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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

April 1, 2025

Ms. Rogerene "Kali" Arce, Director
Department of Agriculture
County of Maui
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Ms. Acre:

SUBJECT: **FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET** (BFED-1) (AG-02)

May I please request you be prepared to answer the following questions at the BFED Committee meeting on **April 7, 2025**.^{*} This will enable the Committee to comprehensively review the FY 2026 Budget.

May I further request that, after approval by the Office of the Mayor, you transmit your answer to bfed.committee@mauicounty.us by the end of the day on **April 7, 2025**. **Date subject to change without notice.*

Overall

1. Relating to the Agriculture Program, Goal #1, item 1: (Page 106, Program Budget)
 - a. The Department's FY 2025 Estimate for the number of grant workshops conducted during the fiscal year is three. Please confirm how many workshops have been held to date. (TK)
 - b. Why is the Department estimating it will conduct only two grant workshops in FY 2026? (TK)
 - c. How does the Department plan to measure the effectiveness of its grant workshops in the future? What metrics will the Department use to assess participant success, including attendees who submit grant applications? (NUH)

2. Relating to the Agriculture Program, Goal #1, item 2:
 - a. The Department is proposing a \$1,000,000 increase in FY 2026 to the total amount of department grants for agricultural producers. How does the Department plan to measure the success of grant awardees? Please explain whether benchmarks or performance metrics will be used to assess the funding’s impact on agricultural production or infrastructure development.
 - b. How will the Department ensure the continued operation of the projects these grants support? (Page 107, Program Budget) (NUH)
3. Why did the Office of Economic Development’s four Feral Animal Control grants not get transferred to the Department? (Pages 558-559, Program Budget) (GJ) (YLS)
 - a. Would managing these grants assist with the Agriculture Program, Goal #1, item 5: “to protect agricultural activities by assisting with agricultural pest, disease, and feral ungulate mitigation.” (Page 107, Program Budget) (GJ)
 - b. If the Department managed these grants, could the scope be expanded to include mitigation for birds and rodents? (GJ)
 - c. Would it be appropriate for these grants to be transferred from OED to the Department given that these funds assist ranchers and farmers? (YLS)
4. Relating to Agriculture Program, Goal #4, item 1:
 - a. The Department plans to survey and map 500 acres of agricultural lands in FY 2026. Please explain how the Department will prioritize the land and whether the community will be involved in identifying key agricultural areas. (Page 109, Program Budget) (NUH)
5. In FY 2025, per the Department’s correspondence dated March 28, 2024 (AG-1), the Department indicated a “Dashboard” as a top priority. The “Dashboard” would be accessible by the public and contain food security data compiled by the Food Access Coordinator. What is the status of the Dashboard? Please clarify whether the

“Maui County Agricultural Resource Directory” found on the Department’s website is the Dashboard. (TP)

6. Relating to the Department of Agriculture’s Strategic Plan for 2024-2028: (Page 1-5, Mayor’s Proposed Budget Details, FY 2025 Budget) (TP)
 - a. Please confirm if the second draft of the Strategic Plan is the final draft. If not, when can we expect the final draft?
 - b. Did the Department work with farmers to develop a standard for organic compost when creating the Strategic Plan?
 - c. In the FY 2024 Budget, \$240,000 was budgeted under Professional Services for the development of a Strategic Plan. Have these funds been fully encumbered?
7. Would the Department support a \$2,000,000 grant to be awarded to grantees to promote the purchasing of local food to bring Maui-grown crops to residents’ tables? If yes, how much funding would the Department recommend be allocated per grantee? (GJ)
8. Has the Department established its administrative rules? If yes, please provide a copy. If no, please state why not. (TP)
9. Please explain why the Department is not seeking any grant funding for its Agriculture Program. (YLS)
10. Please confirm whether the Department received a \$200,000 State Department of Agriculture grant to fund a pilot program that would transform green waste at the Central Maui Landfill into compost with the assistance of coconut rhinoceros beetles. If so, please explain how the pilot project was conducted and its outcomes. (TP)

Salaries and Wages (Category “A”)

1. For the Agriculture Program, Index Code 918223A, have the following positions already been described by the Department of Personnel Services? Or is a reorganization required to maintain pay equity among staff? If already described, will the positions be ready for recruitment by July 1, 2025:
 - a. P-00674, Secretary III;

- b. P-00675, Information and Education Specialist;
 - c. P-00676, Value Chain Coordinator; and
 - d. P-00705, Park Project Coordinator. (Page 1-3, Budget Details) (TP)
2. For P-00674 Secretary III, Agriculture Program, Index Code 918223A:
- a. The Department is requesting additional funding to provide assistance with Boards and Commissions. Which Boards and Commissions does the Department staff?
 - b. Does the Department believe the work of the Boards and Commissions the Department oversees is worth continuing, or should they be combined or dissolved? (Page 1-3, Budget Details) (TP)
3. For P-00604 ISA Certified Arborist, Index Code 918223A: (Page 1-3, Budget Details)
- a. Please provide a status update, including why the Department of Personnel Services did not establish the position in Fiscal Year 2025. (GJ) (TP)

Operations and Equipment (Category “B”)

1. For the Agriculture Program, Contractual Service, Index Code 918223B: (Page 1-6, Budget Details)
- a. Which entities will the outsourced grant writer be applying to? Will the funding sources be county, state, federal, or philanthropic? (TP)
 - b. The outsourced grant writer services are intended for Agriculture Producers. What criteria will be used to select producers for assistance from the grant writer? (TP)
 - c. Please clarify how the requested \$162,600 will be allocated, including how the contractors will be selected. (NUH) (GJ)

- d. How will the Department track and monitor the effectiveness of the grant writing services and the clerical services to support the Arborist? (NUH)
2. For Professional Services, Index Code 918223B:
 - a. Please explain how the \$473,000 was used in FY 2025 and how the same allocation will be used in FY 2026. (Page 1-6, Program Budget) (GJ)
 3. For the Agriculture Operations/Infrastructure/Education, Index Code 923018B:
 - a. Please provide a breakdown of the FY 2025 grant allocations, including which entities applied, for what amounts, and how much was granted.
 - b. How does the Department plan to allocate the funds in FY 2026? Please clarify how the Department will be scoring or prioritizing applications. (Pages 1-8 and 1-9, Budget Details and Page 113, Program Budget) (GJ)
 4. For Agriculture Recovery, Index Code 923024B:
 - a. Please explain the difference between OED’s Feral Animal Control grant and the Department’s Feral Animal Recovery grant. Are applicants eligible to receive funding from both grants? (Page 1-9, Budget Details and Page 113, Program Budget) (GJ)
 5. For the Maui County Farm Bureau, Index Code 923032B:
 - a. Please explain why there are no funds for the Maui County Farm Bureau in FY 2026. (Page 1-9, Budget Details) (YLS)
 6. For the Agricultural Micro Grants Program, Index Code 923033B: (Page 1-9, Budget Details and Page 113, Program Budget)
 - a. In FY 2025, how much grant funding was awarded to: 1) women farmers; and 2) Native Hawaiian farmers? (TK)
 - b. Please provide a program report and status update, including number of participants, use and purpose, grant amounts, and

if funding was denied, the primary reason for denial. For each grantee, please include the number of years they have been in operation and whether repeat funding was received. (GJ) (TP)

- c. What was the total amount of grant funding requested in FY 2025 compared to the amount appropriated? (GJ)
- d. How does the Department monitor the program and ensure compliance of the program’s conditional language:

“The micro grants must be dispersed with efforts to ensure equitable distribution among applicants in Maui, Molokai, and Lāna’i, with preference given to socially disadvantaged farming applicants, such as women and native Hawaiians, and to farmers who did not receive funding in prior fiscal years from the micro grant funding. The micro grants will be exclusively to food-producing farm businesses that operate on less than an aggregate of 12 acres, or up to an aggregate of 40 usable acres for livestock producers within Maui County and possess a County business or State general excise license for the farming or ranching business as of July 1, 2025. Low revenue from sales will not disqualify applicants. Farm business owners and any partners must be Maui County residents for a minimum of one year prior to the date of the applicant's grant request. Applicants will not be disqualified based upon receipt of COVID-related grant funding from supplementary sources.” (YLS)

- e. How does the Department plan to select grantees for the FY 2026 appropriation? (YLS)
7. Please explain why these grants, previously managed by the Department of Human Concerns, are now administered by the Department:
- a. Animal Enforcement Program, Index Code 923037B;
 - b. Maui Humane Society for Animal Sheltering Program, Index Code 923035B;

- c. Maui Humane Society Molokai, Index Code 923036B; and
 - d. Spay Neuter Program, Index Code 923038B. (Pages 1-9 and 1-10, Budget Details) (YLS)
8. For the Maui Humane Society for Animal Sheltering Program, Index Code 923035B: (Page 1-9, Budget Details)
- a. Please clarify whether the funds will be used towards the Maui Humane Society’s Pu‘unene location to reduce the need to fly animals off-island. (SS)
 - b. Will the grant funding be used to hire additional staff at the Maui Humane Society? And if so, what types of positions are needed? (SS)
 - c. In FY 2025, \$150,000 was appropriated for the Hawaii Animal Rescue Foundation. Now that Maui Humane Society has taken over HARF’s work, why was the \$150,000 not reappropriated to the Maui Humane Society for Animal Sheltering Program? (Page 469, Program Budget) (TP)
9. Relating to the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Agriculture Grant Award, formerly CBS-7898, Kula Agricultural Park Phase 1 Expansion – Upcountry Maui Ag Park (FY 2024):
- a. Formerly listed as a CIP project in the FY 2024 Budget, the State of Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture provided a \$10,160,000 grant award. What is the status of the project and grant funds? (YLS)
 - b. As FY 2026 funding was not requested, what is the status of the environmental assessment, water delivery system, lot design, placement, roads, electricity, and location of the fire hydrants that was part of the CIP? (TP)

Budget bill

1. Please confirm whether (4)(iii) Maui Humane Society for Molokai should instead be entitled, “Maui Humane Society for Molokai

Ms. Rogerene "Kali" Arce
April 1, 2025
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Animal Services," as described on page 114 in the Program Budget.
(Page 4)

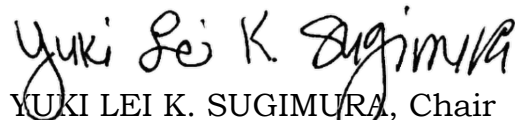
Appendix B-1

1. Are Kula Agricultural Park Lots #30 (Tax Map Key 2-3-002-119) and #31 (Tax Map Key 2-3-002-120) available for lease by the Department? Please describe the lease application process. (Page 2) (TP)

To ensure efficient processing, please duplicate the coding in the subject line above for easy reference.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Should you have any questions, please contact me or the Committee staff (Kirsten Szabo at ext. 7662, James Krueger at ext. 7761, Jarret Pascual at ext. 7141, Clarissa MacDonald at ext. 7135, or Pauline Martins at ext. 8039).

Sincerely,



YUKI LEI K. SUGIMURA, Chair
Budget, Finance, and Economic
Development Committee

bfed:2026bgt:250331aag01:clm

cc: Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr.
Budget Director
Deputy Director of Agriculture

BFED Committee

From: BFED Committee
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 2:37 PM
To: Rogerene Arce
Cc: BFED Committee; 'Michelle Santos'; 'Zeke Kalua'; Lesley Milner;
kristina.cabbat@co.maui.hi.us; tiare.p.horner@co.maui.hi.us; Janina Agapay;
koa.hewahewa@mauicounty.us; Kahea Ueshiro
Subject: FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET (BFED-1) (AG-2); reply by 4/7/25
Attachments: (AG-02) Correspondence to Agriculture 04-01-2025.pdf