

Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2025-2027) on 2026-04-14 1:00 PM

Meeting Time: 04-14-26 13:00

eComments Report

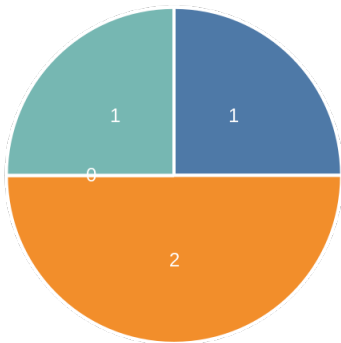
Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2025-2027) on 2026-04-14 1:00 PM	04-14-26 13:00	2	4	1	2	0

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment

Support (25%) Oppose (50%) Neutral (0%)
No Response (25%)



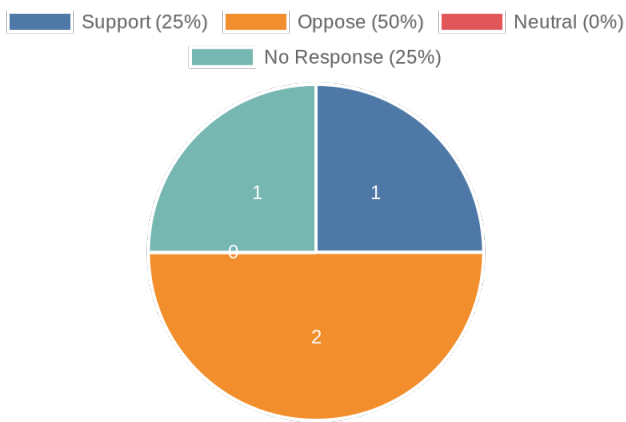
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2025-2027) on 2026-04-14 1:00 PM
04-14-26 13:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
A G E N D A	1	1	0	0
BFED-1 PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BFED-1)	3	0	2	0

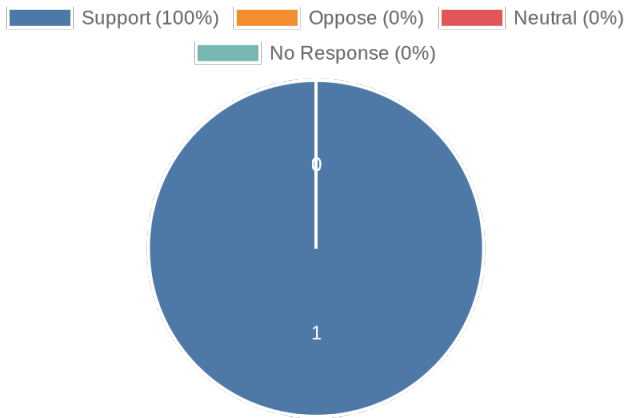
Sentiments for All Agenda Items

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 1:30pm 04-14-26

TESTIMONY REALTING TO MINIMIZING COSTS AND HARM AND POTENTIAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION REFERRAL

To: Maui Police Department — Criminal Investigations Division

Re: Unauthorized Cessation of Effluent Disinfection at Kahului-Wailuku Wastewater Reclamation Facility (WWRF) Possible Violations of State Law, Public Health Endangerment, and Failure to Notify Elected Officials

Date: April 14, 2026

I. SUMMARY OF ALLEGED CONDUCT

This referral concerns the unilateral decision by the Maui County Department of Environmental Management (DEM) director to cease chlorine disinfection of effluent at the Kahului-Wailuku Wastewater Reclamation Facility (WWRF) in or around 2018, without notifying elected members of the Maui County Council, without obtaining required regulatory approvals, and without public notice, resulting in years of pathogen-laden wastewater discharging into nearshore ocean waters used by the public for recreation.

II. RELEVANT FACTS

1. Disinfection ceased in 2018. The Kahului-Wailuku WWRF ceased chlorine disinfection of injection well effluent discharges in 2018. No UV disinfection was installed as a replacement. This decision was made administratively by DEM, not by the elected Maui County Council.

2. No disinfection since 2018. Disinfection of injection well discharges at Kahului-Wailuku WWRF has not been restored. Approximately 95% of the facility's effluent discharges as R-3 (untreated secondary effluent) into nearshore injection wells, with pathogens intact, flowing through groundwater and emerging at the ocean reef.

3. No NPDES permit. The Kahului-Wailuku WWRF does not hold a valid NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge

Elimination System) permit for its injection well discharges to state waters, a requirement established by the U.S. Supreme Court's 2020 ruling in **County of Maui v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund**, which found that effluent traveling via groundwater to navigable waters constitutes a discharge requiring a Clean Water Act permit.

4. Elected officials not informed. The Maui County Council, the elected legislative representative of Kahului, Tasha Kama, with oversight authority over DEM, according to a recent UIPA response, was not notified of the cessation of disinfection in writing, nor was the previous Member Guzman. The Council was not given the opportunity to weigh in, allocate funds, or otherwise exercise its oversight role. It was not until community advocates raised the issue publicly that the Council became aware, ultimately passing Ordinance 5592 in January 2024 to mandate disinfection, years after the fact.

5. Public not notified. No public notice was issued. The communities of Kahului, Wailuku, and surrounding areas that recreate in affected nearshore waters were not informed that disinfection had ceased.

6. Documented public health harm. Research has linked non-disinfected wastewater injection well discharges in Maui to elevated rates of community-associated methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (CA-MRSA) skin infections in children, with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children disproportionately affected.

III. POTENTIALLY APPLICABLE LAWS

State:

- HRS § 342D-4 — Director of Health (and by extension DEM as the regulated operator) has a duty to prevent, control, and abate water pollution. Operating without disinfection and without DOH approval is a violation.
- HRS § 342D-9 — Enforcement provision: any person violating Chapter 342D, its rules, or permit conditions is subject to enforcement action, civil penalties, and potential criminal referral.
- HRS § 342D-50 — Prohibits discharge of wastewater in violation of standards or without a permit or variance issued by the director of health.
- HRS § 342D-57 / HAR § 11-62-10 — Required public participation and notice before material changes to wastewater operations.
- HAR § 11-62-26 — Mandates continuous disinfection as an operational requirement for wastewater treatment works.
- HRS Chapter 91 (Administrative Procedure Act) — Requires public notice and opportunity to be heard before significant regulatory or operational decisions affecting public health.

Federal:

- Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq. — Prohibits discharge of pollutants to navigable waters without an NPDES permit.
- 33 U.S.C. § 1319 — Criminal penalties for knowing violations of the Clean Water Act, including knowing discharge of pollutants without a permit.

Potential criminal statutes to review:

- HRS § 708-820 — Criminal property damage (potential application to public resources/coral reef ecosystem)
- HRS § 707-700 series — Reckless endangerment, if the decision-maker knew or should have known that ceasing disinfection posed a substantial risk of bodily injury to persons using nearshore waters
- HRS § 710-1077 — Official misconduct, if a public officer knowingly failed to perform a duty required by law or exceeded their authority in making the unilateral decision

IV. PERSONS / ENTITIES OF INTEREST

- The Maui County DEM Director(s) serving in 2018 when disinfection was ceased (currently incarcerated)
- Any DEM Deputy Director or Wastewater Reclamation Division chief who authorized or was aware of the cessation
- Any County official who was informed but failed to notify the sitting Council Member for Kahului, or the public

V. RECOMMENDED INVESTIGATIVE STEPS

1. Obtain DEM internal communications (emails, memos, work orders) from 2017–2019 relating to the decision to

cease chlorine disinfection at Kahului WWRF.

2. Identify who specifically made the decision and who else within DEM, the County administration, or the State DOH was informed.
3. Determine whether the State DOH was notified of the cessation of disinfection, and if so, why no enforcement action was taken.
4. Obtain all water quality monitoring data from 2018 to present for Kahului-area nearshore waters (from DOH Clean Water Branch records).
5. Review any NPDES permit applications or correspondence between Maui County DEM and the EPA or DOH Clean Water Branch for the Kahului WWRF injection wells.
6. Interview current and former DEM Wastewater Reclamation Division staff.
7. Cross-reference hospital and public health data on CA-MRSA and other waterborne illness rates in the Kahului/Wailuku area from 2018 onward with Hawaii DOH epidemiology records.
8. Determine whether any Maui County Council member was informed and, if so, when.

VI. NOTE ON JURISDICTION

While regulatory enforcement typically falls to the Hawaii DOH and EPA, criminal violations of state law — including reckless endangerment and official misconduct — fall squarely within MPD's jurisdiction. The absence of an NPDES permit and the failure to comply with implicit mandatory disinfection standards in any NPDES permit properly obtained over a multi-year period, combined with documented public health impacts and the concealment of this decision from elected officials and the public, may rise to the level of criminal conduct warranting a formal investigation.

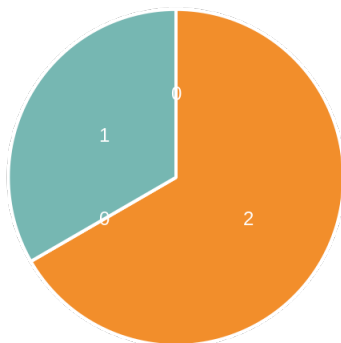
Infections may be at the root of a lot of crime, as symptoms associated with nervous system inflammation sometimes looks exactly like mental illness, and can drive addiction progression. Citizens suffering from this process, then being policed for the related symptoms, is not logically or internally-consistent.

This referral is submitted for investigative consideration. All facts and citations should be independently verified through official records requests, interviews, and forensic review.

Agenda Item: eComments for BFED-1 PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BFED-1)

Overall Sentiment

Support (0%) Oppose (66%) Neutral (0%)
No Response (33%)



BFED Committee

Location:

Submitted At: 4:11pm 04-14-26

Testimonies received from BFED Committee 04-14-2026

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 1:19pm 04-14-26

Pelletier has to go. Giving him additional authority or resources would simply put more taxpayer money into a department that has already demonstrated serious leadership failures. During his tenure there have been multiple officer-involved shootings, the loss of an officer in the line of duty, and the deadliest wildfire in modern American history under the county's watch. Before coming to Maui, he was also a senior official in Las Vegas during the period that included the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history. At some point, leadership has to be judged by results—and the record here raises serious questions about competence and accountability.

Edward Codelia

Location:

Submitted At: 10:00am 04-14-26

Agenda Item: BFED-1 – FY2027 Budget / Bills 55-67

Chair Sugimura and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony as a Maui resident who is trying to understand the direction of the County's financial policy and what it means for people living here day to day.

The budget discussion before you is not small. Maui County is now operating at roughly a ****billion-dollar annual budget****, and the agenda includes ****authorization of approximately \$195.8 million in new general obligation bonds under Bill 57.****

Borrowing at that scale deserves very clear public explanation. Bonds are not free money. They are long-term obligations that residents ultimately repay through property taxes and other county revenues. Before approving nearly \$200 million in additional borrowing, the public should see exactly which infrastructure projects are essential and which projects are discretionary.

At the same time, the Committee is considering ****Bills 66 and 67****, which would dedicate ****at least 20 percent of Maui County's Transient Accommodations Tax to environmental, climate, and sustainability-related funds.****

These proposals represent a major policy decision. Earmarking tourism tax revenue into specific revolving funds removes flexibility from future budgets. Once funds are dedicated by formula, that money cannot easily be redirected to other needs such as infrastructure, staffing, or disaster recovery.

I want to be clear that I am not necessarily opposed to environmental protection or climate planning. Maui's natural resources are one of the reasons people live here and visit here. However, the County must balance those priorities with its basic responsibilities.

Residents currently see several practical problems on the ground:

- infrastructure projects that remain on capital improvement lists for many years without completion
- slow permitting processes that delay housing construction
- drainage and flooding issues that repeat during major storms
- county departments reporting difficulty hiring and retaining engineers and other technical staff

In fact, recent public discussion has highlighted that departments responsible for infrastructure and disaster recovery are struggling with staffing levels while the County budget continues to grow.

That raises an important question for residents: before creating additional dedicated funds and programs, should the County first ensure that its core departments are adequately staffed and capable of delivering the services

residents rely on?

Another concern with earmarked funds is that they often expand over time. Once established, revolving funds can develop their own administrative structure, grant programs, and spending priorities. Without careful oversight, the result can be a growing number of specialized funds layered on top of the general budget.

Maui County has gradually moved in this direction over many years, particularly since the administration of Mayor Alan Arakawa and later Mayor Tavares, with increasing emphasis on environmental programs, sustainability initiatives, and policy-driven funds tied to tourism revenue. Each initiative may have merit individually, but collectively they shape the overall structure of government spending.

Residents are left trying to reconcile two realities:

- County government spending continues to increase.
- At the same time, departments report staffing shortages and difficulty delivering basic infrastructure services.

Those two things should not occur simultaneously without careful examination of how public funds are being allocated.

If the Council moves forward with Bills 66 and 67, I would strongly encourage clear safeguards, including:

- full transparency on how tourism tax funds are spent
- measurable outcomes tied to environmental and climate programs
- regular public reporting so residents can see the results of those investments

Ultimately, residents want the same thing the Council wants: a County government that protects Maui's environment while also delivering reliable infrastructure, responsible budgeting, and efficient public services.

Before expanding new funds or committing significant borrowing, it would be wise to ensure that the County's core operations are functioning effectively and that existing programs are producing measurable results.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.
Edward Codelia, Maui Resident

BFED Committee

From: jenn barker <waiside.botanicals@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2026 5:15 PM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: Testimony for FAM program

You don't often get email from waiside.botanicals@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am currently in cohort 11 of the FAM program and I am learning so much from Maui farmers . This knowledge I would not be able to get any other place as I am low income and running a small homestead on leased land. This program has supported me by connecting with community farmers and teaching me how to grow our soil fertility to produce higher nutrient density foods for my family and our community. This program is such an important part of our county budget and it has helped so many be a value to our community suppling foods for markets and shared.

Mahalo

Jenn Barker

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

BFED Committee

From: Keolamau Tengan <keolamau@kaehu.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 5:54 AM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: Written Testimony in Support of FY27 Budget — KA'EHU | Item f(1)(ii), Page 7
Attachments: 2026.poo.letter.support.kumu (2).pdf

[You don't often get email from keolamau@kaehu.org. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Aloha e Chair,

My name is Keolamau Tengan, Executive Director of KA'EHU. I submit this written testimony on behalf of KA'EHU - and our Board of Directors - in strong support of the Mayor's proposed FY27 budget line item allocating up to \$500,000 to KA'EHU to manage and restore County shoreline property at Tax Map Key (2) 3-3-001: 001, under the Department of Environmental Management's Environmental Protection and Sustainability Fund (Item f(1)(ii), Page 7).

ABOUT KA'EHU

KA'EHU is a Native Hawaiian-led nonprofit organization that has stewarded the 64-acre Ka'ehu Bay coastal wetland in Paukūkalo/Wai'ehu for over a decade. Our work is grounded in the ahupua'a framework — integrating land stewardship, cultural education, community resilience, and environmental restoration as an interconnected, place-based practice. A place for our community to gather, together.

We do this through our huaka'i with the keiki, those who are hungry through our farmers' market, and those in need through our recovery services to the community.

2025 IMPACT: A YEAR OF HISTORIC GROWTH

The following metrics reflect KA'EHU's programmatic reach and impact during Calendar Year 2025 and our FY26 reporting period:

- 5,114+ participants engaged across 104 events — representing a 254.6% increase over the prior two-year average
- 21+ schools supported through field trips and cultural education programming
- Approximately 3,000 native plant species propagated in our on-site nursery
- Nearly 8,000 lbs of marine debris removed from the Ka'ehu Bay shoreline
- 30+ community partners actively engaged through programming and network coordination
- Nearly 2,000 lbs of food distributed through our Mahi'ai Night Market program
- Approximately 2 acres of firebreaks created adjacent to homes neighboring KA'EHU, directly supporting wildfire risk reduction

These numbers reflect not just programmatic growth, but a community that is increasingly relying on KA'EHU as a hub for mālama 'āina, cultural education, disaster resilience, and food security — particularly in the wake of the disasters that struck Maui in the past few years.

KA'EHU BOARD OF DIRECTORS STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

The Board of Directors of KA'EHU unanimously supports the inclusion of this funding in the FY27 operating budget. Our Board affirms that this investment directly advances the mission of our organization and the long-term stewardship of one of Maui's most ecologically and culturally significant coastal wetlands. We are grateful for the continued partnership and confidence of the Maui County Council and the Office of Council Chair Alice L. Lee, whose leadership has been instrumental in establishing this funding relationship this past year.

FY27 PRIORITIES: SHORELINE RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE

The requested FY27 funding will directly support:

- Active management and ecological restoration of County shoreline property at Ka'ehu Bay, including native plant restoration, invasive species removal, and coastal erosion mitigation
- Strengthening infrastructure and capacity of our organization
- Continuation of community programming and cultural education at the site
- Fire mitigation infrastructure improvements to protect neighboring homes and the wetland ecosystem
- Flood resilience enhancements, including drainage and wetland management, in direct response to the March/April 2026 Kona Low flooding events
- Workforce development through our community stewardship programs, creating local jobs rooted in 'āina-based practice

This funding is not duplicative — it directly addresses the County's obligation to manage this shoreline property and ensures that management is led by the community most deeply connected to this place.

CLOSING

KA'EHU has demonstrated year over year that County investment in our work yields exponential community benefit. We are a trusted steward, a proven partner, and a vital anchor for the Paukūkalo/Wai'ehu community and Maui, at large.

We respectfully urge the Council to support this line item as proposed by the Mayor. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information or testimony at any time.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Keolamau

--

Komo mai kau mapuna hoe

"Dip your paddle in." Join in the effort.

Keolamau Tengan

KA`EHU

Director of Organizational Development

(808) 372-0804

keolamau@kaehu.org

April 12, 2026
Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, Maui, Hawai'i 96793

Re: Letter of Support — KA'EHU FY27 County Budget Proviso, \$500,000

Aloha,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of KA'EHU, I write in strong support of the \$500,000 FY27 County budget proviso line item for KA'EHU. We respectfully urge the Maui County Council to approve this critical investment in the health of our 'āina, wai, and our community.

KA'EHU is a Native Hawaiian-led nonprofit stewarding a 64-acre coastal wetland in Paukūkalō/Wai'ehu since 2014 — caretaking a critical point in our watershed and a place of heritage for Maui. For over a decade, KA'EHU has served as a cultural resource for groups, a living classroom for our keiki, a place of healing, and a community anchor, delivering cultural education, native habitat restoration, water quality monitoring, and coastal resilience programming to thousands of Maui residents each year. In 2025 alone, our programs reached over 5,100 participants across 104 events — a 254% growth in community engagement over the previous year's numbers.

The requested \$500,000 proviso will directly support KA'EHU's capacity to sustain and expand its core operations, including coastal restoration, community-based environmental stewardship, wildfire resilience programming, and cultural education for Maui's keiki and 'ohana. This funding is not simply operational support — it is an investment in the long-term ecological and cultural resilience of our island. KA'EHU's work sits at the intersection of land, water, community, and heritage, and contributes to both the social and environmental ecologies of Maui, at large.

Indeed, in the aftermath of the 2023 Lahaina wildfires and the 2026 Kona Low flooding, the need for community-rooted organizations like KA'EHU has never been greater. We have stood with our community through every crisis, and we remain committed to doing so. County support through this proviso will ensure KA'EHU has the stable foundation necessary to continue showing up — not just in moments of emergency, but in the steady, daily work of restoration and renewal.

The Board of Directors of KA'EHU stands united in our commitment to this 'āina and to the people of Maui. We are honored to have the County of Maui as a partner in this work, and we humbly ask for your continued support by approving this proviso.

Mahalo nui loa for your support and for your consideration.
Me ke aloha pumehana,

Hōkūlani Holt

Kumu Hōkūlani Holt
Board Chair
KA'EHU

BFED Committee

From: Dr Beth King <drbdking@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 6:24 AM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: MAPA

You don't often get email from drbdking@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Maui County Financial Board,

Maui Academy of Performing Arts (MAPA) needs your help in completing the Naylor theater! We needs \$250,000 to purchase the chairs and finalize the lighting. This building has greatly enhanced downtown Wailuku but we need your help to complete the theater. Please help our community !

Beth Daigle-King
Teacher of the Deaf
Kihei Resident
Actor

BFED Committee

From: kristina shugars <kristinamaui111@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 3:53 PM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: 2027 Budget Request
Attachments: To Maui County Councilmembers.pdf

You don't often get email from kristinamaui111@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Chairperson Sugimura,
Thank you for your hard work during this fiscal year's budget.
I have attached a letter with my request for support for MAPA and our new Naylor Theatre.
Mahalo
Kristina Shugars

Subject: **Support for Maui Academy of Performing Arts (MAPA) – FY2027 Budget Request**

Dear Honorable Members of the Maui County Council,

I am writing to you today as a Board Member and supporter of the arts to urge your full support for **Maui Academy of Performing Arts (MAPA)** in their request for **\$500,000** in the upcoming County Budget. These funds are specifically designated for the critical equipment and supplies necessary to complete our new theater facility. As Maui continues to recover and rebuild, the completion of this cultural hub is more important than ever for the well-being and vibrancy of our community.

Why This Investment Matters

- **A Home for Maui's Youth:** MAPA serves thousands of children across our island. Completing this theater ensures that our students have a professional-grade space to develop confidence, discipline, and creativity.
- **Economic Vitality for Wailuku:** The new theater is a cornerstone of the Wailuku redevelopment effort. It will draw residents and visitors to the town center, supporting local restaurants and small businesses.
- **Cultural Resiliency:** In times of hardship, the arts provide a necessary space for healing and connection. This facility will be a venue for storytelling and community gathering for generations to come.

The Impact of \$500,000

While we have opened our doors to the community, a theater is only functional with the specialized "tools of the trade." This funding will bridge the final gap for:

- **Professional Lighting and Sound Systems:** Essential for modern productions.
- **Staging and Safety Equipment:** Ensuring a secure environment for performers and audiences.
- **Technical Supplies:** The final components needed to finish the scope of work.

MAPA has shown incredible dedication to Maui for over 50 years. I respectfully request that the Council honors our \$500,000 request to ensure this project crosses the finish line.

Thank you for your hard work in balancing our county's needs and for your commitment to the future of our island's culture.

Sincerely,

Kristina Shugars

(808)281-3268

