaʻi, and Molokai, a small program, small amount of funds can make a huge impact because our community of farmers out there are just...you know, they're doing so much with so little. I would say our Grants Program has had a huge impact on scaling up our producers, increasing the amount of food that's getting to local people through farmers markets, through summer food programs.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Excuse me, Lauren. Lauren, I have a limited amount of time.

MS. NELSON: Oh, pardon me, Chair.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, you bring up a lot of small programs, which is fine, but we're talking about six...an investment of \$16 million. And so, I'm asking, what is our return? Is it substantial, or is there a goal to...to reduce the 90 percent to 80 percent in so many years, et cetera? I mean, we cannot continue to just rely on these...these little programs that help just small numbers. And so, that's what I just want to know. Do you...do you have an overall goal to...to cut that 90 percent down at some point?

MS. NELSON: Yes, Chair Lee, we are very much in support of our Statewide goals, supporting specifically institutional purchasing. So, our small pilot programs around food as medicine and also our efforts to scale up . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . farm-to-school purchasing will have a very large impact over time, even though the pilot programs are small now. Thanks for the question.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. All right. Thank you, Chair Johnson. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. It sounds like Chair Lee wants to increase your budget, and I'm in full support of that. Okay. Let's move on to Councilmember Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Before my time starts, I just wanted to say limited time, plenty questions. And so, if I cut you off, I'm not trying to be rude. The focus of my questions is like the continuity from one year to another. Have the administrative rules been created? Last we heard March 5th, it was with Randy Perreira of HGEA for a consultation.

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MS. ARCE: No, we're...it's still in draft form. Our Administrative Assistant is just...has so much stuff to work on, but we're...it's on our list to do. And we knew you were going to ask us about that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then in Fiscal Year '25, the dashboard was one of your big priorities. What's the progress on that?

MS. ARCE: Okay. Thank you for asking the question. So, the dashboard is...actually, we're considering the mapping, the...that we're doing with GIS as the dashboard. So, that will reflect all the food access locations, et cetera. And we have more details that Lauren can answer if you want more on that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: No, that's good. Thank you. In your April 7, '25 transmittal, you had said that there's not a need for the Kula Ag Park Committee to exist for several reasons, but it's still existing. And now we're taking the Secretary III and making it a Boards and Committee [sic] Secretary. Is it going to still remain Kula Ag Park or was it going to just be an ag park committee?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yeah. Thank you for the question. So, currently, we're looking at bill...Chapter 22 to make some Code changes so that it specifically says Kula Ag Park or Upper Maui Ag Park. So, the other thing is, we don't have enough to fill quorum. And because the Administrative Assistant and myself are doing all the secretary work, it's just a huge task. So, the Secretary III would help. But we are intending to continue it if...you know, because the Code hasn't changed it, so it's still in effect.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do you still feel that it's not necessary and that it should be made into an ag park committee rather than focused on Kula and the UMAP area or whatever?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yes. I...I feel that a committee for the ag parks would be more of a benefit than focused on Kula Ag Park because the...the Department might develop more agriculture parks. Like, I know Lānaʻi wanted one at one time if we can find, you know, land. Maybe Molokai wants one, although they do have State ag parks. So, I think that would benefit the County.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then I think we were anticipating Lot 30 and 31 of Kula Ag Park would be rented out by now. Has that occurred?

MS. ARCE: No, that hasn't been leased out. The lots, through litigation, were returned to the County. We are intending . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . to move into Lot 31 to have presence in the Kula Ag Park and to show support for our tenants there. Lot 30 will eventually be out for applications, but there's Code changes that need to be...need to happen as recommended by our Corp. Counsel in Kula Ag Park.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do...do you need our assistance with those Code changes, or you're drafting the Code changes?

MS. ARCE: We're drafting it with our Corp. Counsel at the moment.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. ARCE: And then...and then we'll review it...or we'll share it with Council.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Because we thought the thing would be available for solicitation at the end of April last year.

MS. ARCE: Yeah. Unfortunately, just, you know, our Corp. Counsel has other...other departments and it's just a waiting game. And I know they're working very hard and we're just, you know, giving them respect to do what they need to do.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. For my round of questioning, Director, I...I noticed your slide about the grants and that's what I'm curious about is, it says 61 grants were awarded, but you have 136 active grants in addition to that. I think it...I'm trying to get...the root of my question will be the needs of the community. Did the...do you feel like there was a...a big...a lot of people applied and you...we...and you could only give out "X" amount of grants, but there was a big number of applicants? Can you talk about the...the number of applicants for these particular grants?

MS. ARCE: Yes. Thank you for the che...question, Chair. I'll give what I know. I understood from the grants team that there were a large number of grant applications, and I guess based on the scoring criteria, that would have determined the amount of award and who would or would not get awarded. But Ana may be able to add more to that answer.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes. I...I have actually a few figures to provide. For Fiscal Year '26, we actually did receive 91 applications, and we were only able to award 6...I'm sorry, 50...let me look back over here...57 competitive opportunities. So, we do...we do have quite a bit of a demand, but because we have a criteria to follow for evaluation and scoring of grants, we were only able to award 61 grants for Fiscal Year '26.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Would you be open to having the pot a little bit bigger so you can bring in more applicants?

MS. ARCE: May I add on that before you add, Ana? Yes, if we --

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MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes.

MS. ARCE: -- can have more E/Ps. Because currently, we're running it with two GMPS' and one Grant Coordinator, and we're definitely needing an Accountant or two and more GMPS specialists.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Fair enough. The Food as Medicine partnership was...was impressive. You...are you working with community hans...health centers, the Federal community health centers? And if so, how...is...are they talking about their budgets getting cut and everything?

MS. ARCE: Thank you. Lauren, would you be able to address that question?

MS. NELSON: Great question, Chair. The RFP will be open to all healthcare providers, including Federally-qualified health centers and Native Hawaiian health centers, and we encourage everyone to apply. We'll be doing outreach when the RFP is open in April.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Thank you. I'm...I'm going to go back to the grants, specifically the Farm to Family grants. Can you guys . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . remind me the number of grants applicants and group...number of who received? Was it...was it less than five, I think, who received that? Can you guys tell me the number?

MS. ARCE: Thank you. I...I believe it was five. Ana or Lauren can...

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: We are...yes.

MS. ARCE: Go ahead.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: We received...we received 15 applications, and we were able to award 5.

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's right. Okay. Again, it seems like there's a big need, and if...and I understand if staffing is correct, then you could probably expand that fund. All right. And that's my time. The time's up. So, second round, Members. We...we have second round. How about we go Councilmember Sinenci?

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. And yeah, I agree. If...if there is any need to invest in our community, this is the Department that we should. I think the discussion when we did create the Department is, how much the State Department of Agriculture invested in our agriculture system, .5 percent of the monies.

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's right.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: I think they failed when their idea was expanding agriculture was to rent out our important ag lands to outside, you know, seed companies. That was the plan back in the day. So, I think you guys are working on establishing the infrastructure

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to build up that program. We was always a...a big agriculture community, but because of the shortfalls, now we're going to...we're having to start all over again, so hence more investment into this Department. You mentioned County Codes, and I know that is it...is it Chapter 18, agriculture?

MS. ARCE: Chapter 19.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Chapter 19. A lot of the codes are still stuck in old plantation era, you know, monocropping.

MS. ARCE: Oh, I'm sorry. I think it's 22.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Are...are --

MS. ARCE: Oh, it is 19.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: -- you looking at --

MS. ARCE: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: -- are you looking at changing some of those Codes? Because those are still stuck in...in the plantation era, and a lot of those Codes are just for monocropping sugar and pineapple. And right now, we see that there's a...we...a need for diversified agriculture where, you know, we don't want big crops that attract all of the invasives. We want to use, you know, composting and...and smaller types of farming. So, are you addressing some of these County Code changes?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question. Right currently now, we're going through Bill 160, and we're working on that. Then we'll go back to our Chapter and go through it one by one. And we've really been working on the section with all the...you know, the A through N, and all the duties that we're supposed to do, and we realize that we've been addressing each of them. So, that might change a little just to be focused on the Maui County needs, but currently we're working on Bill 160.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. And then for the grants, you mentioned that some of the smaller nonprofits that cannot...start-up monies, and then...and then get the reimbursements. Are there any financial institutions out there that are willing to fund small farms or...or invest into the small farming?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: I believe there are pots of money available. I think the...as Ana had pointed out in her priorities, was to educate financial literacy education on our farming community so they know that there are other resources out there, but at the same time, we don't want

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to have our agriculture . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . community re...dependent on our funding, and eventually be weaned off. Ana might be able to add more on...on the side if you request a question in writing.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. And then real quick, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: We see the Federal Government cut drastically the funds to farmers and to other countries. Are you looking for...are there any Federal grants available? I mean, we are looking for those big grants that can really put in the infrastructure, whether it be water infrastructure, CIPs.

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question. We just offered the position that...the grants management position, and it has 30 or 40 percent FTE towards seeking for grant funding and writing to secure for the Department in order to have Federal funding. And we do know that our Department was developed to be self-sustaining, so that will be a start. And that was a difficult thing for us to do, but there are funding out there, we just don't have...we didn't have the staffing capacity.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, one more. I think she wanted...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Go ahead.

MS. ROSSA: Sorry. And also, I just recently was talking with NRCS, and they actually have received, you know, quite a lot of funding, so they are feeling very excited about going forward, and of course, they provide irrigation infrastructure and all that kind of stuff and support to farmers, so they're...they're okay right now.

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's good.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Great.

MS. ARCE: But theirs is cost-share as well, so the farmer would have to come up with 100 percent --

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, see...

MS. ARCE: -- before they get reimbursed.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right.

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VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. Mahalo for that leeway.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Councilmember Batangan, any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. None for me.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. I'm just going to go down the line here. So, Councilmember Paltin, any questions for the Department?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I was wondering...you know, I'm trying to pay attention to what goes on worldwide, and the Strait of Hormuz, they're kind of not using that, and they were saying not only oil, but also, like fertilizer inputs and like that. Are we working on creating those inputs locally, maybe organically without the petroleum bases? Because we've got a lot of manure here that I see from certain areas.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. We do know that Department of Environmental Management, we work closely together. Cecile has been looking into biochar. She's working with some...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Is the Strait of Hormuz affecting our ability to get fertilizer?

MS. ARCE: You know, I don't know about that. I can't answer that. But in terms of...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, more Environmental Management?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, local created.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then...

MS. ARCE: I know they have a handle on that, as well as composting.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: My other...

MS. ARCE: But we'll support the...the farmers, the producers.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: My other question was, Member Johnson, the Chair, said about 61 current and 136 grants, reviewing, like from...back from 2023. Are you evaluating...like, you know, when we gave out the COVID money, plenty of people were getting into farming because everything was shut down. But then it seemed as though some of those that got the microgrants went back to their regular system when COVID kind of slowed down. Are you reviewing with like the '23, '24, '25 grants...like if they're still doing farming, if they're like expanding, if they're doing more, since you still have those to close out?

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question. That's a excellent question. I've had...expressed that to our grants team that I do want to see, from day one when we started, all the grants that we assumed from Office of Economic Development...I want to see where they are and wha...how did the funding im...improve and where they are now...where they were and where they are now. So, our team is working on some system to develop...develop a system to see those metrics.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And if you can like project it in which you pick that this is...like touching this entity is going to pay off in bigger dividends down the year or this is just, like a niche thing where they might want to do farming for one year, and the next year they do something else?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yeah. I believe once we collect that data to see each project, where they...where they were and where they all...are now, then we'll move to...the next step would be, you know, what do we do with this data? How can we utilize our funding to make sure that the ones that are actually helping the County meet their goals in reducing the imported food. I think we'll tailor it towards that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then Representative Case was saying like, you know, SNAP and Medicare...Medicaid cuts. So, I just wanted to commend . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . your Food as Medicine and if we can like link it to those things...Food as Medicine, Medicaid cuts, SNAP cuts, and locally grown...like if we can perpetuate that. Because I don't think those guys care too much about us except for military expansionist ideas over here. So, we got to feed ourselves.

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you. And Lauren is...is connecting those two together. She is, yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Thank you for that line of questioning. We're going to move on to Chair Lee, followed by Councilmember Cook. Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Oh, and by the way, Director Arce, I'm...I'm becoming an expert with feral cats. If you just saw the screen, I had one. And the trouble is, is they're very expensive. Mine just had an \$858 surgery. So, I'm looking for a second job --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- just in case you need grants managers or something. But speaking of grants managers, okay. So, is the issue only that you don't have enough Staff, or is it the system itself that is...is so slow? Because...because being a prior director, I know it...people don't understand. It not only goes through...applications not only go through your Department, but they...they're reviewed twice by Corp. Counsel,

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the Budget Office, the Finance Office, and so forth. Is it that system that's causing the backup?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question, Chair Lee. That is one of the...one of the problems. But also, if you recall, my budget is...in grants, 14.356 million of my total budget of 16.4. Majority of my budget is in grant subsidy. And with two grant managers --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. ARCE: -- it's a bit overwhelming. And also, our Grant Coordinator has to not only coordinate, but she also has to be the financial accountant for all of these. So, we see gaps in our system. We're happy to give out money, but we just need to develop the amount of Staff that can, you know, manage it comprehensively.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So, you...so, you must have a...a healthy Carryover/Savings then?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, I...I believe we have some Carryover/Savings, and part of it is attributed to, you know, the positions which take a long time to develop. Because we are new, we don't have classes that have any relatable tasks. So, we've developed like four new classes, and that does take time. But also, I believe we've done it the fastest and filled it the fastest.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Do you need any more positions?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Beyond what...beyond what the Mayor is proposing?

MS. ARCE: Yes, we do. Especially in grants, we are asking for an Accountant or two, and a...and at least one more Grant Manager. Like I want to be...you know, I don't want to ask for like too much, but...because I don't want to overcommit, but yes, we do need more Staff. Not only there, but I do see a gap in the animal area...you know, aquaculture, bees, livestock. That is an area that we also need to develop.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Good line of questioning. Let's move on to Councilmember Tom Cook, followed by Councilmember U'u-Hodgins.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director. Hopefully, between the State and the County, we can come up with a way to address the feral chickens. I think we'd make a lot of money if we just put like a \$10 bounty on each one.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(laughing)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Then...then...then everybody would be getting them. And the thing...I've discovered this. Don't ask what you do with them after you catch them. Because...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(laughing)* . . .

MS. ARCE: I was trying to...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That's the problem. No, that's...that's the problem. You get into like cruelty to animals, and all this other kind of stuff. And it's like, you know, what about the health for the community, and sanitation in restaurants, and sanitation at stores, and the fact that they are...they go on public property, on a sidewalk, on the road, then they walk on the private property, and then they go across to somebody else's property. It...it seems like our government is being very unrealistic as far as the rights that they're giving chickens. So, I...I...I'm hopeful that we all collectively can work on it and acknowledge the Department of Agriculture. Thank you for all you're doing, young Department growing. And I would just...Director, I really like the fact--I think all three times that I've heard you come--you've said, I don't want to overcommit. And I told you once, you're the first director who's offered money, and you go, no, not this year. And I think that's a...a very big sign of your responsible management, and I just wanted to give you credit for that. Thank you.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well said, Councilmember. Okay. Let's move on to Councilmember U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I agree with Member Cook. Sometimes I have to just tell my kids that animals go to the big farm in the sky, and we move on.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(laughing)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: But other than that, I really don't have any other questions. Thank you so much for scheduling this, Chair. And thank you, Department of Ag, for all the good work you're doing. I really do appreciate your passion and hard work. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Well said. I guess I'm last. So, Director, the Humane Society grant, stuck in your Department, would you say? It doesn't seem to fit your Department.

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It seems departments have been playing hot potato with this. What do you...what do you consider these?

MS. ARCE: Thank you for the question. Like I've said before, if we're...if Management gives it to us, then we're going to manage it.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Does it take up a lot of your time?

MS. ARCE: But it does...well, the Maui Humane Society grants are pretty spelled out, and...you know, there's...it seems to be just award them, you know. But...however, we want to focus on agriculture, you know, livestock animals.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. ARCE: But fortunately, the Maui Humane Society already has like a simple system to award. In the beginning, I think it was a lit...a bit burdensome, but we have a really awesome grant team, and I think we're managing at the moment. But more money we manage, we need more people.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Understandable. You made it very clear to the body, and I think that's important to do that. That's the end of my line of questionings. Any last chance, because I'd like to move on to the next agenda and thank the...the Department. I don't see any hands, so...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I just have one --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh. Councilmember Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- last question about the HARF resources. I think HARF dissolved. Are you guys overseeing their resources? Like I think the County was contributing to their big barn and stuff like that.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Director?

MS. ARCE: Yeah, thank you for the question. I hate to say, what is HARF?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I'm sorry. It was like Hawaii Animal Rescue Foundation, and the main lady that was...like they did the other animals besides just like dogs and cats. I think they did...like did horses.

MS. ARCE: Oh, okay. I think Ana can answer that. I know...I recall Koa talking to me about that, but he oversees the grants team. And Ana, are you still on? Can you...do you have a response on that?

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MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yes, thank you for the question. We have not assumed any responsibility for HAR...HARF. I have heard of them in the past, but yes, we...we...we do not --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Have their resources.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: -- we have not assumed any resources.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. All right.

MS. MEJIA-VASCONCELLOS: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I wonder...I'm not sure what happened to that, because --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- we paid money for a barn or something.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right. Do you want us to have the Committee look into that question for you?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, maybe...if can.

CHAIR JOHNSON: And I see Staff nodding their head. Do you understand the question? Okay. We'll...we'll...we'll follow up.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Members, really appreciate these lines of questioning. And Department, you guys are rock stars. Thanks for doing what you do. Keep...keep up that fire.

MS. ARCE: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: And...let's see. Any objections if I defer this item, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: KB)

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. This item is now deferred, and we'll move on to the next one. Thank you once again. We're going to take a three...a five-minute recess, if you guys...so that

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they can...we can switch out. Just five minutes, Members. Five minutes. The time is 10:26...time is 10:27, we will come back at 10:32 a.m. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 10:27 a.m.

RECONVENE: 10:34 a.m.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .(gavel). . . Aloha, Members. Will the ADEPT Committee of 3/12/2026 come back to order from our short recess as we switch topics.

**ITEM 1(5): OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF WATERSHED
PROTECTION GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY (Rule 7(B))**

CHAIR JOHNSON: And the next fascinating topic is Operational and Budgetary Review of Watershed Protec...Protection Grants Administered by the Department of Water Supply, ADEPT-1(5). I see the Director on the call, so, so happy. Here we go. Members, water is life, and these watershed protection grants help to ensure our water sources are clean, healthy, and sustainable. Again, with the budget session coming soon, I want to hear about the FY '26 operations and budget, and learn about any needs for upcoming '27. Ms. Blumenstein, Mr. de Robles, as well as Director Stufflebean, thank you all for being here today. And if you're ready to present, we're all ears.

MR. STUFFLEBEAN: Yeah, thank...yeah, thank you, Chair. Well said, and I'll turn it right over to Robert, who is our grant...manages the program, and he has the presentation. Thank you.

MR. DE ROBLES: So, let me see. Let me share my screen here, I guess.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Robert, if you don't mind, can you pronounce your last name for me so I...I'm getting it right?

MR. DE ROBLES: Sure. Sure. Robert de Robles.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Got it. Okay. Go me.

MR. DE ROBLES: Give me one second. I'll share the screen. I wasn't sure if you guys were going to put it up.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Chair, this is not the budget, just the . . .(inaudible). . . grants.

MR. DE ROBLES: Well, can everybody see this?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, we can.

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MR. DE ROBLES: Okay. Great. So, good morning, Committee Chair and Committee Members. Thank you for having me here today to provide a quick update for the Fiscal Year 2026 DWS Watershed Protection Grants Program and upcoming Fiscal Year 2027 priorities and opportunities. The purpose of the Watershed Protection Grants Program is, protect forested watersheds, providing ecosystem services for essential groundwater source recharge, to control feral ungulates, like feral pigs and axis deer, to combat invasive nonnative plant species, to protect priority upper watersheds with fencing, to reduce ladder fuels in the Wildland-Urban Interface, or the WUI, and to promote community engagement. So, every year we advertise an RFP, which is...all the proposals that are evaluated by Committee. What we expect are detailed proposals, qualified existing project applicants, and a...a Wildland-Urban Interface strategy, all of which are meant to promote delivering water from forest to faucet. So, we currently have ten grantees, and expect to approve one new applicant in Fiscal Year 2027. Our current grantees are East Maui Watershed Partnership, Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve, Waikamoi Source Protection and Watershed Preserve Management, Honokōwai and Wahikuli Source Protection, East Molokai Watershed Partnership, Mauna Kahalawai Watershed Partnership, Auwahi Forest Restoration Project, Miconia/Invasive Species Containment Project, MISC, and developing wilt-resistant acacia koa for Maui watershed restoration by HARC, and developing disease-resistant 'ōhi'a for Maui watershed protection on Maui by HARC. I'm not sure if you can see this. It's not showing up here. Well, this slide here is currently blank. I don't know why it's not showing.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh.

MR. DE ROBLES: I'm not sure. Can everybody see this map?

CHAIR JOHNSON: It was there for a moment, and then it disappeared. But maybe you can just talk us through. Oh, I thought I saw something.

MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah, sure. Sorry about that.

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's okay.

MR. DE ROBLES: Anyway, it's supposed to be a map here indicating all the locations of our watershed partners. We cover hundreds of thousands of acres. At any given time, we're covering...they're covering about 10 to 15 percent of tho...of those lands, depending on the size. Like East...East...East Maui Watershed Partnership covers over 100,000 acres, and...but at any given time, may cover 12,000. So, as they get smaller, they're able to cover more ground every year. Oh, now it's showing. Okay. This is kind of strange. I'm sorry, my...

CHAIR JOHNSON: If you like...well, now it's showing. If you like, the Staff could present that. Is that correct, Staff? Are you able to pull it up?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, we do have the presentation downloaded on our end, so we could also screenshare as well.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Do you want us to do that?

MR. DE ROBLES: Sure, maybe. This is not functioning.

CHAIR JOHNSON: It could be weather-related. Yeah. Why don't we just...if you close yours out and let these guys set it up --

MR. DE ROBLES: Sure.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- is that okay? You guys can handle that?

MR. DE ROBLES: Absolutely.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Jarret's got it coming up there. Ok, there we go.

MR. DE ROBLES: Okay. So, I guess we could move on to the next slide, since I already mentioned this one. Okay. So, we monitor...we monitor grantee projects over four quarters every fiscal year, and...which includes reviewing reports for consistency...consistency and substantive updates, correlate expenditures, address project issues, ensure that online Amplifund submissions are accurate and time...and timely, check for issues that may prevent tasks from...from being accomplished. And just to go over quickly, the main deliverable...deliverables that we support--ungulate control, fencing, invasive plant control, overreach...vegetation and planting, resource monitoring and research, and community outreach. We have two grantees, HARC and MISC, that only cover certain aspects of the deliverables that's...that's mentioned here. Next. So, without breaking down each award and anticipated funding for FY '27, FY '26 awards total about \$3,511,125. FY '27 proposals grew a bit, to about 4,642,255. These are proposals. And the FY '27 requested amounts, it's...it drops to a total of 3,861,269. Next. The FY '27 requested amounts, you know, as...I should have mentioned this earlier, includes the Kula Community Watershed Alliance, still waiting for the IRS to issue their 501(c)(3) nonprofit documents to qualify for our grant. But communications with them indicates that they should be getting that sometime this year, which we'll make an exception and...and have them as a grantee for FY '27 starting in January 2027. So, all current grantees...I'm sorry, can you go back one? So, all current grantees are preparing right now for the status of FY '26. They're preparing to...well, we're preparing to process arriving first quarter FY '26 first quarter reports and requests for payments at the end of March 2026...so end of this month. We have only three applicants right now from all University of Hawai'i for FY '26 that we haven't issued an NTP for due to a requested amendment to their contract, but this issue has been resolved as of last week. So, we're processing their contracts for execution hopefully in the following week or two. Next. So, here we have a few before and after pictures just to give an idea of the kind of work that's being done in the upper watersheds, before-and-after pictures from Auwahi Forest, Waikamoi, East Molokai, and also Mauna Kahalawai. And so, the hard work, as you can see, is...is evident here. It's hard work. I don't think a lot of people understand just how hard the work is. There's a lot of

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turnover because you're out there every day, rain or shine, trying to do this work, and we appreciate what they're doing. Next. As mentioned earlier, it's hard work in the watersheds and, you know, we continue each year on January 1st to December 31st so that we issue NTP every January to December. And there are some...some...not issues, but everything we analyze every year to determine how they're doing. So, for FY 2026, operational costs are on the rise a little bit, and then also, there's also ongoing Staff turnover that's...it's just persistent because of the nature of the job which requires retraining and operations onboarding. So, a lot of times we get a lot of turnover with our grantees and we have to kind of...not us, but the grantee's staff themselves have to retrain their staff, and it takes a it takes a...it takes a toll sometimes but we're working through that. Grantees are continuing to expand and improve their operations in the wildlife...Wildland-Urban Interface in West Maui and East Maui. PKW, Aloha Pu'u Kukui established the first private endowment amongst our grantees to ensure the project's survival, so we're...we're really happy about that. And Waikamoi-TNC, they don't do work in the WUI, but received outside funding to pilot a biochar, charcoal-like product from invasive trees and plant species to create useful products for carbon sequestration amongst amending soil and post-remediation for community needs. So, hoping that something good comes out of that. And next please. So, priorities and opportunities for FY '27. Based on our experience and discussions we've had with our grantees, we're still encouraging all grantees to standardize data collection methods for consistency. So, technology is on the rise and...and we want to make sure that we're able to collect data and information accurate...accurately for our program analysis and for our...the benefit of our grantees. To continue and encourage grantees to practice acceptable accounting practices. So, a lot of times we have to go back and forth to make sure that everything is submitted properly and documented. Expand and before...expand before-and-after photos for project areas to increase efficacy measurements. So, last couple years we required grantees to submit before-and-after pictures since we can't always be on the ground to see progress. And as you can see from the last few slides with the before-and-after pictures, some of the pictures are really dramatic and...and helps us understand what's going on. As costs rise, we would like to hire a consultant to conduct an efficacy study evaluating the progress and effectiveness of grant projects. Establish a watershed protection grant committee composed of program grantees. We've had preliminary discussions with some grantees now who are willing to develop that committee, and to develop a competitive nationwide internship program with grantees to support watershed initiatives and maintain a steady pipeline of qualified candidates. A lot of times our grantees have openings that can't be filled for a...a year or longer, mainly because there's not enough people to hire on the island. They go out and try to hire locally, but sometimes the qualifications and the pool of candidates is just not there. The Kula Community...Community Watershed Alliance is also preparing their compliance documents that I mentioned earlier for this program to restore and mitigate wildfire risks. So, we're trying to work with them, and we've sent them supporting...a supporting letter so they can get their 501(c)(3), and to encourage grantees to establish endowments like PKW or Pu'u Kukui. Next please. So, here's just a few pictures of some of the community outreach and some of the benefits received by the community through our grants program and watershed partners. Thank you.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much for your presentation. We're going to move on to public testimony for this item. At this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise-your-hand function and you will be called upon to testify. Staff, is there anyone wishing to testify?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, there's no individual signed up to testify, but I see one person approaching the podium.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(5). . .

MR. LAW: Aloha. Jasee Law from Kula Uka, Waiakoa Ahupua'a. Just to be consistent, Mr. Chair, I was going to kind of skip this one, go to the store and get something to eat, but I really just wanted to stand up and support my Department of Water Supply and pono...pono ole (*phonetic*), something like that. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Jasee.

MR. LAW: And I'll save the rest of my time for the Hawaiian peoples.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Staff, do we have any other testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. There's one individual on Teams, it's Johann Lall. And he's unmuted on our end, he just needs to unmute himself and begin his testimony.

CHAIR JOHNSON: I see you, Mr. Lall. Are you ready to testify?

MR. LALL: Yeah. Aloha. Johann Lall. I'm testifying on my own behalf, and I wanted to comment on this super important topic. I myself worked in watershed conservation on O'ahu and I can attest to the issues with like turnover and all of that. So, you know, this is...this is one area where there's really great opportunity to create jobs, especially for like locals who are like straight out of high school, straight out of college, and have a lot of those skills if they studied resource management or anything like that. You know, there's an opportunity to create internships and then all that and have more people stay in Hawai'i to do work rather than go to the mainland and do STEM and all that over there. You know, so if you guys can find any way to provide more funding, that would be like, oh, it's not just win-win, it's like win-win-win-win because water is so important for agriculture, for development. And in my opinion, there's...there's a huge need for even way more housing than is planned, and that's going to require water. So, you know, this...if...if this grows, you know, it's going to help in...in so many different ways. So, that's my...that's my two cents. Mahalo.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Well said, Mr. Lall. Members, do we have any clarifying questions for our testifier? I don't see any hands. So, thank you once again for your testimony. Staff, will you call the next testifier, please?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, that's all the individuals signed up to testify. If anyone in the audience or Teams would like to testify, please come up to the mic and begin your testimony or use the raise-your-hand function on Teams and Staff will unmute you. Here's a brief countdown...three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, seeing there's no one else wishing to testify, are there any objections to me closing public testimony for this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(5) . . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. I don't see any objections. So, Members, I'll now close public testimony for this particular item and jump into our deliberations on operational and budgetary review of watershed protection grants administered by the Department of Water Supply. I propose three minutes per Councilmember for each round of discussion. And Councilmember Sinenci has left the building, so we're going to move on with Committee Member Batangan, followed by Councilmember Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. No questions, just want to mahalo the Department for their hard work and our partners as well.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well said. Councilmember U'u-Hodgins, followed by Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I, too, really don't have any questions. I know the Department works really well with their grantees, so thank you so much for all that you guys do. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Moving down the list, we have Councilmember Cook, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Department, for your presentation and your work. Your...your presentation showed that you're very responsible in your review of the applicants, and I see that, like, UH also is reviewing. Very supportive of the program. I think we need to do more of it. It is work that is...I've...I've walked up there on a tour with MISC and it was...it was a dry day, and it was hard. So, I'm very supportive of funding it, and I'm hoping that we could somehow, somehow get some permanency in the labor. As Mr. Lall was saying, it's an opportunity, but it's a really hard job, so it would have to have some...a bit of a future to it to be able to stick it out. But I don't really have anything to say besides being supportive. Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Councilmember Cook. We're going to move on to Chair Lee, followed by Councilmember Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you for the presentation. I have no questions. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Moving along. Councilmember Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. de Robles, for your presentation. I was wondering if you can go into a little bit more...more detail about the contract amendment that University of Hawai'i is recom...requesting?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, good question.

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you for your question. It's a good question. Well, we have this issue with UH sometimes where they want to change the indemnification. So, we ask them to indemnify the County regarding the hard work because the work...this type of grant is different from other grants. People are, you know, repelling off of helicopters and doing a lot of dangerous work that we want to make sure the County is indemnified. So, the State doesn't always feel like we should...they should be indemnifying us from responsibility.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, trust, I had an issue with them about a unilateral agreement. I know what...I know what you're dealing with.

MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah, so...yeah. So, it happens, but we work through it. And a lot of times it happens. It happens about every two or three years where somebody new comes in UH and doesn't understand the negotiations that we just prev...previously had, and they want to go over it and make it a long process to get signatures. And...but, you know, after that, it's another two or three years until they have turnover. So...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you for that.

MR. DE ROBLES: But we're working through it, and we should be processing it. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then can you tell me what the quarter timelines are, if it's just processing first quarter payments now in March? What...when...what are the quarter delineations?

MR. DE ROBLES: So, that's a really good question. We actually...before the grants...the grants would start, NTPs would start with individual grantees any time of the year, and it created a lot of overlap problems. So, that's why I mentioned January 1st, December 31st. So, basically, every three months, they submit. So, end of...of March, they would submit a request...a report and a request for payment, and then they have about 30 days to reconcile that if they need to. Sometimes they submit early, sometimes they submit late, but they always try to be in communication with us regarding that.

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And then the final payment or final report is not due until 90 days after December 31st. So, we're...we're just starting to close FY '25, for example, right, from last year. So, I hope that answers your question.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, yeah. And then I think my last question is, like do you know the percent of the whole that their budget is? Like certain watersheds get like a million plus, others get less than a million. But do you also track like how much other money they're able to hustle or what percent of their entire budget that the County is providing? And if we're...I mean, I'm stoked on Pu'u Kukui doing their endowment thing, but are we moving all of them towards that? Is that a possibility?

MR. DE ROBLES: Well, the endowments are established between Pu'u Kukui MLP . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . and private investors. So, it really is depending on the location, and if...maybe if landowners feel like they have a benefit for this type of work. We're encouraging it, but it's never been done before. I think Pu'u Kukui is an example. And then with regards to the...the outside funders...there are and we track that. So, in our application process, we ask them to disclose how much funding they're getting outside of our...our funding stream.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you so much. I heard the timer. Great presentation. Love the pictures.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. Okay. Great. Thank you for that line of questioning, Councilmember. So, for my turn, first off, thank you for your presentation, and thank you for the work that you guys do on the mountain. You know, I...I am so energized to work on the Nāulu Cloud Bridge on this upcoming budget, and to see the work that you guys are already doing by helping partners to do that kind of work is great, but we need to do more, of course. Now, having said that, I'm really...you know, the testifier, Johann Lall, worked in conservation, and I, too, worked in conservation, and what his struggle was, was my struggle. They just didn't pay conservation workers the wages that you could make in a hotel, you know, and that's so frustrating for me to get trained, like you say, for the helicopter training, or the training to do fencing, and how to manage...you know...you know, all the training that's involved, and the wages are just so low. People got to understand that that's not the right way to do things. So, is there a possibility to do, like, grants with a stipend, like a housing stipend, or something to help bump the wages up? Something, anything. I'm just trying to hear your guys' feedback on what your feelings are for that.

MR. DE ROBLES: Okay. Thanks for the question. It's a good question, something we've been discussing over the years. So, just to be clear, like you mentioned, it's hard work, so it's not always about the amount of money, but just the difficulty of work, and as they creep and...and...and expand their scope of work, you know, there's more stress on...on...on the worker themselves up in the mountains. So, they can be out there for two or three days --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

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MR. DE ROBLES: -- and then come back, they're completely exhausted. But we have...we have talked about certain aspects Pu'u Kukui and some other grantees have had in the past...workforce housing, or some kind of, you know, place that people could stay temporarily. But, you know, with...since the fires and everything, it's been a little bit harder to --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- to do that. But I also mentioned the internship program to hopefully have some kind of constant stream of applicants. And I do acknowledge that we need to hire locally, it's important to hire locally, but a lot of times, again, they're not able to fill those positions with local --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- participants or, you know, applicants. So, we're trying to expand that, and we're exploring how we could do that, but --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well...

MR. DE ROBLES: -- unfortunately, it's not always money. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: I'll give you an example. My daughter is an intern at Haleakalā, and her wages are so low, she can apply for SNAP. I mean, that's...that's not...I don't think that's the best way for folks, right? But that being said, I...I wanted to ask something about a different topic, the WUI, right? You...in your slideshow, it said you guys are working on WUI in West Maui, and was it Wailuku, or Central...East Maui, East Maui. Thank you. Why not South Maui? For me, in my mind, I look at South Maui, and the WUI is right there. There...there's literally ranchland, the highway, and then the town. I mean, it wasn't mentioned, so maybe...oh, I see Ms. Blumenstein on, so maybe you can clarify on that.

MR. DE ROBLES: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS. BLUMENSTEIN: Yeah, let me just take a stab at it first, and then I'll let you continue, Rob. Yeah, thank you for the question, Chair. We ha...we have encouraged all existing grantees and new applicants to expand their work where possible into the Wildland-Urban Interface, but it also has to have the connection to the water supply and the resources that we tap into, and our customer, because these are 100 percent rate-funded grants. So . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . we are...we have...we're hoping to take on the Kula Community Watershed Alliance, which is really a great example of restoration work in...in the WUI. So, that is Makawao Aquifer, which...you know, it benefits, of course, customers in Makawao, but indirectly, it benefits the watershed and on down...all the way makai, right? So, it just has to have that connection to our customers

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and our system, but we are kind of lenient in the type of restoration work that can benefit the resource or just prevent wildfires.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. BLUMENSTEIN: Yeah, I'll let you finish, Rob. Thanks.

MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah, good point, Eva. And so, right now, the...the WUI is really that urban interface, right, between the wildlife...Wildland-Urban Interface. So, we've never really had a mauka-to-makai connection because these are essential, critical watersheds we're working in, upper watersheds above 3,500 feet and above, but we are looking into the implications of the work there and...and...and below. And so, we're still developing...our grantees are still developing that strategy, the WUI strategy --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- and like what Eva mentioned, the...the...for the Kula Community Watershed Alliance, they're doing work now, and hopefully, we get them on board and...and, you know, have something new like this. We don't have many grantees come up, you know, applicants all the time, so --

CHAIR JOHNSON: I understand.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- we're excited about it.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well, let me follow up on that. You listed a total of FY '27 grant proposals on slide 7. And just to be sure, there's any proposals submitted to the Department that were not included on the list. I'm just trying to ballpark --

MR. DE ROBLES: So...

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- total funding needs for the watershed, just to...that's what...that's...what do you think?

MR. DE ROBLES: Right. No, that includes...the \$250,000 was included in our ask for FY '27. It's just that we're waiting for Kula Community Watershed Alliance to submit their...the proper documentation so they can qualify to...to receive funding.

CHAIR JOHNSON: If there's additional funding in the pot in the budget for forestry, not necessarily in the Department of Water Supply, would the Department be willing to refer applicants to that department and fund so that they can meet their funding gaps? I see you nodding your head, yeah, you guys are working with...find all the pots of money, right? So...with the grantees.

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MR. DE ROBLES: Yeah. Well, the one thing just to keep in mind is, we do talk about these things all the time with our grantees. It's just we want to make sure that their staff is not stretched too thin --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Fair enough.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- regarding the scope of work that they...they...they propose to us. We...again, we try to be realistic, and hopefully, if funding was made more available, they could hire more people...but then again, we get into that conundrum, right, of --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

MR. DE ROBLES: -- how to hire more people and keep Staff. So, it's a vicious cycle.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Well, thank you for that first round of questions. A lot of Members didn't have a first round, so I'll just do a raise hands. Anybody have questions for second round, you can raise your hands. I don't see anybody with their hand raised. So, I...Members, I...I think we...they did a great job presenting, and I want to thank you your...thank for your time, Department. That's...that's a sign of a good presentation. You guys squashed all our questions. So, thank you so much once again for all the work you do. Mahalo. Members --

MR. DE ROBLES: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- if there's no objections, I'll defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: SS)

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. I didn't see any objections. All right.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: No objection.

ITEM 1(3): OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (Rule 7(B))

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, next, we have Environmental review, and they're in the Chamber, so we won't take a recess, if you don't mind. We'll just...we'll go on through for this one, because they're here, and they're ready to rock and roll. All right. The next agenda

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item, as they come down and...and take their seats, is Operational and Budgetary Review of the Environmental Protection and Sustainability Division of the Department of Environmental Management, ADEPT-1(3). Members, this division has the task of guiding, leading, and implementing our County's environmental initiatives, including natural resource protection, sustainability, conservation, and restoration efforts. In response to the climate emergency and recognizing our island's unique and fragile ecosystems, the work this division does is of the utmost importance. Through their green grant and recycling programs, support for this division, in turn, supports our community partners who are putting in the work, boots on the ground, to care for our land, water, and air. We have today Deputy Director Petersen and Ms. Powell. Thank you for joining us today. And if you're ready, please proceed with your presentation.

MR. PETERSEN: Good morning, Chair, Councilmembers. My name is Mike Petersen, Deputy Director, Department of Environmental Management. Next to me, we have Cecile Powell, our EP&S Division Manager. Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the EP&S Division. Today's presentation will summarize our current operating budget, our grant management scope, and goals and priorities for 2027. Our work focuses on protecting the County's natural resources, ensuring compliance with environment...environmental regulations, and advancing sustainability initiatives that support long-term environmental and community reli...resilience. As we move on to the next fiscal year, we remain committed to strengthening our programs, improving operational efficiency, and aligning our initiatives with the County's broader environmental and climate objectives. With this body's continued support, we look forward to discussing our program...our progress and resources needed to effectively carry out this important work. I'll let Cecile Powell present the details on budget, grants, and upcoming goals.

MS. POWELL: Thank you, Deputy. And thank you, Chair. So, we have the Environmental Protection and Sustainability. I did want to mention here that it was part of a Charter amendment back in 2012 aimed to guide and fund environmental initiatives around natural resource protection, sustainability, conservation, and restoration. So, through that, we foster partnerships with government agencies and the community leaders to support innovative programming and community-based initiatives in public education. So, we are committed to building a sustainable community with mālama 'āina as its guiding principle. This slide is showing our FY '26 operating budget status as of, let's see here, the 2nd of March. We do anticipate using all funding by the end of this fiscal year...maybe not every penny, but pretty close. And you can see the...the...the first six index codes at the top are our General Funds, and we have a subtotal there, and then the bottom two index codes are showing our Revolving Funds. Next slide, please. Our Grant Program consists of about 9 million this fiscal year...2.7 million is of competitive grant funding, which is the majority of our grants programming. We have environmental and green grants, green building and resilience housing grants, wetland restoration, renewable energy, recycling, highway beautification, and then we have a series of provisos. You can see descriptions underneath each one. I know I don't need to go into detail. Next slide, please. So, now the following pages, each one has its own...each type of grant funding source has its

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own slide. So, the first one is the environmental and green grants. The total funding is 460,000 for FY '26, and we did receive over 1.8 million in grants applications. And you see a list of the grantees that were selected through the grants review committee. And please note that the grants review committee that selected these grants, these competitive grants, it was the same committee that selected all of the EP&S grants for FY '26. Next slide, please. Green building and resilience housing, our approved funding was \$100,000, and the applications we received was 240,000. Next slide, please. Wetland restoration, the approved funding was 800,000. The total applications we received was 1.5 million. Next slide, please. Renewable energy, we did get approved funding for 100,000, and the applications we received was 276,000...and the list of grantees are there, of course. Next slide. Recycling...so, the approved funding for FY '26 was 1 million. We received just under 5 million in applications, and the grantees are listed here, totaling a little over 1 million. Next slide. Highway beautification, approved funding 300,000, total applications received was 300,000. Highway beautification is funded through Revolving...side note. Next slide. And this is a list of our proviso grantees, totaling 6.4 million. And the status of each one is there in case you have questions. Next slide. So, these are FY '26 grants awarded to Department of Environmental Management. So, we do have a...a State Department of Agriculture grant for 200,000 for CRB mitigation, and that is to develop a compost facility out in Hāna. We received 3.6 million for a West Maui Recycling Center from the Environmental Protection and Sustainability...the EPA. . . .*(laughing)*. . . I'm not saying that right. Environmental Protection Agency. There we go. And we also got a State Department of Health pending \$200,000 award for electronic recycling education and outreach, and another 180,000 award pending from the State Department of Health for a glass disposal fee. Next slide. Our expansions for FY '27. I know that this meeting is not about our expansion request, so this is just a quick summary...and I can't read it. Hold on. Increased participation of our tow and scrap program. We're launching an environmental podcast and speaker series. Continuing to develop a facility at the Central Maui Landfill for our compost and the GreaseZilla system. And continuing to build our EP&S team. We'll brush over the expansion positions in our next BFED. And we're expanding the grant funding to align with the Climate Action Resiliency Plan. The evaluation criteria for our competitive grants is going to include how it aligns with our Climate Action Resiliency Plan and the measurable outcomes that they are proposing for that. Next slide, please. Oh, that's the end. Thank you so much.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Thank you so much for your presentation, Department. Now we're going to open up for public testimony. And first off, Staff, do we have any testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, there's no individual signed up to testify, but I see one individual in the Chamber who would like to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Do you need me to read the script?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

MS. MONIZ: Yes. . . .*(inaudible)*. . . Chair.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Just give me a moment, will you? I'm going to read this script.
Jasee --

MR. LAW: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- I know you know everything, but let me just put this in the record.

MR. LAW: If you've got to read the script, I'm just not going to testify because they already know what I like. So, we save time for the Staff. We'll go to lunch early. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. MONIZ: Never mind.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Moving on. Any other testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: There is one individual signed up to testify on Teams.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Got to read the script. All right. Okay. Testifiers wanting to provide testimony should sign up for the lobby to join online meetings via the Team link or call in the phone number noted on today's agenda. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link to the meeting at maucounty.us/agendas. For those wishing to testify via Teams, please let Staff know by using the raise-your-hand function. Once you have been added to the testifier log, Staff will lower your hand. If calling in, please follow the prompts via phone, 5 to raise your hand and lower your hand, and 6 to mute and unmute. Staff will add names to the testifier list in the order testifiers sign up or raise their hands for those on Teams. Staff will lower your hand once your name is added. Staff will then be...then call the name you're logged in...or under, or the last four digits of your phone number when the *[sic]* time to testify. At that time, the Staff will enable your microphone and video. Please ensure your name appears in Microsoft Teams as the name you prefer or anonymous if you wish to testify anonymously. If you're in person, please notify the Staff if you would like to testify anonymously. Otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of testimony. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item. If you're still testifying beyond that time, you will hear a second timer go off after 30 seconds, and I will kindly ask you to complete your testimony. Once you're done testifying or if you do not wish to testify, you can view the meeting in *[sic]* Akakū Channel 53, Facebook Live, or maucounty.us/agendas. Thank you all for your cooperation. The Chair will maintain decorum at all times. We'll do our best to take each person in an orderly fashion. We'll now call testifiers at the beginning of the meeting. Staff...or at this time call the testifiers.

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MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. The first testifier is on Teams, it's The Royal House of Hawai'i. They're unmuted on our end. They would just need to unmute themselves and begin their testimony.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Royal House, are you ready?

TESTIFIER 1: Aloha. This is...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Aloha.

TESTIFIER 1: Yeah. This is a descendant of The Royal House of Hawai'i, and an allodial land tenant and resident and title holder. And I'm just wondering and testifying if any of the said lands that are being used, if any of the original title holders have been contacted that were the owners from the Mahele. And yeah, for all the said lands, and...because I don't think they've been contacted or anything, because...yeah, they haven't been contacted. And...and as you guys should know, all of Hawai'i is royal patented, allodial titled. It's mentioned in the TMKs, but are being erased from the TMKs for some odd reason online. I don't...I don't know why it shows online, but...yeah, but the...yeah, I don't know. If you ask for a title history, it shows, but why are they showing it not online though? Because you're supposed to be showing it online.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

TESTIFIER 1: But yeah, are any of the...oh, yeah, it's a title from the Kingdom of Hawai'i, yeah, made by Kamehameha III, the original title holder...holders, yeah. And yeah, please contact the descendants and heirs --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

TESTIFIER 1: -- and the descendants of the original title holder. Okay. Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Well, thank you for your testimony. Let me see if I have any clarifying questions for you. I don't see any hands, so thank you once again for your testimony. We do have a second testifier coming down, and go ahead, Jasee Law.

MR. LAW: My apologies, Mr. Chair. I was just trying to save time for everybody. Jasee Law from Kula Uka. And first of all, I wanted to mention the CARP. That word hasn't been thrown around here for a while, so I'm pretty sure that's in your vocabulary, the Climate Action Resiliency Plan. And my...my personal testimony for what I wanted to ask was, I've been trying for a while now to track down...there's a rumor to be a recycle...curbside recycle up there in Kula, in my town, and I've been trying to find that guy and talk with him and maybe get some kind of work with him, even if it's just voluntary. But where do I go? Just walk around Kula and ask, does anybody know the guy, or just stand on the side of the road and look for him? So, if anybody can provide me with the...the contact information, I sure would like to help recycling up in Kula. And if Councilmember Sugimura is watching, maybe she knows.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. LAW: She seems to have everybody's number.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Any clarifying questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Thank you once again for your testimony. Staff, is there any other testifiers today?

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. That's all the individuals signed up to testify. If anyone in the audience or Teams would like to testify, please come up to the mic and begin your testimony. Or use the raise-your-hand function on Teams and Staff will unmute you. I'll provide a brief countdown...three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify. Oh, I do apologize. There is one individual on Teams signed in as M.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. M, if you're ready to testify, the floor is yours.

TESTIFIER 2: Hi. I was just wondering if anybody could provide clarification on funding for Open Space reserves and if that would ever fall under EP&S.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Open Space under EP&S. Okay. Is...is it...is that the end of your testimony? Okay. Any clarifying questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Thank you once again for your testimony. Staff, is there any other testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you, Chair. Nope, that's all the individuals signed up to testify. This is the last call. Please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you'd like to testify. And the countdown is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, seeing there's no one else wishing to testify, are there any objections to closing testimony on this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Seeing none. I will now close public testimony.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(5) . . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Members. Okay. Let's head to deliberation on this item. I propose three minutes per Councilmember from each round of discussion. We were starting on this end, so again, we'll go on this side, starting over. So, start with Councilmember Batangan, followed by Councilmember Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Administration. Can I ask for a little bit more detail on the Recycling Program? What kind of things do you collect?

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How do you collect them? What happens to the things that you collect? And how is the County charged for the recycling of it...of the goods that it processes?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. POWELL: Thank you, Deputy. Thank you, Chair. So, I'll try to keep it short. We have multiple community recycling drop box centers where it's self-haul, and it's what's called source-separated. So, we have one contractor that manages the sites as far as monitoring and hauling, and that's about 700,000, 750,000 a year for that contract. And then we have one processor, a MRF, material rec...recovery facility, that processes them. So, essentially, they bail them, and then they ship them off island. If you click on mauicounty.gov/recycle, there is a "where does my recycling go" button there that will show where our recycling goes and how many tons. I do need to update it, okay. So, it has older information, so we will update that for you. And then what was the other question about it?

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: What are the type of materials that we recycle?

MS. POWELL: Oh, okay. So, we have mixed cardboard, mixed paper, which is new...just a year or two, we started doing that. Number 1 and number 2 plastic bottles, bimetal cans, and glass containers. It's basically...it's reliant on the global commodity market, but we are moving towards on-island recycling and to remanufacture commodities to be used on island, such as glass crushing for fill. And we're looking at a new technology to make pulp out of cardboard that can be used for seeding and insulation. I mean, there's a lot. I could give you a whole hour discussion on this. Do you have any specific questions about it?

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Actually, you answered it. I was going to follow up with what...if you had any plans for on-island recycling of...of the products that you collect. But thank you. And I just want to note that I also understand the challenges of updating our department websites. I feel for you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Great. Okay. Let's move on to Councilmember Paltin, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. My understanding is the tap and...Tow and Scrap Program was halted on emergent...or electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles temporarily because Hammerhead didn't have capacity to continue storing those batteries. Are we looking to expand capacity? Because as we've seen at Ukumehame, when people don't have a place to dispose of those batteries, which are highly combustible, they'll throw them in the bushes on County land. And there's another abandoned vehicle stockpile just before on the Lahaina side of Cut Mountain cropping up. So, is that within your purview of those abandoned vehicles? And are you looking to expand collection of EV batteries?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

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MS. POWELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank you...thank you, Councilmember Paltin. Yes, we are looking to expand. Right now, it's not necessarily capacity concerns, it's safety concerns because they are...they...they can explode. You know, it's...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: My understanding was they had too much at Hammerhead.

MS. POWELL: No. Currently, we utilize the...the Ukumehame cleanup--EV batteries that were cleaned up there--we went ahead with our local contractors and brought all of the back stock of EV batteries to that location, too, so we handled them all at one time. So, the issue is, and where is it going to go? In order to get these on the barge, there's safety concerns with Matson guys. In...in order for them to be permitted, they need to be essentially deactivated in a salt bath, stripped apart and shredded, and then salt-bathed again. And then what's left over is this residual waste that we don't know what to do with. So, frankly, it's a lot of...it's...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are you working at all with E-Opala? They had a --

MS. POWELL: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- contract with Redwood Industries [sic] to take them to Vegas, I believe.

MS. POWELL: Yes, we've been working with everyone to come up with a solution as soon as possible. And as far as the cleanups go, we're still receiving and processing EV vehicles through our cleanup...Abandoned Vehicle Program. It's just not included in the tow and scrap. We're just asking residents to hold their vehicles until we get our ducks in a row, which should be in a few months.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Is there any way to put this cost on the front end of hybrid and electric vehicle importers?

MS. POWELL: Like producer responsibility? Definitely looking into that bill. I was hoping something was going to be introduced this Leg. season, and I haven't seen anything yet.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then I saw money for West Maui redemption. How is that coming along? Because I don't know of any place in West Maui that we can redempt [sic] our five cents.

MS. POWELL: Yes. We've been working with a local family over in the West Maui. There was a delay in procurement, but we are looking to open soon. It was a fiscal sponsor with new terms and conditions with the Grants Program. We're just getting . . .(timer sounds). . . some technicality issues squared away for procurement, and the project is underway.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Do you have an estimated opening date?

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MS. POWELL: We wanted it to be February, but we're looking March/April at this point due to procurement.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I heard the bell. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Great line of questioning. Let's move on to Chair Lee, followed by Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you for the presentation. I have no questions. Thanks.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's move on to Councilmember Cook, followed by Councilmember U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for your presentation. And I take...I take bottle, cans, cardboards to the Kihei site, and I was really amazed that they do 15,000 tons every other week, 30,000 pounds...I mean, an amazing amount. So, that's super successful. And that's going off...is that going off-island to the mainland to be recycled?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. POWELL: Thank you, Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Does the glass...the plastic --

MS. POWELL: Yes, they...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- plastic and aluminum?

MS. POWELL: All the...oh, you're talking about the ADF, the HI-5s, or are you talking about the commodities?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: The HI-5s.

MS. POWELL: The HI-5s do go off-island. They have...that's a State program, and the redemption centers are required to report to the State Department of Health on where they go. I don't know that offhand. I know about our commodities because that's a local program, and that, again, is on our website, mauicounty.gov/recycle. If you click on where my recycling goes, you can see exactly the remanufacturing plant that our recyclables go to.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Thank you. Could you give me an update, kind of an overview on the green waste? Is that...like how many people do we have processing, and how many people do you work with on that?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

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MS. POWELL: Are you talking about...am I close enough to the mic?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: The composting.

MS. POWELL: The composting at Central Maui Landfill or composting island-wide with our partners, community partners?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: The composting island-wide with your community partners.

MS. POWELL: Okay. Great. We have been having a lot of meetings with Hawaiian Compost over on Mā'alaea side. They are producing quite a bit of compost. It's available for sale now. We are looking to submit our solid waste management permit to start composting at the Central Maui Landfill very quickly here. It's just in its final stages, and then, permit pending, we can start composting on site. We have been working with a grantee to start food waste...producing fertilizer from food waste. We've been working with other grantees that are doing mass waste-to-micro production for microorganisms, and I'm in process of developing a compost facility in Hāna with a local family, as well as we're continuing to support West Maui Green Cycle on the West Side. And we have a new grantee for Molokai that we're going to be developing a compost facility over on Molokai as well. It's a mouthful, I know, but if you have more questions, let me know.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Great. Is there...is there any plan for the sewage sludge to be composted? Was that...that used to be done, and now it's not being done. Is that correct?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. POWELL: Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Okay. So, co-composting with biosolids is included on the permit, so it's going to be dependent on the State. I know there have been concerns over PFAS with that. We are prepared to do aerated static pile and continue that operation, but again, that's permit-pending, and we anticipate submitting our permit in the next couple of weeks...our permit application.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Well --

MS. POWELL: Should we --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- great. Thank you for your...

MS. POWELL: -- not get co-composting, then we are looking at more things like fish emulsion, utilizing local fish waste and making a fertilizer out of that to combine.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Well, thank you for your presentation. I don't have any further questions, Chair.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Right on the three-minute mark, Councilmember Cook. Good job. Let's move on to Councilmember U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, DEM, for your presentation. I wanted to talk to you about one of the grants that we have in my area, which is Mālama Hamakua. I'm pretty sure that was Maile testifying earlier. So, we appropriated \$50,000 for their trash cleanup this year. As you know, it's County property with Open Space, and they're tasked with cleaning it, and they do a really good job, but we do...they do need our help. It is our property that they're kind of, at this point in time, more volunteering than anything else. So, I just wanted to check on the status of their grant, and what can we do to ensure that they get their monies before this fiscal year ends?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. POWELL: Thank you. That grant is in pre-procurement. We have a...a team that is putting the grant packet together and working directly with Maile to get that encumbered and get their money out to them as soon as we can, which...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. No, sorry. Go ahead, please.

MS. POWELL: So, we have...this was actually just last month's report that I'm pulling off from, but I do recall signing their grant packet, so it's definitely moved towards draft at this point. So, it has maybe like eight signatures to go. We do have a "rush" stamped on it, so hopefully we'll get it ratified here in the next couple weeks.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. It takes a couple weeks to get eight signatures. They have to still be reviewed?

MS. POWELL: Correct, yes. It...there is a...there is a process. There's a routing process for all grant amendments and initial drafting of grants, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. So, they can expect it in a couple weeks. I will let her know. She was emailing us. She's really trying desperately to clean up that place, and she's doing a really good job, as you folks probably know. Is there anything else we can do to support you folks as you guys work your way through all of the grants that you now have to oversee? I know I saw some expansion positions, but is there anything else we could do on our end?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. PETERSEN: Thank you for the question, Councilmember. I...I believe, you know, continued support with our expansion positions, support in the grant process. And I know there's a heightened awareness on grants in general this year, and I...I think it's all going towards the right direction to get everyone on the same page and to streamline the process. But, you know, we appreciate the support with Staff to manage the

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increased amount of grants that our section or division is having to manage. Cecile, anything to add? . . .(timer sounds). . .

MS. POWELL: Thank you. Just quickly, streamlining is the keyword here. We're...you know, we have a new team, and we have new procedures in place from...from Finance and Corp. Counsel. We're all working as a team to move forward and make sure that FY '27 grant season, we're well geared up for it.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. If I may, can I...I won't need a second round, but if I could ask just one question.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Please.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. How do you propose you folks streamline your grant process? I do know that the grants has been an issue. So, how...how are you guys going to streamline your process? I'm...I'm excited to hear about it.

MS. POWELL: Thank you. So, am I. I'm excited to share. So, it's just identifying how we're standardizing it Countywide and just making things as...as clear and concise as possible from the get-go, from our grants information session. Our grants for FY '27 are going to go live in April for the competitive ones, and we're just going to be really clear about all of the new procedures in place and the direction and what to expect with all of our grantees, including reporting requirements, proof of payment requirements...and encumbrance, pre-procurement requirements so that they can be prepared at the application process so we won't experience hiccups throughout procurement.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Of course. All right. My turn for a round of questions. So, really, we're going to get into the grants here. So, do you anticipate the proposed expansion budget for grants will increase the number of organizations getting funding, or will it keep that number about the same but increase the grant amounts? Can you speak to the division's capacity to manage more grantees?

MS. POWELL: Thank you, Deputy. Thank you, Chair. It's going to do a little bit of both, but like for...for instance, the wetland restoration grants, we had to just give 60 percent to all the...just the repeat applicants for the...to continue the programs that they were doing. So, for instance, that one would just be increasing the grantees. For the sustainability and the environmental and the Green Grants, it's, you know, including all the organics operations because, you know, recycling is moving to Solid Waste next year. So, we're going to keep all the organics programming in EP&S. We need a budget for that. So, it's not necessarily adding extra grantees. It may, because every year we don't know what the grants review committee is going to score and how many grantees are going to be awarded.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

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MS. POWELL: But I anticipate giving more money to around the same amount of folks so that they can be more effective in their programs.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. You had a slide of 100,000 for KIRC. Can you get into the details of what that \$100,000 was for? Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Committee...Commission.

MS. POWELL: Yes. Yes, for...for that one, we are working with them for a feasibility for their irrigation system and to support their ongoing restoration efforts. They're doing replanting in the wetlands area of Kaho'olawe. And I believe that that about covers it. They're doing some soil amendments and plantings and just continuing their efforts with that. The 100,000 doesn't really go too far in the grand scheme of things, really.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Are you open to making it more?

MS. POWELL: Are you open to giving them more? . . .*(laughing)* . . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. You have the capacity, too, is...to do that?

MS. POWELL: Yes. Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. POWELL: As far as the capacity for...for that project, I mean, I wouldn't anticipate the larger figure for the grantees. It takes the same amount of administrative work. A little more administrative work, the higher the price tag is on the...the grants, but for us on the administrative level, we're prepared. And again, we're streamlining everything to make it more easy or...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. It's a very important topic for me, and just for everybody, I would hope, for is to bring back the Nāulu Cloud Bridge. And the work that KIRC is doing over there, I think 100,000 we could do more. So, just letting you guys know. I think it's very important, and it's something that I'm going to advocate for this upcoming budget. Those are my lines of questions, Members. Second round. Second round as the weather is getting really gnarly outside. I don't know if you guys can see that, but any rou...any cha...anybody need a second round question? Do we have any? Councilmember Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I had asked Department of Agriculture about, you know, the fertilizer, like locally-grown inputs because of what is going on with the Strait of Hormuz. Are you guys working on anything that would...I don't know if that is affecting our ability to get fertilizer, but that is like petroleum-based fertilizer. Do you guys have any initiatives to help folks over here get locally-made fertilizers?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

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MS. POWELL: Yes. We ha...we do have a number of grantees that we've worked with over the last couple of years. One is this fiscal year we purchased...we provided funding for a \$250,000 accelerated digester to turn food into fertilize pellets. And we've also went...worked with a grantee, Bio Bamboo out in Mā'alaea side. She's...Charlotte O'Brien actually built 12 bioreactors and has an abundance currently of fertilizer that is available for use. We're of a...also working with Kalima O Maui for a upcycling agricultural waste using a fish pilot. And we...we want to expand on that using fish emulsion as a fertilizer. It recently got tested. I can't wait to see the results.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are they able to distribute it locally --

MS. POWELL: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- and replace the...

MS. POWELL: That's the plan is, we want to develop a distribution plan and how to get it out to the folks who can utilize this.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. And then my other question on the West Maui Green Cycle, my understanding is they didn't receive the funds. They had to lay off people, and then there was a fire on the site. And so, they may not have the site. Do you have an update on that grant?

MS. POWELL: I believe that we just sent the notice to proceed to Gretchen.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, great.

MS. POWELL: I will double check on that, but I'm 95 percent sure. I can update you...you guys. I can send an email out to you folks with an update.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then on --

MS. POWELL: And I'll text Gretchen too.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- the invasive species, how is that going in your coordination with Agriculture? Because I know they have a portion of it and you folks have a portion of it. How is the coordination going?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. POWELL: Thank you. We have a...a working group. We...we collaborate a lot together. So, you know, I think that it just happens organically. We just kind of just do our thing and they do their thing and we work together as a team.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What is the biggest concerns in the invasive species groups right at this moment?

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. POWELL: Right now is...is mitigating coconut rhinoceros beetle. There's been a lot of complaints about coqui frogs, but from environmental perspective, our big concern is, you know, our food source, which coconut rhinoceros beetles will impact that, whereas coqui frogs are a nuisance and they're going to continue to be addressed, but they're not going to impact our food source the way that coconut rhinoceros beetle can.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are you guys working towards quarantine areas at the harbors and port...airports and things like that?

MS. POWELL: I...I believe that the Department of Agriculture is designing a biosecurity plan. So, that's not really our kuleana. We're just providing input and working in collaboration with them, but they're spearheading the biosecurity plan.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I heard the bell.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members. Anybody else for second round? Seeing none. I want to thank the Department first for your hard work and thanks for your presentation. As you can see, we had a lot of good questions and good...good discussion. So, thank you once again for spending time with us today. Members, without objection, can I defer to this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: SS)

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Seeing no objections, this item now is considered deferred. Members, we're going to...I wanted to do...take up Department of Transportation after lunch, but it seems that this weather is kind of maybe...maybe making us push it forward, but we don't know yet. I got to hear from them. So, I'm going to take a ten-minute recess, sort this out, and I hope if they need to come back at lunch, I hope we're able to. Otherwise, it would be after lunch, but I'm trying to sort out their schedule right now. So, just give me ten minutes, Members, and I'll come back on and tell you the plan. Is that...is that okay for you?

MS. MCKINLEY: Pardon me, Chair?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, go ahead.

MS. MCKINLEY: Our...the latest update is that they will be able to be online after a ten-minute break.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

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MS. MCKINLEY: And they...they won't be available later.

CHAIR JOHNSON: See, that's the thing. Members, they're not going to be available after lunch. So, can we just do like a little...a little bit longer for...and jump into your lunch break, and then we'll be done for the day, okay? Sound good? I got quorum?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I...I do have a 12:00 meeting.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. And we'll...you have a 12:00. Anybody else unable to make...make this? Okay. Thank you.

MS. MCKINLEY: I see the Deputy Director online now. If you'd like to maybe take a...a two-minute break, and we can hear from her about timing. Maybe we could...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's just...11:47, we'll ta...we'll come back.

MS. MCKINLEY: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right? 11:47. This meeting is in recess. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 10:47 a.m.

RECONVENE: 10:52 a.m.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Aloha, Members. Welcome back from that short agenda [*sic*] as we sort out what we're...our path forward, and we're going to...we're going to take on our last item on the agenda, which is the budgetary and operational reviews under the ADEPT Committee's jurisdiction plan for today.

**ITEM 1(4): OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (Rule 7(B))**

CHAIR JOHNSON: It is the last one, and it is...I really appreciate you guys for standing...hanging in there with us. We have with us Deputy Director Yogi, Mr. Ya...Nakamoto, and Mr. Haney, and help me with your last names, I beg your pardon. Thank you all for being here today, and if you're ready, we'd love to hear your presentation. If you can turn on your camera and...yep, there's the presentation.

MS. YOGI: Thank you so much for making accommodations for us. I...I really appreciate it.

CHAIR JOHNSON: I understand the weather is unique, so...

MS. YOGI: Thank you. Good afternoon, Committee Chair Johnson and Committee Members. Thank you for having me here today. My name is Diane Yogi, I'm the Deputy Director for Transportation. Also joining me in this meeting is Neil Nakamoto, our

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Program Specialist III, and William Haney, who was hired as our second Program Specialist III last month. I will be reviewing the Department's Fiscal Year 2026 operations budget. Next slide, please. The following is an organizational chart for our Department, listing the programs that I will be covering today. Next slide, please. Our Department's budget is broken down into three funding sources...the General Fund, the Highway Fund, and grant revenue. The General Fund covers our Administration Program, the Human Services Transportation Program, the Air Ambulance Program, Park Maui Program, and the Ferry Program. The Highway Fund covers the Maui Bus Fixed Route, ADA Paratransit, and Commuter Services, as well as matching funds necessary for the County to secure outside grants. The Grant Revenue...the Grant Revenue Fund covers projects for which we are able to secure grant funding. Next slide, please. Also included in this program are Fiscal Year 2026 funds for the Maui Economic Opportunity Bus Replacement Program. The increases in salaries are due to Salary Commission increases, collective bargaining increases, and three additional E/Ps in Fiscal Year '26. Increase in equipment...equipment's budget is for the office furniture for expansion positions. Next slide, please. Our Department currently has 11 E/Ps and 4 vacancies. We are in active recruitment for a Planner V, which became vacant in February, and a Contracts Assistant limited-term appointment, which became vacant in December. We are also in the process of preparing a recruitment for our Grants Coordinator LTA, which became vacant in February. We are also in the final stages of recruitment for an Administrative Assistant I, and are awaiting a qualified applicant...applicant list from DPS for that position. For operations, MEO is in the process of procuring 14...a 14-passenger, 2-wheelchair electric bus to support their transition to an electric fleet. Next slide, please. The General Fund additionally provides for the Human Services Transportation Program operated by Maui Economic Opportunity, which includes services for senior service transportation, senior nutrition, Maui Adult Daycare, and youth transportation. Also including...included is rural shuttles and dialysis. The General Fund also funds Maui County services for...excuse me, Maui County's portion of the air ambulance services. The increase in the Human Services Transportation Program was requested based on actual cost increases related to prevailing wage increases, software licensing fees, vehicle maintenance, and insurance premiums. Next slide, please. Regarding the Human Services Transportation Program, MEO remains dedicated to the ongoing reliability of these essential services, and is actively recruiting for drivers to meet the demand. Long-time drivers have since retired, and the ongoing nationwide shortage of CDL drivers has contributed to the difficulty of filling these vacancies. Regarding the Air Ambulance Program, we continue to partner with the State Department of Health for the Air Ambulance Program. The State's contract for the service is over \$3 million, and the County's sha...share remains unchanged at \$672,215. Next slide, please. The General Fund program also funds the Park Maui Program and the Ferry Program. No changes were requested for Park Maui, and funds were requested for the ferry to move the program forward. Next slide, please. The following is an overview of the Park Maui Program for Fiscal Year 2026. For our Wailuku and...Town...Garage portion, our parking ambassadors launched in Wailuku in August 2025. An ordinance was adopted updating Wailuku paid and permit parking maps, and the 'Iao...Iao Theater parking lot has been restriped, and signage for the program has been installed. We began with

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initial pilot locations at County beaches and parks. We're starting with the Kamaole I, II, and III launch for this...for beach parks...for County beaches and parks. An ordinance has been adopted updating South Maui paid parking zones. An SMA permit has been approved for pay stations and signage, and signage has been installed, and "Coming Soon" banners are also installed at the parks. Next slide, please. For commercial towns, the Office of Recovery requested Park Maui's implementation for the Lahaina Harbor reopening. In Lahaina Phase I reopening, Park Maui initiated three parking lots...500 French Street lot, 116 Prison Street lot, and 750 Luakini lot. We're continuing to work with OOR on the Lahaina reopening. What's next in Fiscal Year 2026? We are working on a marketing campaign for Wailuku Garage and South Maui launch. We will be doing the implementation of pay stations at the South Maui sites, ongoing data collection of parking utilization, and an ordinance for Lahaina Town to establish paid parking and permit parking zones. Although this summary is very brief, it consisted of a lot of work in coordination with other departments to get to this point. Neil will be available after the presentation if you have any questions. Next slide, please. The following is a brief description of what has transpired in the Ferry program so far in Fiscal Year 2026. A contract was awarded to KPFF to assist the County in...in planning and developing documentation for vessel procurement, operations contracts, and environmental requirements. To inform the implementation plan, comprehensive meetings were held with existing ferry operators, including the New York City Ferry, Puerto Rico Ferry, and the Nationwide Public Ferry Coalition, along with other West Coast operators. Maui was also introduced as a new member of the Public Ferry Coalition, which serves as a forum for ferry coordination and advocating for...and advocating for continued Federal funding. An RFP was prepared and posted for the Maui County ferry environmental study, with a bid opening on March...on April 9th. The County anticipates that services for the environmental study may begin as early as May. The Department also began coordinating with FTA Region 9 regarding compliance with environmental requirements, as well as potential Federal funding opportunities. Further meetings were held with DNLR and DOBAR to discuss harbor and vessel limitations, which will impact the vessel procurement process. Draft ferry ordinances were also developed and are being finalized for discussion. Next slide, please. What's next in Fiscal Year 2026 for the Ferry Program? We'll complete the environmental study, vendor selection, and award, which is anticipated to take approximately one year to complete, the HEPA Hawai'i environmental assessment, and the NEPA, the national environmental requirements. Work on finalizing the operations and maintenance RFP is also underway, and the RFP...the RFP to be completed with further planning contingent on a FONSI, Finding of No Significant Impact, for the environmental process. We'll be finalizing new vessel procurement documentation as well. During the first seven-and-a-half months of Fiscal Year '26, our Program Specialist III, Neil Nakamoto, needed to split his time between the Park Maui Program and the Ferry Program. We now have a Program Specialist III dedicated to the Ferry Program, which is Will...Mr. Will Haney. Neil and Will are available after the presentation for any questions. Next slide, please. The Highway Fund supports the Maui Bus Fixed Route, ADA Paratransit, and Commuter Services, as well as the matching funds necessary for the County to secure outside grants. These grants include bus and...bus-related equipment matching funds and Maui MPO matching funds. Also

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included in the Public Transit Program are bus stop maint...bus stop and maintenance funds. Next slide, please. The Administration Operations Program [sic] includes matching funds necessary for the County to secure outside grants. In Fiscal Year 2026, we are on track to encumber all our matching funds for bus purchases, utilizing 80 percent Federal funds...Federal Transit Administration funds, and 20 percent County matching funds. FTA grants awarded to the Department were for hybrid buses for our Maui Bus Fixed Route service, commuter buses for our Maui Bus Commuter Service, and vans for our future microtransit service. The funds also includes the matching funds for the Maui Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Department also purchased its first truck for Staff to work out in the field in lieu of using their personal vehicles. Next slide, please. The following are programs funded by our Highway Funds. We currently have one Transportation Program Coordinator that oversees these programs. He also does the initial ADA paratransit application intake and approval for these pro...for that program. Regarding the public transit programs, our contractors have faced...been faced with a shortage of drivers, mechanics, and support staff, which has been an ongoing issue nationwide. Despite those challenges, they have been diligent in minimizing service disruptions for these programs. Regarding the Maui...the Bus Stop and Maintenance Program, we strive to ensure our bus stop shelters are clean and safe. We have a contract for shelter pressure washing monthly and trash removal three times a week for each sheltered stop. We are currently in the...we are currently working with a contract for the develop...we are also currently working on a contract for the development of the microtransit program...pilot program. Next slide, please. The Grant Revenue Fund...sorry, I apologize. The Grant Revenue Fund rejected a large increase in Fiscal Year '26 due to the inclusion of congressional delegated funds for the Ferry Program that was not chosen to select...chosen to move forward in Fiscal Year 2026. Next slide, please. Grant...grant revenue funds are allotted for the different type of Federal funds expected from the Federal Transit Administration and for the Maui MPO. It includes the FTA discretionary competitive grants, congressional delegated funds, and other transportation grants. Regarding the MPO, there are also four grant revenue fund...funded positions that fall under Transportation. They are the Maui MPO Executive Director and Staff who are administratively tied to our Department. They currently have two vacancies that are...they are working to fill. Next slide, please. The following is a list of our current Fiscal Year 2026 CIP projects. We currently have one CIP Coordinator for the Department. Next slide, please. Regarding our Bus Stop and Shelters Program, Phase VII has been completed. It included six new bus shelters on the South and West Sides, and repairs to six existing bus shelters. Phase VIII construction contract has been awarded, and the project will construct four new bus shelters and repairs to three existing shelters. New shelters for this phase includes Ha'ikū, Hāli'imaile, and Kihei. Phase IX is currently in the planning and design phase, and this phase will include 3 new shelter installations and repair and maintenance to 18 existing shelters. For the Kahului Transit Center project, the project contract has been awarded and the consultant will begin design work for the new PV and battery system for the transit center. Next slide, please. For the Transportation baseyard, the Maui DOT Baseyard Master Plan is currently in progress and is expected to be completed soon. The Vevau Street improvement project has been awarded to a consultant, and design work has begun with curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements. The parking

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benefits districts project will work in conjunction with Park Maui Program's needs. Next slide, please. That concludes our presentation, and we'll be here to answer any questions you may have. Thank you. And I apologize for going so quickly through that.

CHAIR JOHNSON: No...

MS. YOGI: I know time is of the essence for everyone. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Thank you, Deputy Director Yogi, for that presentation. We're going to jump into public testimony right now. So, Staff, I see one person coming down for this testimony, so feel free to come on down. And the floor is yours, Jasee.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(4) . . .

MR. LAW: Hey, Mr. Chair. Long time no see. You don't have to read all that stuff for me. I know...I know the big...big guy over there will come and get me with a hook if I...if I do anything wrong. You know, I ride the Maui Bus every day. I really appreciate all the taxpayers keeping that thing going. And I think about like if the buses ever...ever stopped, then we'd be in big trouble because a lot of...I see a lot of the...the workers that ride the bus. And yeah, a day like today, the Maui buses are going to be as...running as long as they can. And I just...that's what I wanted to say mainly was just thank all the unseen workers there. And we have a...we're...we're really blessed to have a good company, Roberts, from...I think they're from O'ahu that...that do a really good job and they're very courteous to everybody and treat everybody equally.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. LAW: And I...I don't see Councilmember Paltin here, but I'm pretty sure she was going to ask a question about the Strait of Hormuz and the prices of oil going up.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you for your testimony. Staff...or Members, do we have any clarifying questions? I don't see any. So...what's going on with our TV there? I don't see anyone.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The presentation.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, is that the presentation?

MR. PASCUAL: Apologies, Chair. We did stop sharing the presentation. I'm not sure what's going on with the screen --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. PASCUAL: -- on our monitor.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Well, I see everybody in here. I don't see anybody saying they can't see anything. It's maybe a tick on our issue. But do we have any other testifiers?

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, there's no individuals signed up to testify at this time, so I can do a last call.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Please.

MR. PASCUAL: Please come up to the podium or raise your hands on...hand on Teams if you would like to testify. This is final call. The countdown is three...two...one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Members, seeing there's no one else wishing to testify, are there any objections to closing this item for public testimony?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(4) . . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you. I'll now close public testimony for this item and jump into deliberations. And let's enter discussion on this item. I propose three minutes per each round this...three minutes for each round per Councilmember, and we'll just go down the list, starting with our left. We have Council...Vice-Chair Sinenci. Three minutes, do you have any questions, comments...

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: I'll defer, I just got back from --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: -- . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Fair enough. Councilmember Batangan?

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Department, so, what does the delay in your environmental assessment...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Just a minute. I'm sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Am I...

CHAIR JOHNSON: I see folks online saying they can't hear.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Can you guys hear me now? Oh, interesting.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Can you hear?

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COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Because it's echoing loud and clear through the Chamber.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. PASCUAL: Chair, could we take like a one-minute recess?

CHAIR JOHNSON: We're going to take a recess. The time is now 12:12. We'll come back at 12:15. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 12:12 p.m.

RECONVENE: 12:15 p.m.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Aloha. And apologies for the interruption, Members and community members. The ADEPT Committee is now coming back from its short recess. The time is now 12:15. We're dealing with a little bit of weather issues, of course, but we were on Councilmember Batangan's line of questioning. I don't mean to cut you off and...because of the weather, but feel free to continue your line of questions. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Department, what does the delay in conducting the environmental assessment for the Ferry Program mean for the timeline of launch?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. YOGI: I'll let Neil take that. Neil, do you have an time...updated timeline?

MR. NAKAMOTO: Can you hear me or see me? Okay. Great. Yeah. So...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . got that notice and I thought I...I forwarded it . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MR. NAKAMOTO: I hear Chair Lee. Oh.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Chair Lee's mic's open now. She's muted. Go ahead, Mr. Nakamoto. Beg your pardon.

MR. NAKAMOTO: Okay. Great. So, we're not quite sure how long the EA is going to take. So, if it gets issued in May, it could be as short as one year or it could go up to two. So, that's the problem that we have. We can't do anything else until that EA is approved. We know with the HEPA that we have to go and do all of the stuff with SHPD and all that. We're still trying to get clarification from FTA in terms of what we do with the NEPA part. And so, we're trying to do the best that we can right now, but there's a lot

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of unanswered questions. We won't know until this gets started, unfortunately. So, on the long term, it's probably going to be up to two years.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you for that response. Does the Department have any plans to increase the frequency in its fixed route service in the next fiscal year? And does it have any plans to modify the West Maui Express? I note that it was a four...previously four routes that were combined into one post-fire, but it's been some time now. Is there any consideration to breaking that back up?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. YOGI: Thank you for the question. We have been in discussions with the Lahaina community and what the requirements...well, what...what the needs are there as well. The hardest part for us is, we don't have a...a hub on the West Side at this time. So, what we try to do is we take requests from people and if we can provide additional stops in areas within Lahaina, then we will try to accommodate them in that way. But as of right now, we will continue the...we'll have to continue the one route on the West...West Maui Islander. Excuse me, losing my voice.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: And then for the rest of the system, is there any consideration to increasing frequency?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. YOGI: Well, we try to increase...oh, sorry, I apologize. We try to increase frequency when...well, we...it's actually difficult at this time. The . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . if we increase frequency, it's going to require additional funding, additional drivers, additional buses. And right now, our contractors are having difficulty finding drivers. So, that's going to be hard. We are getting new buses from FT...with our FTA funds. So, that might help address that problem. But we do need to find drivers and workers to...to expand the service.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's just go down the line here. And we have Chair Lee up next, followed by Councilmember Cook. Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I have no questions. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair Lee. Councilmember Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha, and thank you for your presentation. I've really enjoyed working with the Department on the Park Maui planning, and I'm looking forward to that unrolling. It seems like the CDL drivers is one of the main choke points to be able to expand service. Is there...how much does CDL drivers get paid --

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- offhand? Are you...are you aware of that?

MS. YOGI: Thank you for that question. I...I believe it varies by contractor or...or employer. I know we were talking about development...developing a workforce development program with, you know, maybe colleges and things of that sort. But the snag we ran into is, you have to be 21 to get a CDL license. So, that...that made that a little bit difficult. But...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So...so, I don't mean to interrupt you, but --

MS. YOGI: No, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- I understand, and part of that question was I want to...I'm acknowledging the challenges the Department has in expanding its services. Because I...one side, I'm asking for expanded routes in South Maui, and more-often routes, and diversifying from the big buses and the little buses. And I've been told part of that is financial, of course, but fundamental, even if you had unlimited money, you can't do that expansion unless you have the CDL drivers. And my understanding, CDL drivers get paid really well, but they have to have a clean record and be reliable and very responsible. So, anyway, all of us can keep our eyes out and cheer for people to get their CDLs so that we can expand our services. So, I don't really have any more questions. I'm just supportive of what you're doing and hoping that we can get the bus stops that are planned built sooner than later.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you.

MS. YOGI: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you for that line of questioning. Let's move on to Councilmember U'u-Hodgins, followed by Councilmember Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. I have no questions right now. I appreciate the Department's time and their flexibility too with us in this storm.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Well said. Vice-Chair Sinenci?

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, Deputy Diane, for that presentation. My first question was, has there been any applicants to fill the MPO positions?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

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MS. YOGI: Thank you for that question. I believe there are applicants, and they are being reviewed by the MPO TIG. So, that's all the information I have regarding that position.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. I don't see Member Paltin, but the Mayor had committed to expanding the Lahaina Bypass northbound. Has there been any movement with our, I guess, lobbyists up in D.C.?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. YOGI: Thank you for that question. I apologize. I believe that would be more a Highways question. I...I...I don't have information regarding that. I apologize.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. But I think the...the Department still has a Federal lobbyist that helps with some of our projects. Okay.

MS. YOGI: Yeah. Well, we have a Federal lobbyist for our transportation programs. Yes.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. All right. Thank you. Chair, that was all. But I did want to extend my mahalo to the continued support of the Air Ambulance Program.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Rural communities like us heavily rely on those. So, again, mahalo for...for the support. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you for that. That's well said. You know, Councilmember Sinenci's from Hāna, I live on Lānaʻi. That air ambulance is so key. Is that enough funds, the 670K? Could you do more with more?

MS. YOGI: Thank you for that question. I...we are in direct communication with Department of Health. Whenever we are preparing our budget, we reach out and ask, hey, do you guys need more funds? And so far, they're say...they're letting us know that we're okay with the same 672,000. So --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. YOGI: -- that's what we keep in our budget.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, I'm going to move on the big topic in my mind. I'm sure you can guess what it is, it's the ferry. First off, you know, there's a lot of work you guys done on it. Thank you so much. You know, I'm glad we partnered up to get some stuff done. But that...Mr. Nakamoto, I'll be honest, that two-year timeline kind of scares me. So, I guess basically for the environmental assessment, my understanding is the status now is you have until next month to apply to...to do...to be the person to do the assessment. So, my question is, is when those applicants come in, don't they have like a timeline that says we can guarantee this work done in "X" amount of months and that application

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says 10 months and this application says 12 months and that applicant can do it in 14 months? Wouldn't you want to consider the one to be the shortest? And, you know, I mean, all things considered, I would ask you to try to crunch that calendar a bit. So, is that how the process works? Can you get into that, Mr. Nakamoto or Deputy Director, whoever likes?

MR. NAKAMOTO: I...I think from our vantage point, whenever it comes to an environmental assessment, you want to plan for the best, but also for the worst. So, in the best case scenario, a FONSI would be delivered maybe be...below 12 months. But on the longer side, it could take up to two years. And honestly, we won't know until we get there, until they start doing, you know, all of their analysis and the research. We're hopeful that it's going to be a very short turnover. But we...we're not the people doing the assessment. So --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right, but you're going to --

MR. NAKAMOTO: -- I can't speak to...

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- contract out someone to do that assessment --

MR. NAKAMOTO: Correct.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- right? So --

MR. NAKAMOTO: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- I would --

MR. NAKAMOTO: Yes, we are.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- hope you had some partners, some folks who have done this before, you guys know some other groups, you work well with these folks or you just know that they're well known in this...in this arena --

MR. NAKAMOTO: Sure.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- to do a really good job.

MR. NAKAMOTO: Yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Quicker...quicker being the thing I'm emphasizing, just letting you know.
...*(laughing)*...

MR. NAKAMOTO: Definitely. We fully concur with your assessment and that's what we're going to try to...to obtain as well. And once the bids are closed by April 9th, and we'll be able to evaluate who's applied. And of course, we'll select the best candidate.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. The Public Ferry Coalition. That's news to me. That's fascinating. I didn't ever know it existed. So, it's a bunch of municipalities that...who meet up and said, this is our communities that are all...we all own public ferries. Is that my understanding? And you guys are...

MR. NAKAMOTO: Yes, you have to be...

CHAIR JOHNSON: And Maui County is not one of them?

MR. NAKAMOTO: Sorry. Yes, we are. We're a member of them. Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: In my notes, I wrote Public Ferry Coalition and I...put me in coach. I want to be there. I want to hear. I want to talk. . . .*(laughing)*. . . I want to learn more about that...that coalition and see what...what they can actually do help us make this ferry system a reality. So . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . if you guys...this looks like the way you guys are rolling out the Ferry Program. Maybe it would be time in the upcoming year for me to have like a Committee meeting on this topic. And you guys can all present the findings and tell us where you're at. Because it's not just me in this body who wants to know about the ferry. It's the Lānaʻi residents. It's the Molokai guys who are stuck going on the airline. It's all the folks in our community, in a multi-island community, that really want to learn more. So, maybe this is something moving forward. We could bring it for a 7(B) if the time is right. Not during budget, though, because it's going to be too crazy. But, you know, at some point when there's actually some...something to really discuss, I'd want to learn more about it.

MR. NAKAMOTO: Okay. We'll definitely follow up and send you an invitation and the link to...to their...PFC.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Please, I would love that. Those were all my questions, Members. And Department, thank you. We'll do a second round by a raise of hands if anybody wants. Okay. I would assume Mr. Batangan would have some more questions. So, the floor is yours.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Okay. So, I heard Deputy Director mentioned that there was some congressional directed spending in a previous fiscal year. Can you go into more detail on that?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. YOGI: Sure. Thank you for that question. We did receive congressional delegated spending for planning and design of our Maui baseyard facility. We also received, in the previous year, congressional delegated spending for four buses from Senator Schatz as well.

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COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Were there any requests in this...in FY '26 and are there any requests in the Administration's package for FY '27?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. YOGI: We actually did put in a request for ferries...ferry vessels. Unfortunately, that did not make the cut because of...I'm imagining it's because of the cost of the ferries. We also did...we are exploring Federal...other Federal funds from the Federal Transit Administration. It will mostly be for ferry vessel construction because in order to get Federal funds for operations, we have to be operating for five years...is what we were told, so...

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you. So, when you say it didn't make the cut, does that mean that the Department made the request to the Administration and the Administration didn't include it in its package to the congressional delegation, or it was included in the request to the congressional delegation and the delegation wasn't able to deliver?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. YOGI: Thank you for that question. It was not included in the packet to the...the delegation. I believe it was because of the amount of funding. They did try to help us by saying maybe we could do partial, but in the long run, it was...it was a very big ask and there was a lot of...I guess, a lot of other projects that were being considered as well.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Understood. Last question. Your presentation said that Park Maui rollout in South Maui is coming soon. Do we have an indication as to when soon may be?

MR. NAKAMOTO: I...I can address that question. It all depends on our vendors and getting the application up to speed as well as the installation of the pay stations. So, fortunately, we got the SMA approved just last week, which is a big win. I would like to say it's...it's...going to...coming soon is April-ish. I'm hoping that it won't delay into May, but that could be a...a possibility. So...yeah. That's all I can say . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . to that.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. For my second and final questions, you know, every time I see our Representative Jill Tokuda, the first thing she says to me is, when is the County going to purchase a ferry so I can put it in my transportation fund...or transportation plan? So, I think there is desire at the congressional...you know, at the Federal level. So, don't be shy to reach out because she always reaches out to me about this very topic. So, I would really recommend you guys speak to her to see what kind of things she would be willing to work with us on. So, just wanted to put that out there because that's great to

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have alignment. It used to be I'd be going to the Federal guys saying, hey, we need money for the ferry. Now, all of a sudden, the Fe...the Federal guys are coming to me and saying, when you...when are you guys going to buy it so we can help you? So, I think there is, you know, a change in...in perspective. So, please look into that if you can. That would be wonderful. That's...that's the end of my time. That's the end of my questions. And I don't see any other hands from...

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Chair?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, we do have...

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Can I follow up on that?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Go ahead. Feel free.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: I would also like to note for the Administration that in my conversations with the congressional delegation, they expressed an eagerness to support the ferry project as well. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. All right.

MS. YOGI: Thank you for that. I appreciate it.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Because I'm going to ask them too, you know. . . .*(laughing)*. . . So, it'd be nice to hear the Department of Transportation ask them. All right. That's the end of our lines of questions. And I really appreciate you guys' presentation. I appreciate the work you do. And thank you so much for joining us on a...on a particular bad weather day. Thank you. Okay.

MS. YOGI: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, Members, if you don't mind, any objections to me deferring this item?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TP)

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Staff, is there any...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: No objections.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Is there anything else we need to do? Are we at the end of the agenda, Staff?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, there's nothing further for the Committee.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members...well, seeing that takes us to the end of the agenda, this meeting is adjourned. The time is now 12:34. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 12:34 p.m.

adept:min:260312:crp:ds

Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 71 of the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not in any way concerned with the cause.

DATED the 21st day of April 2026, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Daniel Schoenbeck