

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

April 13, 2026

Mitchell Pau'ole Community Center

CONVENE: 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair
Councilmember Kauanoë Batangan, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U'u-Hodgins, Member

EXCUSED: Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member

STAFF: Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst
Criselda Paranada, Committee Secretary

OTHERS: Va'a Tafuga
Clayton Ching
Kawika Gonzalez
Mark Scott
Pualani Akaka
Emma Velasco
Gwendolyn Arce
Eugene Santiago
Barbara Bostwick
Gregory O'Shea
Jennifer Pupuhi
John Arthur Kikukawa
Catherine Aki
Patty McCartney
LuAnn Lankford-Faborito
Yvonne Everheart
Ku'ulei Arce
Milton Cortez
Tolani Kuoha
Amber Nakihei
Courtney DiMaggio
Pihanalani Kalilikane-Kamaunu
Hulunani Kaopio-Camvel
Matt Yamashita

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Nani Kahinu
Lori Buchanan
Gandharva Mahina Hou Ross
Zhantell Lindo

Others (20+)

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good evening, everybody. Welcome very much for attending our residency area meeting. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura, I'm the Chair of this Committee, and the Councilmembers who are here are here to listen to what you may want to share with us. This is very important, and we are going to every single residency area. This meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Sunshine Law. The Members who are here, this is an in-person meeting only, so we have no members to be able to testify online, and it's whatever...whoever's here is to listen to you. I want Member Rawlins-Fernandez, who is your Councilmember, to introduce our fellow Councilmembers, Staff. Proceed.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha mai kākou, Molokai. Mahalo for being here today. We'll start from my left, all the way to the east of Molokai and Maui, we have from Maui Hikina, Councilmember Shane Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: From the north and mauka of that, Pā'ia-Ha'ikū-and Makawao, we have Councilmember Nohelani U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Hi, guys.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: From Upcountry, our Budget Chair, Yuki Lei Sugimura.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Center of us and of Maui, Councilmember Kauanoe Batangan of Kahului. And all the way to my right, we have Lāna'i Councilmember Gabe Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Our three Councilmembers who were unable to make it, Alice Lee, Tom Cook, and Tamara Paltin, all send their aloha. We have with us our Office of Council Service Staff, Ellen McKinley and Criselda Paranada. Anyone wishing to sign up to testify can go there. In the back, we have my...from my Staff,

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Hina Hanapi-Hirata. And she also has our budget highlights for Molokai, if anyone is interested. Our...forever in...on my team, Zhantell Lindo.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Forever, it was a forever commitment. From Councilmember Sinenci's Office, Uncle Don Atay. The ever awesome District Supervisor for Parks and Rec, Darin Kimoto. Mahalo for setting up for us and streaming live on *Akakū*, Dan Emhof. Mahalo for being with us, Dan. And back to you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Well done. I will say, I think, Daniel, you entered the film contest. You entered a film contest, did you, recently?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, not recently . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, well, thanks for the ones you have done. So, I was calling him the famous Daniel. Thank you, everybody, for being here.

ITEM 1: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY
OF MAUI (BILL 55 (2026), BILL 56 (2026), BILL 57 (2026), BILL 58 (2026),
BILL 59 (2026), BILL 60 (2026), BILL 61 (2026), BILL 62 (2026), BILL 63 (2026),
BILL 64 (2026), BILL 66 (2026), BILL 67 (2026), and RESOLUTION 26-63)

CHAIR SUGIMURA: As a...you will have three minutes to testify, and if you're not done, we'll give you another 30 seconds to complete. When you come to the podium, please identify yourself by name, organization that you're representing. And please share with us what you may think that we need to do or tell us what a great job the County is doing. Whatever you want to share, we appreciate it. And before I continue on with the testimony, I just wanted to recognize someone you may not get to meet often who's visiting, is Maggie Batangan, with the pink shirt in the back there. So, Maggie is the Executive Director for MEO, and I know a lot of you receive MEO services. So, I just wanted to recognize her. Thank you very much. So, we'll now proceed with oral testimony. First testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the first testifier is Va'a, to be followed by Clayton Ching.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: She's so precious. Oh. Oh, we don't have a mic that we can take to him. Darin, do you have a mic that you can...oh, they do? Oh, okay.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. TAFUGA: How's it going?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi.

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MR. TAFUGA: Thank you for the opportunity so I can say a few words about the good people over at MEO. Make a long story short, I originally arrived here in Molokai back in 2019 from Los Angeles. I was at a nursing home recovering from a back procedure, and I ended up coming here to Molokai with my little sister to live with her and her family up in Maunaloa to do therapy. But that was shut down due to the pandemic, and COVID segregated everything and everybody. So, my little sister pulled me to the side and told me, so much for that plan, bro. And she also told me that I could still stay with them until I got better, then she got a way to find a place of my own. So, right after that conversation, I went to work on myself, did my own therapy, and finally got my own place here in Pumehana. And the first thing I wanted to establish at my new place was transportation. That was very important for me. So, please, to whom it may concern, continue to fund MEO. Why? Because they are a constant professionals from the supervisors to the staff, all the way down to the drivers. And it's convenient for myself and for people like myself. We count on them and depend on MEO to get us from point A to point B, and we appreciate them. Before I go, I would like to say, like the great James Brown would say, please, please, please, can you fund MEO? Thank you for listening. Thank you for coming out. And I love you, and may the good Lord be upon us all. God bless this beautiful Island of Molokai, a place of healing. And for whatever reason what it's worth, it's heaven on earth. Remember, be kind and love one another. In Jesus' mighty name, amen.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, amen. Anybody have questions for him? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Clayton Ching, to be followed by Kawika Gonzalez.

MR. CHING: Aloha, everyone.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MR. CHING: Everybody knows me, right? . . . *(laughing)* . . . I think more people know me than I know them. We have so many new faces on Molokai, it's kind of scary. It's like, what? They live here? Oh, yeah, five years already. Oh, three years. Okay. Never mind that. I've been here on Molokai for 54 years April 1st. It's not an April Fool's joke. I came April 1st, 1972. So, what I've noticed in the whole time that I've been here is what's so, so important to our island is the kūpuna. I'm serious. The kūpunas are the ones who know everything. They got all the best recipes. You know what I mean? They know how to make poke. You know, that kind of stuff. And anytime I hear funding possibly not being there for our kūpuna, I was like, huh? I don't think that's...that's wise. You know, we have to take care of our elders. In...in every nation, tribe, whatever, the elders are always the most important people of the tribe. Amen? You guys understand where I'm coming from. Come on, yeah, Molokai. We're all kūpunas. You don't have to be 60 to be one kūpuna, you know. You get some young 50-year-old kūpunas, too. But anyway, I just wanted to speak in behalf of the Kūpuna Program. We started pickleball, you know, stuff like that. Getting people activated and moving. And when I first went to the first class, all we had was about 23 grandmas. Never had any grandpas. Only

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grandmas came. So, I'm just sharing that I'm behind anything kūpuna-related. I didn't want to take up any more time than that. But anything kūpuna-related, I'm...I want to back it up. And I want to thank all of you because you know where I'm coming from when I'm, you know, explaining about the kūpuna. So, that's what, two minutes, right? Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions? So, before you sit down, what program are you talking about? Do you have a program that you're advocating for?

MR. CHING: Ku'ulei.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. When...Ku'ulei will testify. All right. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Kawika Gonzalez, to be followed by Mark Scott.

MS. MAURA: Hi, I'm Maura (*phonetic*).

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi.

MR. JUDAH: I'm Judah (*phonetic*).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi, Judah.

MR. QUINCY: And I'm Quincy (*phonetic*).

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi, Quincy.

MR. GONZALEZ: Aloha, Councilmembers. My name is Kawika Gonzalez. I'm a fifth grade teacher at Kaunakakai Elementary School with my fifth grade students where I've been teaching for the past 25 years. I'm here today to...we are here today to express our continued and strong support for the Maui Economic Development Board, also known as MEDB, and their STEMworks program. For more than two decades, I've taught science, technology, engineering, math, and computer science. Throughout those years, MEDB has...has been one of our most important partners in creating meaningful, relevant STEM opportunities for our students. Their support goes far beyond funding. They open doors to real-world experiences, mentorship, and inspiration that truly shape the future of our keiki. In fact, tomorrow, we are going...me and my students, we're going to attend the...the Hawai'i STEM Conference on O'ahu, and...that they put on every year. This is an incredible opportunity where they will learn directly from industry leaders and be exposed to the latest innovations in STEM and technology. For many of our students from Molokai, this kind of experience is lifechanging. It allows them to see possibilities beyond our island while building confidence in their own potential. MEDB has also been a key supporter of our 'ulu maika project where we intentionally connect Hawaiian culture with computer science and digital storytelling. Through this work, our students are learning that technology is not separate from culture. That it can be a powerful tool to preserve, share, and innovate with...within it. And I'm proud to share

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that this year, my student's film, *Ulu Maika*, that we created, was selected for the Hawai'i International Film Festival. In fact...

AUDIENCE: . . .(applause). . .

MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you. In fact, this weekend, it will be shown on O'ahu at the Kahala Theater during the Hawai'i International Film Festival, 'Ōpio Fest. This is a direct result of the opportunities, mentorship, and resources made possible through the partnerships like MEDB. Additionally, MEDB continues to support our STEMworks after-school programs where students engage in art, STEM, and robotics. In short, MEDB is not just supporting programs, they're supporting dreams, pathways, and futures for our students here on Molokai and across Maui County. Thank you, Councilmembers, for your continued support of the Maui Economic Development Board. And I respectfully ask that you continue funding of MEDB and STEMworks as their impact on our students is profound and lasting. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo, Mr. Gonzalez, for your testimony. I was hoping that each of your students would be able to tell us their favorite part about the STEMworks program or the conference.

MS. MAURA: I think my...I would think that my favorite part of the STEMworks conference would be to presentate [sic] our idea so that people would get to understand it more clearly.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good.

MR. QUINCY: I think mines would...would be talking about how we can help bullying more. Not bullying more. Prevent bullying.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, very good.

MR. GONZALEZ: So, these students are actually going to present on their...their Presidential AI challenge that they participated in this past school year where they won the State championship in the entire State representing...yeah, for the Presidential AI challenge. They're going to be presenting that at this conference.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. Impressive.

MR. JUDAH: So, I like that we're sharing...like, so if our project gets like sent out to the world, bullying, like, won't be possible in schools anymore.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo to your students.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And since Member Paltin isn't here, I'll do the plug for her that the County has many engineering and STEM-related jobs for your future.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Chair, I have a question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay. Member U'u-Hodgins has a question.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you so much. If we're unable to attend the film fest, how else can we watch the *Ulu Maika* movie from...that they created?

MR. GONZALEZ: Yeah, I...I think you can just go on the HIFF website --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. GONZALEZ: -- and they...they have listings of where it's going to be shown on the different islands and the dates and the times.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. GONZALEZ: And we're also trying to get it over here on Molokai --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. GONZALEZ: -- where the...the students can also participate in Q&A. And Matt Yamashita, he helped guide my students directing the film and he...he took...he spent his after-school hours helping my students with this project, so...

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. GONZALEZ: Yeah, thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, students.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's awesome. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for all you do. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Mark Scott, to be followed by Pualani Akaka.

MR. SCOTT: Aloha, everybody.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MR. SCOTT: Aloha. My name is Mark Scott and my wife Paula Mondoy and I run John's Farm in Kalae. It's her family property. She was born and raised on that property. The average age of a farmer at John's Micro Farm in Kalae is 71. The average age of a farmer in Hawai'i is 68. So, we're a little older. Our farm is also a teaching farm. We've had people visit us from literally every corner of the...of the world to learn about sustainable farming, for us to teach them and for us to learn from them. But that's not why I'm here tonight. It's not to talk about farming. My wife, who's ill tonight, sent me this piece of paper. She had some notes she wanted to give me and the very first one I found quite shocking. She says, as it stands, the Molokai Rural Health Program, Kūpuna Care, is not funded for 2027-2028. The Kūpuna Care Program is not funded. This is one of the...I think, one of the most important programs on the island. As a senior myself, I find on the island more and more things being taken away. Not your fault necessarily at all, but we lose a restaurant. We lose two airlines. We constantly lose things. The Kūpuna Care Program is very important to us, to me. And I know you asked earlier, what do you...what do you participate in? The Kūpuna Program brings podiatrists to the island. There's no podiatrist on this island. They bring one. I'm very grateful for that. Men, there's no barber on this island. The man who cuts my hair happens to be the same guy who trims my hedges. That's me. That's why it looks like this. It's small things that really are important. And not having the program...I'm just shocked. But let's look at some numbers because you guys are numbers people. I know that. Absolutely. So, the Kūpuna Program has 750 active customers. Active. They have 980 registered, but active customers, that's a lot of people. If you look at the population of Molokai, around 7,500 people, depending on who you ask, the program is serving 10 percent. And tonight, I'm just asking to put it back in the budget at \$600,000. So, on your overall budget, that would be .0375 percent of your budget, a teeny, tiny amount of budget for the program that serves so many people in so many important ways. Now, I may not have the number dead on, but I understand over 80 percent of our kūpuna live alone. This is a huge program for them. Not just for this gentleman back here, but for all of us, to be able to come together, to be able to share, to be able to help each other. Do the math. It's a small, small ask. My wife Paula and I are asking for that to be put back in the budget. And I'd like to thank you for your time tonight. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Pualani Akaka, to be followed by Emma Velasco.

MS. AKAKA: Aloha ahiahi.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MS. AKAKA: My name is Pualani Akaka. I'm a kūpuna resident of Moloka'i. I live in Kalae. I was born in Kahului in 1948. I lived on the bay, and I have very, very fond memories. And I...I love Moloka'i. I love my community. I am...I am testifying tonight to commend

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to you the Kūpuna Services Program that the Molokai Rural Health Community Association is administering. And I am asking respectfully, please, please restore the \$600,000 in the 2027 budget. I am a grateful recipient of the kūpuna services. During this year, I received lomi services due to my diagnosis of severe arthritis and scoliosis. I receive fresh produce and yard service, and I so, so appreciate it. The care and support are given with skill and kindness and dignity. I want to thank you all. Thank you all for supporting this program in the past. And Ku'ulei and the team are skilled. They're respectful and tenacious in ensuring that our program is carried out as intended. They call us, they know us by name, and implement what they know is most needed, and they administer it fairly. These services really allow me to be the best citizen for Moloka'i that I can be. I can do more for Moloka'i because I get the help that I need on the things that I can no longer do by myself. I am truly grateful and hope this unique care is able to continue for the kūpuna of Moloka'i. Please, please restore the 600,000 that is much needed and has been taken from vulnerable people. And...and the costs, we don't need to go there. You already know what we're facing. So, I really appreciate you all, and thank you for your time and listening.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Emma Velasco, to be followed by Gwendolyn Arce.

MS. VELASCO: Good afternoon, everyone.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good afternoon.

MS. VELASCO: My name is Emma Velasco. I live at Home Pumehana with my husband, who is a disabled Vietnam vet. I look back at 2025, and I have to say after the incident, TGIF, thank God it was Friday, because that month of May, he and I were pretty busy with appointments and all, and we failed to pick up our food box at Home Pumehana. He was already at the Kūpuna Care getting his hair cut last year, but now there is a small minimal charge that we give, which is understandable. So, anyhow, at that time that he was there getting his haircut, I had the opportunity to stop in and pick up something that Sust'ainable Molokai provides, and that was a bag of...of fruits and vegetables. As I say, we were so busy we failed to pick up our food box at Home Pumehana. So, there I was with the dolly, which serves multiple purposes for those that may not have a car or have that choosing. So, I just am here in support of enhancing the Kūpuna Care that Ku'ulei and her very helpful staff operate. So, thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Gwendolyn Arce, to be followed by Eugene Santiago.

MS. G. ARCE: Aloha, Councilmembers.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MS. G. ARCE: My name is Gwen...Gwendolyn Arce, and I am here on behalf of the Moloka'i Rural Health Community Association, better known as the Kūpuna Program. To continue, I...I ask for your continued funding for the year 2027-'28. And as an outreach worker for the program, I have the opportunity to see our kūpuna come to receive such services as haircuts, podiatry appointments with Dr. Pitt, foot care, and lomi lomi. The foot care is actually diabetic foot care. These are just a few to mention. By coming to these services, it has been beneficial to the health and wellness of our kūpuna, as well as mental health. But in my opinion, the greatest thing of all is the socialization. They have been isolated during the COVID-19 time, and they are slowly coming back out to...to attend the services that we offer in our program. And I am very grateful to see them there, because they get to socialize and talk story with those that they haven't seen in a long time, along with meeting new people. And I really hope that you will continue to fund the 2027-'28 budget for the Kūpuna Program. Mahalo nui.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? None. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Eugene Santiago, to be followed by Barbara Bostwick.

MR. SANTIAGO: Aloha, Council. Mahalo for being here on Molokai to hear our concerns and our requests. My name is Eugene Santiago, resident of Kualapu'u, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Kūpuna Program and request the approval of the \$600,000 budget that they requested to continue their operation and their staffing. As a recipient of their program, I'm very thankful for the services that they provide. But beyond the services they provide, I'm very thankful and appreciative of their staff, who are professional in what they do, very proficient at booking their appointments, making their services available, organizing their calendars, and making sure that those who participate in their programs are completely satisfied. And I am. . . .*(laughing)*. . . That's why I want to continue the program. In particular, I have had numerous massage appointments that has helped me to maintain my quality of life as a kupuna. You know, at my age, it's kind of hard to massage myself, so I need help. . . .*(laughing)*. . . And this is just one of the many services that the Kūpuna Program offers to help seniors enjoy their golden years with quality and dignity. And in light of difficult times and high cost of living here on Molokai, with many seniors either on a fixed budget or receiving meager Social Security benefits, trying to maintain a quality lifestyle on one's own can be rather challenging. Nevertheless, no one senior should be denied the opportunity to live their last remaining years as best as they can. I cannot think of a better way to honor our seniors to live out their remaining years of their lives with quality and dignity but to allow these programs to continue. So, mahalo, mahalo, mahalo for all that you guys do. Mahalo for the previous support that you folks have provided to us over the years. And it'll be real nice to see these programs continue. So, again, mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier.

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MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Barbara Bostwick, to be followed by Gregory O'Shea.

MS. BOSTWICK: Aloha ahiahi. And I really appreciate all of you coming today. It's kind of tricky getting here, as you know, one flight in on Mokulele. My name is Barbara Bostwick, and my husband's family have been tenants of their land in Kamalō for over 120 years. So, they've been around a bit. I'm a 1960 tsunami survivor. I've survived COVID. I've survived Mount St. Helens, two hurricanes, and the recent Kona Low. And that was really something there. So, as I stand here before you, I wanted to address three things about the budget that's coming up here. First, I want to say in the agriculture part, I commend you for budgeting the feral animal control for Moloka'i, but I think you need to give it a little more to help our cat and dog population. They've been doing a tremendous job, and it cost a minimum of about \$100 per pet. One weekend, when I was taking some feral cats in, they did 150 pets, or cats and dogs, eventually being pets one day. And the other thing on that agriculture budget, the Maui Humane Society for Moloka'i, \$372,000. Yes. If you can increase that, give them a little more, because over the years, they've really improved their services with the help of volunteers and with the help of Maui County funding. But recently, they've been impacted by the storm with the flooding. And so, surgery for the animals have been postponed until they can fix that. So, that's coming up. And then thank you again for funding the ferry program. Whoo. \$2 million for a study. I'm wondering if you can elaborate later and tell us how that money's going to be spent and how long will it take for the ferry to come. Hopefully faster than the rail, you know. So, the main part of my testimony, and I'm going to summarize it because I submitted a written testimony to Ku'ulei, and that's for the Moloka'i Rural Health Community Association. And as you review the Maui County annual budget, I noticed that they were not funded. Was this an oversight? MRHCA Program is a lifeline to our small community in Moloka'i. My husband, Charlie and I, have both benefited from their services over the past years, and it has made a wonderful difference in our lives. Some of the earlier events and activities . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . oh, is that my call? Is it three minutes?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 30 seconds.

MS. BOSTWICK: Oh, okay. I'm going to just summarize that it's been wonderful, and I've really enjoyed all the medical services, the education workshops, and the best part here is we have a beautiful lei of aloha that connects us because our Molokai Rural Health Community Association, thanks to you and your hardworking staff, Ku'ulei, has connected us to our community. We are blessed to have their professional care. Mahalo nui for being here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Member Batangan has a question for you, Barbara.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: E kala mai, Aunty.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, he has...he has information . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

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VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: No, I don't. So, you asked for an increase in the feral animal control in the Humane Society --

MS. BOSTWICK: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- line items. Is there a specific target that you had for those two programs?

MS. BOSTWICK: When you say target, can you elaborate?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Are you requesting a specific dollar amount?

MS. BOSTWICK: You know, I don't feel I'm qualified --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Just --

MS. BOSTWICK: -- to give that --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- it should be more --

MS. BOSTWICK: -- amount --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- than what's in the Mayor's budget.

MS. BOSTWICK: But it really should be.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. BOSTWICK: I'm...I'm glad they're listed, that you've given it, but they need a bit more --

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay.

MS. BOSTWICK: -- because they've really improved the services over the years for us.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you very much.

MS. BOSTWICK: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I have a question. Sorry.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Just a second.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Barbara, we have one more.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Sorry, you keep trying to run away.
...*(laughing)*... So, the feral animal --

MS. BOSTWICK: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- when you say they, is...is it that you think that the feral animal control funding for Molokai is Maui Humane Society? I just wanted to clarify that.

MS. BOSTWICK: Well, you know --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Because that's...

MS. BOSTWICK: -- in the past when Maui County Humane Society was given funds, Moloka'i was not really given funding, but they have shared that recently. I know that was specifically told to us as customers or clients of the Humane Society in the past, but I've noticed they have received some, but they could sure use a lot more.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that clarification.

MS. BOSTWICK: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: The feral animal funding is a competitive pot, and then the Maui Humane Society is its own line item, so that's why it's separated like that.

MS. BOSTWICK: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then you asked about why the Rural Health Association didn't get the funding.

MS. BOSTWICK: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: They missed the deadline when submitting the budget. That's why it didn't get....make it into the budget.

MS. BOSTWICK: I see.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It wasn't taken out. It was...

MS. BOSTWICK: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: That's why. Mahalo.

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MS. BOSTWICK: Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Gregory O'Shea, to be followed by Jennifer Pupuhi.

MR. O'SHEA: Thanks for coming to see us. Gregory O'Shea. I'm here testifying on behalf of my wife, Kiki (*phonetic*). She had to go to the mainland for some family stuff. I'm babysitting also. She's been working for the past year with a group of people and a traveling veterinary surgeon, and they've put together a nonprofit organization to...and have some strategies on how to fund availability of veterinary services mobile across the island. I've got a three-page grant summary proposal. It's pretty tight. She's a longtime program manager in tech on the mainland, so...she scares me sometimes, too. But I'll hit the highlights. The...the key goals and kind of differentiate between some of the other services that are provided by different organizations. This would be we're looking to get some mobile veterinary infrastructure, which would mean a capital investment to get a fully equipped mobile unit, which would be capable of providing surgical, diagnostic, and preventative services directly to the community. It's just three of these. Infrastructure and service support, so subsidization of travel. Equipment duplication. For the last year, they've been...Palmer Naki and Uncle Robin (*phonetic*) going over to...Kahana (*phonetic*) in a boat, loading things up, trying to keep them from getting saltwater, bringing them back. These are x-ray machines, things like that. And they're going back and forth to...to Hāna. So, hopefully we could duplicate equipment and save some of that cost and travel. And then the third thing would be, and probably one of the things that I think is most important about this, is a subsidized veterinary care program. It's a needs-based financial assistance for qualifying households who would otherwise not be able to afford these services. A lot of people put off the treatments that their animals need, and it ends up causing more problems and more stress and more financial obligations to the...to the people and to the community. So, that's the highlights, and I'll leave this with Ku'ulei. Is there any questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. Can we...did you email that to us, your wife's testimony?

MR. O'SHEA: I can, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

MR. O'SHEA: If I didn't, I will.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then, I'm sorry, what was the name?

MS. LINDO: Yeah, what is the name of the...

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MR. O'SHEA: CARE. Oh, sorry, that was probably the most important part, yeah. Compassionate Animal Resources Everywhere, CARE.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. They're helping me take notes.

MR. O'SHEA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. And...and what is your baby's name?

MR. O'SHEA: That's Hoku. Yeah. Three pounds.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, he looks happy.

MR. O'SHEA: He's a little hot. Yeah, he's trying to get out.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Jennifer Pupuhi, to be followed by John Arthur Kikukawa.

MS. PUPUHI: Aloha kākou. My name is Jennifer Pupuhi. We are residents of Halawa Valley and part-time in Kawela. I'm a parent of a keiki who has benefited...many keiki, actually, who have benefited from the MEO Head Start Program. I want to start by saying how much we really, really, really appreciate it. We don't have schools in Halawa. There is nowhere for my child to go in Halawa. The closest school is Kilohana School. Unfortunately, 16 kids was their...16 or 18 kids was their max this year. They didn't have any room to place other keiki. That means there was 20 kids on East End of Moloka'i who did not have a space to go to. Providing the extra funding for MEO has increased the hours that MEO is able to provide schooling for our keiki. It has also been able to make sure that they have enough teaching staff to accommodate all the keiki who cannot find a place on East End to go to school. Our two children who have benefited from the program in the past, I saw that MEO takes their time with early childhood development, early intervention. Our youngest is dual language. He speaks 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and he speaks English. We had seen a definite difference in him and we thought it could have been potentially a speech impediment. And MEO has done their best in the short time. He did not...we weren't enrolled from the beginning of the school year. He ended up getting accepted halfway through the year. Just in the short amount of time, they've been able to analyze his speech development. They've been able to intervene. They've been able to take the time, especially given those longer hours. They can analyze my child and help him, you know, benefit the most from the program. We appreciate the County continuing to fund the MEO Head Start, especially providing that

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extra funding to extend the hours that our keiki are in school. This gives the kumus more time that we talked about to analyze our keiki for early...early childhood development and intervention where it's needed. This has also freed up time for my husband and myself to return to work. So, we appreciate the continued funding for MEO. And please, if there's room to give them more...I don't know if there's room to give more for an MEO on East End. We have a lot of kids over there coming up. So, if they have any extra funding to provide for MEO, that would be amazing. We appreciate your time. You guys have a great day.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Member...Member Sinenci has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Jennifer, for your testimony this evening. I was just curious, how...at what age does Head Start go to?

MS. PUPUHI: Head Start...so our kahu (*phonetic*) is going to turn five in June. So, he will be being prepared to go to kindergarten this next year. I believe it's up until five years old.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Five.

MS. PUPUHI: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And then they would go to Kilohana?

MS. PUPUHI: Then he's going to go to Kilohana after that.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MS. PUPUHI: Yeah. So, I believe it's...three? Three to five.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Three to five.

MS. PUPUHI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

MS. PUPUHI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MS. PUPUHI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is John Arthur Kikukawa, to be followed by Catherine Aki.

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MR. KIKUKAWA: I think they called my name. I got Costco hearing aids. They don't work all that great. I'm John Arthur Kikukawa, born on Moloka'i. Went away to high school because my parents were cackolic (*phonetic*). So, I went to the better one. I never go Damien. I attended universities up in the mainland, and I came back before I was 30 to take over my father's business. And if you know the character of...of Moloka'i people, my friends in Honolulu that graduated from and made a lot of money, way more money than I did, laughed at us when I told them I still changed my oil on my truck. And the Kūpuna Program, first of all, these people working there, I come in any time, they're all working. When there's an opening for services, they call you up as soon as possible. So, when I started off that we do our own stuff, I...I have a big property with mangoes and haole koa to cut. And I still do my own stuff. I just retired at 75 last month. Started off in the pineapple fields at 15. And so, I'm enjoying my first month of retirement. And it's not cracked up as it's supposed to be. It's not that good. I was working in the...the SPED Program. I'm...I worked with men that won suits against the State of Hawai'i to take care of them. And a lot of these guys had life. So, I retired from that a bunch of time, a while ago. But because I was quite familiar through Special Olympics or whatever with the population and understand the situation, I...I...I specialize in autism. I was a...I was a SPED bus driver up to a month ago. And so, with the idea that we do our own stuff, at 75, the other day I went...I took a fly across...across...into the rocks because I was dragging my mango tree branch because it broke. And I used to be able to get a massage, which is not...it's therapeutical because I am hurting, maybe once a month or twice a month. Now, once or twice a year. I have...in my household, I have myself and my wife, who's a little bit younger than me. She's approaching 70. And I was disturbed that last year, I think it was, or during COVID time . . .(*timer sounds*). . . they...my 98-year-old mother-in-law that lives with us couldn't get service by them because they didn't have enough money. Now they are getting zero from you guys. And the character, the efficiency...I used to run my own businesses, of...of a nonprofit, and I've seen bad nonprofits and good nonprofits. They're excellent. They don't waste our tax dollars. Thank you for spending some time and flying out on a small plane. I hope it doesn't rain --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Yes.

MR. KIKUKAWA: -- too much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. KIKUKAWA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? None. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Catherine Aki, to be followed by Patty McCartney.

MS. AKI: Aloha.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MS. AKI: Thank you so much for being here tonight and, yes, riding the small plane. Hello to everybody. So, I'm writing to you--actually, I'm talking to you, I have my written stuff here, too--for your continued support of MEO, most specifically the Rental Assistance Program. This has been very important to me as a landlord as well as my tenant. He fell behind on his rent when he lost his job and before he found a new one. It allowed him to remain my tenant while recovering his finances as a single parent. As a senior citizen, it helped supplement my fixed income. So, again, thank you for supporting MEO on Molokai. Okay. Having said some nice things, I want to complain.

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

MS. AKI: All right. As a concerned citizen and community member, I believe it is important to ensure that our County budget reflects the needs and priorities of all residents, but more specifically, the kūpuna. I was disturbed when the current budget...year's budget cut back on the Kūpuna Program under the Molokai Rural Health Community Association. The Kūpuna Program is run by caring professionals. Apparently the program is supposed to move towards being self-sustaining. So, things like yard service has been cut. Imagine this. I'm 74 years old with all this rain. I'm pushing a lawnmower to try to get it under control. My 85-year-old neighbor, he's going with the weed whacker because we don't have the yard service and you folks are going to cut the program next year. Okay? Fixed-income seniors can't really afford to pay for yard service...or at least I can't. For years and years, I have depended on the Kūpuna Program for that. I've depended on them for the lomi lomis. It's a great benefit because old age hurts. Okay? I've used the podiatrist, Dr. Pitt, mostly to keep my ingrown toenails under control because of diabetes, and then he provides that diabetes foot care. So, although my toenails may seem trivial, it allows me to avoid the possibility of surgery. Another service that's been invaluable is housekeeping. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 30 seconds.

MS. AKI: All right. So, I think...I don't understand why the kūpuna would be the ones to experience this budget cutback. And another note, the electric car charging station at Cooke Pool has been repaired after being broken for about five or six months, and at this current time and moment, my car is plugged in and charging. So, I thank you, the County, for supporting this alternative energy in light of the Middle East oil crisis. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Patty McCartney, to be followed by LuAnn Kahiki [sic] Lankford-Faborito.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, someone's phone is here.

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MS. MCCARTNEY: Someone's phone?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Is that Cathy?

MS. MCCARTNEY: Aloha.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Aloha.

MS. MCCARTNEY: Welcome. Thank you so much for coming. My name is Patty McCartney. I'm here to say thank you for taking time for coming and letting us speak to you. I'm a Molokai resident, and recently I found out I was also eligible for the Kūpuna Program, and that makes me really happy. Plenty of testifiers have told you about the different programs. Some of the programs that I've been able to participate in is the lauhala weaving, the lā'au lapa'au, also Social Security and Medicare. They brought in professionals and made those things available to us. I'm just so appreciated [sic] of the Molokai Community Health...Rural Health Association and the Kūpuna Program. They collaborate with other agencies on Molokai. They provide services that the other agencies who are Federally funded do not provide. So, whatever the reason is that they didn't show up on the budget this year, I'd like to ask you to reconsider and put them back on, because 800-plus of us who are, have been, and have recently identified themselves as kūpuna are very, very appreciative. If they could all be here tonight, I'm sure they would, but I'm here to be a voice to say mahalo for what you do, and mahalo for the Kūpuna Program for what they do for us. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is LuAnn Kahiki [sic] Lankford-Faborito.

MS. LANKFORD-FABORITO: Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MS. LANKFORD-FABORITO: Aloha. LuAnn Mahiki Lankford-Faborito. Aloha mai kākou. Mahalo nui and thank you for the support of the Molokai Rural Health Community Association. My husband is a recipient, and thank you to Ku'ulei and her staff. Aka, the other half is, on behalf of the Ho'olehua Homesteaders Association, we would like to thank the Maui County OED for allowing us to be awarded two grants. And on behalf of the Ho'olehua Homesteaders Association, we thank you for supporting our Molokai Paniolo Heritage in 2025 and our 2026 Prince Kūhiō. Mahalo nui kākou. Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, thank you. Thank you very much. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Yvonne Everheart, to be followed by Ku'ulei Arce.

MS. EVERHEART: My name is Yvonne Everheart, and I'm very grateful that you're here to listen to us. I'm...I'm here to express my strong support for the Kūpuna Program on

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Molokai, and I request that you would re-fund the upcoming budget. As an 80-year-old widow and a program participant, I've personally experienced wonderful blessings from this program. The Kūpuna Program provided invaluable resources during my husband's illness, including specialized classes that would guide on how to prepare food for cancer patients, and they also gave us estate planning opportunities with an attorney, and they gave us an opportunity to build a binder with important documents that were needed later on. Since his passing in February of 2025, the program has continued to be a vital support and encouragement for me personally. The social engagement, the gracious staff, and the various services have been invaluable. I've been grateful to receive lomi lomi, and haircuts, and medical appointments with Dr. Pitt, and have...they've been instrumental in...in reducing stress and to just fostering that sense of community. And...and just when I see the staff, I just always feel loved. Furthermore, the educational offerings of the computer class have increased my confidence in navigating the new technology. You know, it's every time I go into an app, it seems like it's changed. . . .(laughing). . . So, it's been really helpful. Also, the painting classes have provided meaningful creative and social outlet as I've integrated back into more social activities. So, I encourage you to re-fund the Kūpuna Program and make the services available to the seniors of Molokai, and I thank you for considering this. It's...as you've heard, it's been a very valuable program for many of us. So, mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier, please.

MS. K. ARCE: Hello, Councilmembers. Thank you --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi.

MS. K. ARCE: -- for making the trip. My name is Ku'ulei Arce. I am the Program Coordinator for the Molokai Rural Health Community Association, better known as the Kūpuna Program. So, five years ago, we started this program with one goal, to make sure our kūpuna are seen, supported, and not left behind. Today, we serve over 700 active kūpuna, with nearly 1,000 registered across Molokai, starting at the age of 65. What we provide goes beyond services. Yes, we offer transportation, haircuts, lomi lomi, diabetic foot care, classes like hula, crafts, and computer skills, but what we truly provide is connection, access, and care. Recently, we began monthly wellness calls. These are not quick calls...how you doing, check the box, okay? These are phone calls that we take time to talk story, to really listen to the kūpuna, to reach out to them. Through these conversations, we uncover real needs. Loneliness, confusion about medical care, or challenges at home that would otherwise go unnoticed. And I wanted to add to that that I don't have on my paper. We found one uncle who has cancer by doing these calls, and we thought that he would need the extra care, but on the other hand, it's the aunty who takes care of him and does everything for him...she's the one that needs the extra care. So, with these calls, this is the kind of stuff that we come back with. Okay. So, from there, we connect our kūpuna to resources, whether that's medical providers, Social Security, Medicare, or other services. If we don't offer it, we'll find someone who does. We help guide them through systems that can feel very overwhelming. We also started a cocoa-and-cracker talk story. So, kūpuna come

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together to learn simple things like how to prepare for a doctor's visit. As soon as you walk in, the doctor asks how you're doing, and if you say you're fine, you're done. So, what we teach them is you go in with a small piece of paper with three things on there that you want to get talked about, you want to get covered before you leave. So, those are the little things that we teach them. I mean, yeah, that's real basic, but when you're a kūpuna, you just get in, oh, I'm fine, and then you're done, right? So, more importantly, they connect, they laugh, they feel the sense of belonging. Activities like bingo and group gatherings may seem small, but they are critical to mental wellness. We even help them prepare their book of life, and that's where we talked about preparing all of their important papers. So, like the floods that they had...we had, the...the first thing I hope they grabbed was their book of life, because that's where everything is. You can replace other things, but that you cannot. So, without this program, the loss would be great. For many of our kūpuna, this is their only consistent support system, their connection to services, to community, and to someone who truly listens. We are not a medical program. We are a wellness program. We fill the gaps that often go unseen, and on Molokai, no one else is doing this in the same consistent, . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . relationship-based way. I almost pau.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 30 seconds.

MS. K. ARCE: I ask you to please consider the lives behind the numbers, because without this program, it's not just services that disappear, it's connection, dignity, and the feeling of being cared for. And our kūpuna deserve to be seen, to be heard, and to know they are not alone. And I wanted to add to that. Keani, you mentioned that we did not meet the deadline. I have stuff here that we can go through later, and this is the reason why we never meet the deadline. So, I'm just here to ask that you, if you can, put us back on the budget. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Put us in the budget rather, not back. We...we wasn't there to begin with. But I'm asking for my kūpunas that we get back...we get reinstated again. Mahalo for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Ku'ulei. We have...Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Arce, for your testimony this evening, and for rallying the troops --

MS. K. ARCE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- to explain the...the need of this program. And that this would be one of my priority items, Members, so that when we take it up in decisions week, that you understand --

MS. K. ARCE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- the significance of this program, and I hope to get your support. Mahalo.

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MS. K. ARCE: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Nice. Thank you. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Ku'ulei. Yes, I'm...I'm supportive as well. You mentioned the aunty that was caregiving for uncle. Do you guys support...do you guys provide like a respite for...for aunty?

MS. K. ARCE: Okay. So, aunty still works --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh.

MS. K. ARCE: -- at her...at her young age of 85 --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow.

MS. K. ARCE: -- I think. She's still working. But when she's home, she takes care of uncle. Uncle doesn't even know what kind of cancer he has. He just...aunty just takes him to wherever he needs to go, does whatever he needs to get done, and that's just the bottom of it. He doesn't even know. He told us that, oh, no, I don't know what kind of cancer I get, but aunty know, so you can talk to her. So, what we find out is, she's the one that needs the extra care.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

MS. K. ARCE: You know, she's already taking care of him, so she's the one that needs the care. So, we reach out to her.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah. And...and most of the times we're seeing that our caregivers, they need a break. So, if get --

MS. K. ARCE: Respite. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- other family members that can help out, that's always helpful.

MS. K. ARCE: And we're working on that, too.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

MS. K. ARCE: We're working on that.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

MS. K. ARCE: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Beautiful. No other questions. Thank you. Thank you very much, Keani, for your announcement. Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Milton Cortez, to be followed by 'Iolani Kuoha.

MR. CORTEZ: Aloha. Good evening. My name is Milton Cortez. I'm the current CEO for Molokai Community Health Center, and I've been a resident of Molokai for about a year now. So...so, it's nice to meet you all. And I wanted to share with you...I wanted to thank you all. For the past two years, you helped us fund the Dental Program, which helped in getting dentists and...and shore up the need that was here. There's still a need. We're working on that. Last year, we served 1,600 patients...excuse me, 1,600 visits. Excuse me, I always...the visits versus the patients...1,600 visits and about...about 1,400 patients. This year, we're scheduled to see 4,600 visits. So, a significant number now that we've ramped up and we've provided training. The funds that you provided helped us with training and helped us with shoring up the provider shortage. Unfortunately, there was some miscommunication. We did not make the...we were left out...out of the County budget. Councilmember Rawlins [sic] and I are talking about and she's planning to put this back in there as part...as part of her budget priorities. So, I would thank you for...for that support. And I want to give you some other numbers. The investment that was made...Federally-qualified health centers are designed to be economic engines. The investment that was made in dental provided for six new jobs in the community last year, and that generated about \$600,000 back into Molokai. So...so, that's important that you all know that, you know, the actions that you take do have consequences that are pretty good. So...so, I wanted to thank you for that and...and give you some of that...that information. Now, the reason I'm also here is that I'm a data-driven person and I had always been worried about the sea rise. And when I came to Molokai, our health center is right on the water. So, I've been focusing on the sea rise from the ocean. The last weather events that we had, the Kona Low, changed my perspective on that quite drastically. I was thinking that we had maybe 20 years to be able to move. The water, you know, that came into our health center as far as flooding changed my perspective that it's not the ocean that I need to worry about, it's the water coming from the mountain. So, I'm here to let you know that our support for the Heritage Trust...for the Heritage Trust...Molokai Heritage Trust, is that it's a very timely movement at this time because at some point, this town is going to need to move. And it seems that the work that they're doing now is to address that eventuality that we'll need to move and have someone spearheading the acquisition of land and to maintain the way of life of Molokai. So, thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MR. CORTEZ: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can you tell me how much you are asking for?

MR. CORTEZ: It's 545,000.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. 545,000. Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for doing what you do. I...I appreciate your...your testimony. I do have a quick question though because Lānaʻi also has a Federally-qualified health center and we're being concerned about the Federal cuts coming.

MR. CORTEZ: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, you're just saying you asked for 545,000 from the County. Are you getting cuts from the Feds?

MR. CORTEZ: We are.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: What's the amount on that?

MR. CORTEZ: The amount projected over the next four years is \$1.8 million, starting off with 500,000 in 2027. And the main issue is that 65 percent of the Molokai residents are on Medicaid. And for our health center, that number translates to about 400 people. And I found the extrapolation that for Molokai...for the Island of Molokai, you have about 700, 800 people that are going to fall into that area of able-bodied, and there are not 800 jobs or 800 volunteer opportunities on Molokai. So, we are working to prepare for that, but there will be a significant loss. And the reason I'm looking at just dental is that we're looking at using dental to shore up behavioral health and primary care. So, that is because it is a need on Molokai. It is an area that we can...that we can utilize to generate revenue and reinvest back into the community.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Are you under pressure by the Feds to actually have to pencil out?

MR. CORTEZ: Yes. You know, it's gotten to the point where we just went back to all of our policies and we have to remove all the language regarding DEI, regarding sexual orientation. These are...you know, these historically has been...have been policies to protect people that are underserved.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. CORTEZ: So, we've had to remove that because in the next round of reviews, when the reviewers come to Molokai, they will review the policies to ensure that we are not...you know, we are not addressing that population. However, our code of ethics and who we are as people, we'll continue providing the services. We'll just not put it out there.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Thanks for your clarifying statements. You know, Washington, D.C. is very far from us, but yet, they affect us.

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MR. CORTEZ: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

MR. CORTEZ: Thank you. Appreciate your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any more questions? Seeing none. Can you submit your testimony to us?

MR. CORTEZ: Will do.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Thank you.

MR. CORTEZ: I'll go ahead and submit . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is 'Iolani Kuoha, to be followed by Amber Nakihei.

MS. KUOHA: Aloha mai kākou.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MS. KUOHA: Mahalo for being here. I really appreciate you all being here. My name is 'Iolani Kuoha and I am a TA Vice Principal at Maunaloa Elementary. And so, I'm here to just ask for your support, your strong support of continued and increased investment in our...or in the organizations that I am asking for support. The first is the Molokai Arts Center, Maui Economic Development Board, and Maui Economic Opportunity, or MEO. To rural communities like ours, these organizations, are not extras. They're actually essential for our community members, our kaiāulu. I am the president of the Molokai Arts Center, which provides more than art classes. It creates a space for healing, creativity, cultural expressions, and connections across generations. And it gives our youth and families a place to belong, learn, and grow. And so, mahalo to Councilman...Councilwoman Keahi...Keani for supporting Molokai Arts Center. We really appreciate your support. The Molokai *[sic]* Economic Development Board helps open doors to the future through STEM education. Like Kawika Gonzalez mentioned earlier, we are on the plane tomorrow. We are taking our students from Maunaloa Elementary to attend a STEM conference, which is really exciting for them because this is our first year having an afterschool STEM program at Maunaloa. This STEM education is innovation. It has entrepreneurship. It's a career pathway. For many of our students, these programs create opportunities they may not otherwise have access to because of we living on Molokai and limited resources. I wanted to ask for your support for MEO. I live in Ho'olehua, and I take the opportunity to get on that bus because it helps. And so, it helps me meet one of the greatest barriers which families face, which is transportation. So, reliable transportation means access to school, work, healthcare, and community

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services. So, without transportation, opportunity becomes out of reach. So, when you fund these organizations, which you have, and I'm just asking for continued support, you're funding the real people, the real 'ohana, and real...our real futures. So, Molokai may be small in population, but our needs are significant, and our people are deserving of equitable support. So, I respectfully ask you, the Committee Members, to continue in prioritizing our organizations that serve rural communities with proven impact, compassion, and commitment. So, mahalo for your time and your service.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Amber Nakihei, to be followed by Courtney DiMaggio.

MS. NAKIHEI: Aloha, Chair and --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MS. NAKIHEI: -- Councilmembers. My name is Amber Nakihei, and I am the Program Manager for Family Life Center Molokai. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today in strong support of continued County funding for our Molokai homeless services, and also just to share a little bit about our program here. Family Life Center's goal is simple...to end homelessness for individuals and families in our community. We do this through three connected services. Homeless...homeless prevention, intensive case management, to move people from homelessness into stable permanent housing, and temporary shelter through our Ho'olanani shelter. On the prevention side, we step in early to help households stay safely housed before a crisis becomes homelessness. For those already experiencing homelessness, we partner with participants to become document ready, which includes making sure they have a valid ID, Social Security card, birth certificate, as well as increasing income through either employment or SSI benefits if they qualify. These are building blocks that allow someone to succeed when our time-limited financial assistance becomes available so that they can sustain housing long term. Even though I have been with Family Life Center for a short period of time--it's been about two-and-a-half years--I've already worked with more than 40 individuals that have experienced homelessness, and more than half are now housed. We have also assisted approximately 20 households with homeless prevention. Today, we provide case management to 11 households, which consists of 24 individuals. In this last quarter, we helped one household, a mom with two youth, to avoid homelessness. We helped secure housing for two households, which equaled three individuals, and we currently have two households in our shelter that we expect should be housed within the next month. Family Life Center has secured Federal funding to purchase our shelter property. Counting...County funding is what will help us operate day-to-day, keeping services available on Molokai, and ensuring our neighbors have a safe place to go while we do the work to help them move into permanent housing. Next year, we also will receive State funding that will help strengthen and augment our overall budget, but County support remains essential to maintain consistent local services. I respectfully ask that you continue funding Molokai homeless services through Family Life Center

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Molokai in this year's County budget. Mahalo for your continued support and your commitment to the well-being of our Molokai community.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Courtney DiMaggio, to be followed by Pihanalani Kalilikane-Kamaunu.

MS. DIMAGGIO: Aloha mai kākou. Thank you guys for coming and hearing us today. As mentioned before, we have small community, but plenty needs. And because of this, a lot of times we have to figure it out on...by ourselves. But I think time pau already. Just give us the money so we can do what we got to do. It's just so much easier that way. But I am here in support...and thank you guys so much for supporting Hale Makua's Adult Day Health Program. This is something that was much needed. We don't have long-term care options here on Molokai. This is a step down from that. This is a blessing. It's a blessing for kūpuna and their caregivers who don't have an option. They don't have to be relocated to another island to be cared for. They actually going have one option to be here on island, provide the respite that caregivers need, provide the services that they can get here. So, this was much needed. This was answered prayers. Four years ago, we actually went to Mayor Bissen and was like, we need one long-term care. And he looked at us like, okay, cool, but how are you guys going to do it? We had no idea at that time. But we spoke to Wes Lo, and when we approached him, we were frustrated with long-term care, he was like, no. But he said we can do Adult Day Health. So, mahalo, mahalo for supporting that. That is an option that people and kūpuna that . . .(inaudible). . . already that would have the opportunity to be there and be enrolled in, and caregivers that had that hard decision to displace their family off island because they just had to, would have took advantage of that program. So, mahalo for that. And as I look at all the things that are funded...mahalo, you guys, for funding all these things because that's what we need. And for our Kūpuna Program, without the Kūpuna Program, we going have more kūpunas needing help. And if they cannot thrive, they going end up not thriving, and we'd have more needs for kūpuna. But thank you guys. All this that you guys are funding, they all work together because we all need this to make our community roll. So, again, I think pau already, we just...for us for figure 'em out, just give them money, just give everybody the money, it would be so much helpful. But mahalo. Any questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. You can...

MS. DIMAGGIO: All right. No questions. Oh, oh, you have a question?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You can give us a copy of your list.

MS. DIMAGGIO: This is...this is your guys' list.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, oh.

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MS. DIMAGGIO: It's all in here.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It's from there. Okay.

MS. DIMAGGIO: It's all in here. You cannot --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right.

MS. DIMAGGIO: -- extract that. Okay. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I...I created a budget highlights for Molokai.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Good, good. Next testifier. How many more testifiers do we have?
Just curious.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, we have about seven...six.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Okay. I was going to take a break, but we'll...we'll go. Yeah?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. KALILIKANE-KAMAUNU: Aloha mai kākou. Mahalo. And my name is Pihanalani Kalilikane-Kamaunu. I am currently a volunteer participant in the Papa Makua Program, which is under...offered under MFSS Kane Connections. I want to emphasize that I am here by choice and voluntarily, and I...I participate in the program voluntarily. Being part of this program under Kane Connections has been a choice to invest in myself. My primary driver has been the desire...the strong desire to better my relationships, especially with my keiki. The journey has been about remembering the Hawaiian culture, values, and concepts that are our birthright, and learning how to practically apply them in a modern world. Papa Makua has taught me that our values are not just historical ideas, they are living tools. By implementing these concepts into my daily life, I have found better ways to navigate my responsibilities and my interactions. For my life, it has brought a sense of alignment and peace, helping me grow into the person I want to be. For my family, it has transformed how I communicate and connect. By grounding myself in our culture, I am able to show up more fully for my family, ensuring that our home is a place of growth and traditional wisdom. As a...as a parent in Hawai'i, I recognize that my growth directly impacts my child's future. Through the teaching in Papa Makua, I am learning to parent with more intention, whether it is through direct teachings of my...of our values or the indirect way I now carry myself. My keiki is the true beneficiary of this work. We are building a stronger foundation together rooted in the spirit of our...our kūpuna, our ancestors. I am grateful

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for the MFSS Kane Connections for providing this space for us to reclaim our cultural identity as parents. This program has helped me remember who I am so that I can better help my child remember who they are. Mahalo. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Hulunani Kaopio-Camvel, to be followed by Matt Yamashita.

MS. KAOPIO-CAMVEL: Aloha mai kākou, everybody.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi.

MS. KAOPIO-CAMVEL: First of all, thank you for being here tonight. I am here. My name is Hulunani Kaopio-Camvel. I am from ahupua'a of Kamiloloa or Makakapuia...Kapaiaia (*phonetic*) sorry, Makakupa'ia. . . .(*laughing*). . . I'm nervous. I'm here tonight because I just wanted to testify on behalf of continuing fundings for Maui Family Support Services on behalf of 'Anakala Kawika Mattos, who runs hui Kane Connections and Papa Makua, a parenting class that is the foundation of incorporating our true Hawaiian values. I am a Kānaka 'Ōiwi, and we...our true values that...that, you know, that we've had, that wasn't changed, truly aligned with Ke Akua. And we are people with...of intent. Yeah. And so, I joined the program in 2022, November of 2022. My husband was mandated to join hui Kane Connections, and 'Anakala Kawika had offered a parenting class. So, I figured, oh, why not we both take this class? Yeah. I'm a parent of two autistic children, high-functioning. Not only do they have autism, but they have ADD, ADHD, and ODD, my daughter. So, you can understand, being a parent, you know, being frustrated, and not understanding how I can help my children. And this program, Papa Makua, has truly taught me to be a better version of myself. And the participants that we have that come in, that we offer this program for free, you know? And, I mean, not too many people would want to pay for a parenting class, yeah? But our program, we truly work with, you know, incorporating our Hawaiian values so that we can perpetuate it, so that our children can continue on. And it aligns, and...and to see and to understand both sides of, you know, brain development, so that we know how to teach our keikis, and what...you know, what monumental steps at that age. That's what our program offers. And so, I'd like to ask for continued, you know, fundings for this program. I cannot...words cannot truly express 'Anakala Kawika Mattos, all that he does, you know? He's done a lot. He does...he has a lot of programs under his belt. But this one, I...he calls me a mentor. I don't like to be a mentor, because I don't like to be put up on there. But, you know, yeah. I've been with this program, and I continue to be with this program, to help other parents be better versions of themselves, so that they can...you know, they can steward the generation, the future generation to be, you know, instilled with our Hawaiian values, to perpetuate it, to continue on, and be better versions of themselves, you know? With the keiki. So, with that, yeah, thank you.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Matt Yamashita, to be followed by Nani Kahinu.

MR. YAMASHITA: Oh, my classmate going after me, yeah. Hello, you guys.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi.

MR. YAMASHITA: Mahalo for coming to Molokai and listening to our community. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I'm going to try to do this in three minutes. I have a lot to say. Matt Yamashita, born and raised on Molokai, entrepreneur, filmmaker, on a bunch of different boards. Everything I hear our community talking about tonight reminds me of what Uncle Alex Pua'a used to say, which is a healthy society, a healthy community, you know, prioritizes the care of our youth and our elderly first and foremost. And it sounds like that's kind of what we're trying to be. And mahalo for being in alignment with that. That being said, for sure, 100 percent support kūpuna programs, support our youth programs, STEM, MEDB. I was a mentor for the...the film class with David Gonzalez. And you can watch it, hopefully, at the Wailuku Film Festival, too. And I'll talk about the film convention in a little bit, too. As a former board member of the Molokai Community Health Center, fully support. I just got my...my teeth looked at for the first time in like two years recently, and the facilities are amazing. So, please continue to support them because as our Federal funds run out more and more, they're going to be just vital to our...our healthcare on island. As a current board member of the Sust'āinable Molokai, I just want to mahalo you guys for putting us as a line item in the budget for our Kaukau 4 Keiki program, which feeds our kids over the summer when school's out. So, mahalo for that, for taking care of our youth in that...that way. As a filmmaker, I want to continue to give my support for the Maui Film Commission with Brian Kohne at the helm. You guys funded \$50,000 for a pilot project on Molokai. We just got the funding released recently, and...and it's in full effect. We got five different Molokai filmmakers producing six films for Molokai nonprofits, and that's in the works right now and should all be completed by June. And those stories are going to be really important to tell because they're untold stories that...of the amazing work that our community does in many different areas. And then putting on another hat, I'm also a founding board member of a new nonprofit on Molokai called Hui Wa'a O Molokai, and our mission is basically to bring wa'a education to our island, to our students, to our community. And we had this incredible opportunity in the formation of our nonprofit to acquire, hopefully, it's in the works, 24 acres of property right next to the canoe shack property, the...the...our current canoe beach area over here, but a wharf, what we call Dust Bowl, but we hope to rename...or not rename, but go back to the correct name of Kaunakahakai (*phonetic*). Earlier this year, Loheau Paoa (*phonetic*), who's the board president, myself, the vice president, Auntie Penny, Martin, who's also on the board, we got to put in a proposal for the State legacy land funding . . .(*timer sounds*). . . and out of six or seven proposals, we ranked number one. So, we're super stoked that we got that funding confirmed to purchase this land, and bring land back into Molokai community hands and to be used for educational purposes and to reconnect people to

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cultural practices and...and also to care for the wetlands there. And...and that being said, we have a request in this year for the...the matching funding to complete the purchase of that 24 acres, and I think it's like 130,000 or some...somewhere around there. So, just hoping the County will help us do that so that we can make this vision a reality for our community.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. Thank you for everything you're doing. Any questions? Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think that's a misfire.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Misfire.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Are you trying to tell me something, Ellen? . . .*(laughing)*. . . Mahalo for your testimony, for serving on all the boards, and serving our keiki as a mentor. My question is regarding the pilot program. So, for the film program that you heard about, that was intended to be a pilot for this year so that we can expand the opportunities in...in FY '27. I guess my question is regarding its readiness of expansion. Do you...do you have an opinion of that?

MR. YAMASHITA: I was talking to Brian recently, it was kind of unfortunate that the funds took so long to get released, but we're...we're going to get it done. I do believe that this is a project that should and...could and should be expanded, not just on Molokai. I think this should be Countywide. I think what we're doing here on Molokai should be expanded for Maui Island, Lānaʻi Island. A lot of other filmmakers on Maui, lots of good filmmakers on Maui. So, we have...you know, it's just an opportunity. The whole purpose of the program was to not only tell the stories of the different organizations and groups doing amazing work in Maui...or on Molokai and in Maui County, but it's also to kind of prop up our filmmakers who tell those stories. So, yeah, I do think it's something that can and should be expanded beyond Molokai, and hopefully we nail it here and it's something that you guys are really excited about continuing and...and growing. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your mana'o on that. That was a priority proposal that my colleagues, you all supported last fiscal year. And the intention was to start on Molokai since we have a smaller, tighter community, that we can kind of iron out the kinks and expand it to all of Maui County to help tell that story. And then just for clarification, the Hui Wa'a O Molokai is in Open Space Fund. So, it is already in the Mayor's proposed budget. So, mahalo.

MR. YAMASHITA: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Batangan?

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VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you. Clarification on the funds you're requesting for...to match the legacy lands. That's in the budget or that...

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Open Space.

MR. MATA'AFA: Oh, so that is the one under the Hui Wa'a O Molokai? Or is it separate?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: You can ask him.

MR. YAMASHITA: Yeah, sorry. Hui Wa'a O Molokai.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: So, that is the matching funds for the legacy land?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yes.

MR. YAMASHITA: Yeah, for the County Open Space. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Open Space.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Oh, great.

MR. YAMASHITA: Okay. Right on. Mahalo. . . .(inaudible). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Anything else? Thank you. Thanks for your good work. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Nani Kahinu, to be followed by Lori Buchanan.

MS. KAHINU: Hi. Aloha. Mahalo for coming tonight. We appreciate your guys' presence and flying on the small plane. I am Nani Kahinu. I'm representing Hawai'i Farmers Union, Na'ike LLC, which is our business that we own and operate here, and also voicing support for Sust'ainable Molokai. As a new Molokai farm apprentice mentor for Hawai'i Farmers Union, I want to thank you for supporting the HFU FAM program and commitment to providing our island with such an important mentorship part of our agricultural system. We were in cohort eight, and it improved our homestead drastically. Thank you for supporting this program and look forward to many years in this service. As one of the owner-operators of Na'ike LLC, we are a grateful recipient of the MDOA grant for our agricultural improvements on our homestead. We continue to use our purchases to work effectively and volunteering yard service with our tools at Kiowea Park. I do want to add it has been a little bit frustrating with the experience of being a reimbursement grant, which wasn't transparent at the beginning, and now I'm asking, due to all the recent impacts from the Kona Low, if there's a way that you folks could look at not requiring a reimbursement for the remaining balance of the grants. I think a lot of us awardees don't have that much left in there, and then maybe reallocating it for repair and recovery costs for us. That's just a request. Just want it

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noted. The grants like these do help small businesses that is unable to obtain loans like us. We are on DHHL land, so we cannot obtain regular loans like other people with capital, so mahalo for supporting this grant program. I do want to add mahalo support...for supporting Sust'ainable Molokai. We've been a vendor with them since inception, so a very long time, and we look forward to being with them for more years to come. And just adding another support into the Hui Wa'a O Molokai, as Matt Yamashita advocated for. Mahalo for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very...oh, excuse me. Thank you very much. Member Rawlins-Fernandez?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. And my colleagues will all know your sister-in-law, Nicole Kahinu at OCS.

MS. KAHINU: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony. For the MDOA grant, which one was that?

MS. KAHINU: That was this recent reimbursement grant, so when we applied for it, it wasn't transparent that it was a reimbursement grant. We didn't find out until we had to sign it.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It wasn't a microgrant, it was a different grant --

MS. KAHINU: A different correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- directly through the Department of Ag?

MS. KAHINU: Yes. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Our County Department of Ag?

MS. KAHINU: Correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And if you don't have that information now, I can get it --

MS. KAHINU: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- from you later too. And I'm sorry about your FAM books. I don't know if you ever got it.

MS. KAHINU: No.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, okay.

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MS. KAHINU: It's okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I can...I can help with that.

MS. KAHINU: It's all right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's okay. We'll figure it out. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

MS. KAHINU: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next testifier is Lori Buchanan, to be followed by Gandharva Mahina Hou Ross.

MS. BUCHANAN: Oh, awesome. I thought I was the last. So, does it...oh, you saved the best for last.

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

MS. LINDO: The number one testifier.

MS. BUCHANAN: Wow, thank you. I hope Alice is watching, my favorite chair. Aunty Lori Buchanan here. Obviously wearing the MoMISC shirt. This going to be the first time you see me really dirty and without my pua in my hair, okay? So, take picture.

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

MS. BUCHANAN: So, I know I only get three minutes, but of course, this is my favorite County Council in all of Hawai'i Nei. Because you guys always put your money where it is sorely needed and where it belongs. And so, I have to thank you guys for that. And honorable Members, I wanted to thank for the line item budget. Again, a flat budget for the Molokai/Maui Invasive Species Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Maui Invasive Species Committee. We've been here for years. I've been doing this job for 25 years as a project coordinator for MoMISC, as a project of the University of Hawai'i. And it's been my honor and my privilege to take seriously protecting Molokai from the worst pests. And this last week, our worst fears came through, and we have detected CRB on the Island of Molokai. This is where your funds go to. Having the flexibility to have an organization that can do emergency response on the ground. We started working in the dark, we stopped working in the dark. And if we have coqui frogs, guess what? We're going work in the dark. And so, that is where that funds go to. And I wanted to thank this County Council for being the...the Council throughout the State that provides the funding to protect our resources, which is so important on the Island of Molokai, where we have hundreds of thousands of coconut trees in our...in our city. So, two things that make me keep on waking up and getting dirty sometimes if I have to and working in the

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dark is protecting now our coconut trees, which is our primary overstory in our...on our south shore and along the island coastline. And then also, our primary 'ōhi'a tree that protects our watershed and...and is our primary overstory. And we're here always looking for rapid 'ōhi'a death. So, the...the worst of the worst is what we do. And maybe everybody doesn't know it all the time, but we are here every day looking for these worst pests. And our mission is to nip these incipient pests in the bud so . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . we don't have to deal with...with the outcomes that you see Statewide. So, I wanted to thank you guys here. I am here to answer any questions if you want to because obviously, this is a really fast-moving emergency response that we in. And this week is Earth Day. And you're going to see a lot of information this week coming out on our initial response. So, thank you very much. I love you guys. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much for all you do. Any questions? Member Rawlins-Fernandez has a question for you, Ms. Buchanan.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair Lee's favorite number one testifier. I have one question.

MS. BUCHANAN: Yes? Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Is...after that alarming discovery, do you feel that MoMISC has sufficient funds?

MS. BUCHANAN: Well, that's a big question. So, let me just tell you what I'm doing, yeah? As part of my job as a coordinator, I am making a laundry list. I've already talked to every department DH (*phonetic*) from the State. And we have to do a lot of things really fast in order to build up the capacity and the logistical support that we need to scale up a rapid response that is needed. So, that is going to come from MISC. And it's going to come from the State, hopefully. And if we're short-falling or we're needing help, you're going to hear about it very, very shortly. I am leaning on the County for resources. The Maui Department of Ag is...has always been supportive. In the beginning, they asked us to be the lead agency for CRB, and I didn't hesitate when I said, of course, that's what we do. We do that all our lives. So, we're still that lead agency on the Island of Molokai. Do we have all what we need right here, as I stand here? The answer is no. But I am working to get them here very quickly. And again, everybody's going to hear from...from the State and the County, maybe even the Federal. I don't know. But we are working on getting that capacity of support that we need. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for that response.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, and mahalo for your testimony. I was just curious, are you getting any help from the State Department of Agriculture?

MS. BUCHANAN: Yes.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: You are?

MS. BUCHANAN: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MS. BUCHANAN: So, the first people I called was the State. We have a CRB response plan. We have, like incident command. And so, we're following that protocol. So, the first call is always to the Hawai'i Department of Ag and Biosecurity, straight to the Chair, and to the...the plant pest control and PQ.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Does that help include extra protection at our ports of entry?

MS. BUCHANAN: Well, they did. The Board of Ag and Biosecurity did pass an emergency interim rule about seven to eight months ago that we...that this grassroots community fought hard for, which is supposed to have a quarantine or restriction placed on any materials that could be host materials for CRB to put a stop to that. So, that rule is already in place, and yet we still have CRB.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Got it.

MS. BUCHANAN: That's just testimony to the invasiveness of the...of the bug. So, we are now going on assumptions that we have breeding populations, and a focus and a priority of next steps from last week have been to set more traps, to survey potential breeding sites, and to see if we're in the biology of the cycle of germination where they completed a whole cycle and they're emerging fully mature bugs from the larvae stage. So, I'm just moving on that assumption, and it's...it's all hands on deck.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you for sharing that. Thank you.

MS. BUCHANAN: You're welcome. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for everything you do.

MS. BUCHANAN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. BUCHANAN: You guys look good tonight, by the way.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Just like you. Next testifier.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the next and currently last person signed up to testify is Gandharva Mahina Hou Ross.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Gandharva.

MS. MCKINLEY: Pardon, Gandharva.

MR. ROSS: Yeah. E ke hoa, aloha 'āina. Aloha ahiahi kākou. Mahalo nui, Councilmen and women, for being here tonight to hear our community. I think for me personally, definitely want to support a lot of things that were already shared tonight. For sure, Kūpuna Services. My parents are getting involved in those services as well, and I know my grandmother benefited from service for many years and was a leader in getting those services for her...her kūpuna as well over the generations. But...and definitely, Maui Economic Development Board providing opportunities for our students to travel to the STEM conference. I teach at O Hina I Ka Mālama, which is a Hawaiian language immersion program at Molokai High School, and we're taking pretty much all of our 20 students to the STEM conference, and we'll be there from tomorrow. We got to get in early so we can help with the opening protocol on Wednesday morning when the conference starts. So, due to our issues with travel, we've got to fly out a day early. And then...so we'll...so that's another thing we probably should talk about a little bit, but we don't want to spend too much time. Free time, I teach at the high school. What I really am is a taro farmer in Halawa Valley on kuleana land that we've been farming since we restored the 'auwai in 1996. And so, we've raised our children and grandchildren, and my wife in the back, kuleana land in Halawa Valley. And we have severe impact from this last rains. We went down this last time to check it out, and pretty much it's about close to a mile long, two to three feet wide and...at least three feet, and it's pretty much 100 percent filled in. So, we have a huge task ahead of us. I'm not sure if we just call all our family and show up a couple weekends and make it happen, or somehow we can coordinate with agencies and different response teams and coordinate some activities. A good idea I had was we'll hire some youth for the summer to do the job so they become connected and try to inspire next generation of taro farmers. That's how it started when we were doing it growing up. We just said, let's do it. But it always helps with a little funding. I got a lot of things to talk about, but I'll try stay mostly positive and thank you guys for all of the continuous support of all our programs that we much need on Molokai. But maybe right before I walk off and run away, for the beginning when even the County was part of the funding for our East Molokai Watershed Partnership, we were definitely totally against it. It's a continental management plan. It doesn't take any account into traditional ahupua'a-based management. We told them the deer would migrate from the west to the east, eat all the understory, and as a result, we see our reef being destroyed. So, they wanted to save our native forest. They forgot about the middle zone and the reef that feed our people. So, I think they should be held responsible. A lot of that dirt came down the mountain is a direct result of watershed fencing. We had many alternative plans, and now you see the results of Ka Honua Momona getting lots of funding. In the beginning, we were the Hui Aloha 'Āina O Mana'e, a lineal...a group of lineal descendants from Mana'e, directly descended from kuleana lands from the king. These lands are why we're still on Molokai. Homesteads came later. They received all the funding. Nothing goes to our kuleana people, and when things happen, we're the one hit the brunt of the suffering, pain, destruction, because the fence brought the deer east. The deer population was never . . . (timer sounds) . . that way, but it is now. And

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so, we propose north-south fencing as opposed to east-west fencing. We want our kuleana people to have the opportunity to be on their lands and to be the lineal descendants controlling the future of our island. So, mahalo for listening. Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? *(Audio interference)*

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Mr. Ross, for your testimony tonight. Just to let you know that Maui County has a mauirecovers.org webpage that...that people that are affected by the Kona Low storms and the flooding can apply for.

MR. ROSS: Yeah. So, mahalo for that information. I filled out the form, and we're just waiting response.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MR. ROSS: Yeah. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, very good.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Thank you. Any more testifiers?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no one else has signed up to testify. Would you like to...

MS. LINDO: I just went sign up right now.

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

MS. LINDO: Thank you so much for this opportunity. My name is Zhantell Dudoit Lindo, I am the current CEO of the Molokai Heritage Trust. So, first and foremost, I'd like to thank the County for supporting our efforts as our community moves towards purchasing Molokai Ranch. It's an important stand for our community, and we see it as just a continuation of what our kūpuna started many years ago. So, this is not brand new, this is just us trying to take the ball further than it's ever been before. And so, we mahalo you for your support. I'm going to take off that hat and be one community member because I heard some really great stuff. Our kūpuna...thank you, Keani, for putting this in your line item because I think the majority of our community doesn't really understand how County budgets work and the delicate balance between what the Mayor proposes and what the County can put back in. And your...this Council's ingenious way of directing and allowing for district funds is a fabulous way to be able to fill the gaps of what you cannot do and what your hands are tied to do. So, thank you for putting the Kūpuna Program as a priority budget, and thank you for that insight. Also, thank you for the support of all these programs. MEO is awesome. They got more awesome when they hired Mahie. And just want to thank Matt for all the work he does. The film festival is an untapped resource. Thankful for the homeless support through

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Maui Family Life Center. Amber is great. But I do want to make a plea that this is the first time I heard that any shelter acquisition of land was going to even be considered on Molokai. So, I here, as a homeless advocate, to tell you that that will never happen as long as I live. A shelter is not what Molokai needs. And this Council should make sure that Molokai people have fair hearing and education and...and understand the issue before you put any money into acquiring land for a homeless shelter on this island. We have been advocates of sealing the gates so that we can stop things. And I personally drive people to the airport and pay for their flights. I'm not ashamed of that. But shelters bring in an uncontrollable amount of people because they're government-funded, and there will be no way for us to stop it. So, I'm seriously like concerned that that is even being thought of without this community's input to that. Because I can guarantee you they will not support this. I think there are ways that Family Life Center and homeless programs can be helped and I think it...it means sitting at the table with our community and people like me who are actively doing those things. I want to thank the Department of Health and Courtney and her like amazing bunch of people over there. Those ladies are hammers and they just do the same thing as me. We drive around looking for people in need and just throw them to each other. So, I just want to thank this Council for...for just being so awesome and even our Mayor. I mean this County...I don't know if people ever think about it because we're so concerned about some of our real emergent problems but . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . this County has been through a worldwide pandemic, a fire that destroyed an entire community, and we still in the black. And that's big. And...and we still holding together and we still get to support these programs and that's because you guys work hard because our Mayor cares about this...this community and because no matter what the differences are, at the end of the day, you guys all stand together to ensure that we get what we need. So, mahalo. And by the way, I'm aiming to be the first best testifier. Chair Lee just didn't want to say that because Aunty...out of respect for Aunty Lori, so...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any more questions? Seeing none. Okay. Is that the last testifier?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, that's the last person signed up to testify. Would you like to do a brief last call?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, last call.

MS. MCKINLEY: If anyone else would like to testify, please come up to the podium now. Seeing no one, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. All right. Thank you. That was our last fabulous testifier, right? Any of you that have written testimony, please do submit it to us. We...we would like to hear what you had to say in writing as well as what you shared with us tonight.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

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COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS. (Excused: TC, AL, TP)

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, everybody, for being here, and really, really appreciate you spending the time with us, and we love Molokai. So, this meeting is now adjourned.
...*(gavel)*...

ADJOURN: 7:50 p.m.

bfed:min:260413-Molokai:crp:ds

Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

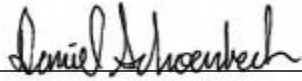
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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 40 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 20th day of May 2026, in Wailuku, Hawai'i

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel Schoenbeck", is written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Schoenbeck