

April 14, 2025

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MEMO TO: Members of the Budget, Finance, and Economic
Development Committee

F R O M: Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair *Yuki Lei K Sugimura*
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee

SUBJECT: **UPCOUNTRY RESIDENCY AREA MEETING REGARDING THE
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET** (BFED-1)

On April 1, 2025, the Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee held a public meeting at the Mayor Hannibal Tavares Community Center, Pukalani, regarding the proposed FY 2026 Budget. Present for the meeting were: Committee Chair Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Committee Vice-Chair Tasha Kama, and members Tom Cook, Gabe Johnson, Alice L. Lee, Tamara Paltin, Keani N.W. Rawlins Fernandez, and Shane M. Sinenci. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. and adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

The meeting began with a brief overview from Kari Stockwell, County Real Property Tax Administrator, who assisted individuals with questions about their real property tax assessments.

Your Committee received oral testimony from 35 individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, the following oral testimony was received in support of funding for the organization, program, or project noted:

1. Seventeen individuals testified in support of continued funding for Maui Economic Development Board, Inc., including four who testified in support of the Maui County Public High Schools Auto Program at King Kekaulike High School and 13 who testified in support of STEMworks AFTER School Program and other science, technology, engineering, and math-related programs, all of which are supported by MEDB.
2. Gay Sibonga, Chief Operating Officer, Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., and two others testified in support of continued funding for the organization and its Head Start Afterschool Programs & Summer Programs, as well as the Agricultural Micro Grants Program, which MEO administers.

3. Four individuals testified in support of continued funding for the Maui Invasive Species Committee and combatting invasive species in Maui County, including Allison Wright, President of the Board of Directors, Maui Association of Landscape Professionals.
4. Six individuals testified for the continued support of Maui County Farm Bureau, Inc.:
 - Theresa Thompson, MCFB Board Member and President of the Maui Cattlemen's Association;
 - Ethan Romanchak, MCFB Board Member;
 - Brendan Balthazar, MCFB Board Member, Maui Cattlemen's Association Board Member, and Kula Community Association Member;
 - Gerry Ross, past MCFB Board Member, founding member of the Maui Coffee Association, and Owner of Kupa'a Farms;
 - Tara Nakahashi, Member of the Maui Growers and Floriculture Collective under MCFB, and Studio Manager of Kahului Florist; and
 - Britney Alejo-Fishell, Maui Growers and Floriculture Collective Member and Owner of Haku Maui.
5. Brendan Balthazar also testified in support of raised crosswalks or speed tables in Makawao, especially in front of schools, and in support of continued funding for axis deer mitigation and composting.
6. Gerry Ross also testified in support of continued funding for diversion of food waste, food security, and agriculture, and asked that the Council consider assisting organizations and programs impacted by federal budget cuts.
7. Elizabeth Ray and Alan Lloyd, Members, Maui Tenants and Workers Association, requested the Council maintain the FY 2026 Mayor's Proposed Budget total while increasing grant funding and assistance to organizations impacted by federal budget cuts, especially those assisting with food security and rental assistance; and creating a

higher real property tax rate for non-owner-occupied properties assessed at \$10 million and above.

8. Donna Clayton, President, Pukalani Community Association, testified in support of continued funding for: Pukalani road improvements, addressing Upcountry drought conditions, mental health programs, affordable housing solutions, and decreasing illegal fireworks.
9. Jordan Hocker, Board Member, Kula Community Association, testified in support of continued funding for dependable water sources for Upcountry; and capital improvement projects which provide water for fire response, wildfire preparedness, fire fuel reduction, brush abatement, axis deer mitigation, increased walkability, Kula Recycling Center, Upcountry road improvements, and upgrades to the Von Tempsky Community Center.
10. Georgia Pinsky, Co-Director, Maui Farmer Support Network, testified to request continued support of agencies and programs that increase food security, food preparation education, and shared kitchens.
11. Kyle Ellison, President and Executive Director, Mālama Kula, testified to request more support for fire fuel reduction, green waste management, wildfire preparedness, and hazard mitigation, and to highlight sustainability opportunities such as repurposing woods that fuel fires into woodchips or other resources.
12. One individual requested the Council support a proposal to establish a sister-city relationship between Maui County and the City of Siena.
13. One individual requested additional support for food security, housing availability, rental and mortgage assistance, and filling gaps in community support services due to federal budget cuts.

Your Committee also received the attached written testimony.

For questions relating to the Upcountry residency area meeting, please contact OCS staff (Kasie Apo Takayama at ext. 7665, Carla Nakata at ext. 5519, Jennifer Yamashita at ext. 7143, or Lori Ann Tengan at ext. 7147).

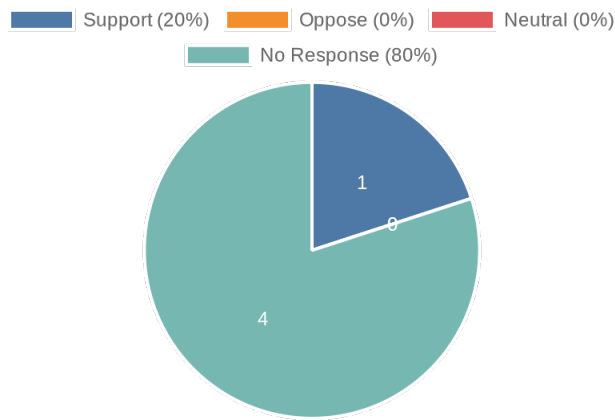
Members of the Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee
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If you have any questions relating to the FY 2026 Budget, please contact the Committee staff (Kirsten Szabo at ext. 7662, James Krueger at ext. 7761, Jarret Pascual at ext. 7141, Clarissa MacDonald at ext. 7135, or Pauline Martins at ext. 8039). Thank you for your cooperation.

bfed:2026bgt:rameetings:250401UpcountryResidencyAreaMeeting:kmat

Agenda Item: eComments for A G E N D A

Overall Sentiment



BFED Committee

Location:

Submitted At: 8:06am 04-02-25

Testimonies received from BFED Committee 04-01-2025 (5)

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 4:46pm 04-01-25

_O ke aloha nui,

My name is Bronson, and I am the Kumu hula for the STEMworks after school program at Kalama Intermediate School. I am an advocate in support of this program for many reasons. However, I would like to express some of the important reasons on why I think this program is life-changing. I am a firm believer that culture-based education is an essential component in strengthening one's cultural identity, and sense of belonging in Hawai'i. As a cultural practitioner, we find ways to connect: connect the past-to-present, connect to our ancestors, connect in our history; and this case, connect STEM education to Hawaiian arts. There are several cultural pathways of learning that our papa hula offers, other than chant and hula. Students learn Ioina Hawai'i/lawena (Hawaiian customary practices, protocol, appropriate behavior vs. inappropriate), _ike kupuna (ancestral knowledge), _ike Honua (place-base learning), _ike mauili l_hui (cultural identity pathway), _ike __lelo Hawai'i, _ike pilina (sense of relationship and connections). This type of knowledge, students are able to apply in the real world, even in a professional setting. Every school should have access to cultural education. This free program at Kalama Intermediate School is unique in the various courses offered for all students of all backgrounds. We need to continue to empower our keiki and equip them with _ike waiwai (valuable knowledge), because knowledge is power! We cannot achieve this level of education without your support. I would like to extend my sincerest aloha and mahalo for supporting our programs that STEMworks offer; and would like to request further support - so that we can make a difference in our communities.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kumu Bronson Ikaika Bajo
Cell (808) 861-7440

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:32pm 04-01-25

Erin O'Kief

Development Director, Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center

April 1, 2025

Aloha Maui County Council Members,

My name is Erin O'Kief. I am submitting testimony in support of Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center's Youth Arts Education & Outreach Programs, which are included as a proposed line item in the Human Concerns Program Budget for FY26 at \$75,000. This funding is critical to the Hui's ability to continue delivering high quality, no-cost arts outreach programs for more than 14,000 Maui County keiki. I am including some statistics and more information below.

However, I would also like to share our family's personal experience with the Hui's art programs, which have been extremely beneficial for our 7-year old son. He became interested in making art because he has been able to participate in the Hui's Na Keiki No'eau afterschool program at Makawao Elementary School. The program is FREE and serves all grade levels. He is a high-energy student who has trouble focusing but with art materials in his hands, he can focus. He loves the Na Keiki program so much, he asked to attend art camp at the Hui so that he could continue working with his favorite teachers and learn new art skills. The projects are well developed and teach other subjects like science, art history, native species, and so much more. As a mom, I am so grateful for this opportunity for my child to learn. As the Development Director at the Hui, I am proud of these programs, which continue to increase in reach and impact every year. The impact these programs have are immeasurable -- I've seen firsthand that children in these programs exhibit greater self-confidence, more innovation and creativity, a better understanding about the world around them, patience, tolerance, better communication, ... and so much more! Having a positive outlet is more important now than ever before. I ask that you please consider support for Hui No'eau's Youth Arts Education & Outreach Programs.

Hui Youth Arts Education & Outreach Programs

Served 14,394 Maui County keiki in 2024 compared to 8,349 in 2023

Hui No'eau is deeply grateful to the County of Maui for partnering with our organization to provide financial support for Hui Youth and Family Arts Education Outreach Programs. The County should be proud, as we are, of the positive impact these critical programs have on youth in Maui County – and especially youth who need the arts the most for their physical and emotional health, educational benefit, community connection, and overall well-being. Hui youth programs address a critical gap in public school education by providing access to the arts for all youth, no matter their economic situation, geographic location, or level of experience. As more partner agencies realize and share the benefits of Hui Youth programs with the community, other schools and organizations regularly contact the Hui asking to partner. Programs are offered year-round for Maui County youth ages 2.5 -18 and include:

Art with Heart: Maui Fire Relief Programs

Hui No'eau's Art with Heart: Maui Fire Relief Program has provided arts programs, Art2Go Art Kits, and art supplies for more than 4,500 children in Lahaina and Kula who have been impacted by the fires. Art with Heart removes cost and transportation barriers to arts participation by sending Hui teaching artists and art supplies directly into Lahaina schools, agencies, and other safe spaces serving clients impacted by the fires. Programs are ongoing, free, and designed to meet the immediate and changing needs of the community. For example, based on demand by Lahaina educators and schools, the Hui has distributed free art supplies benefitting more than 1,500 keiki from Kamehameha III, Princess Nahi'ena'ena, Sacred Hearts School, Lahaina Intermediate, Lahainaluna High School, and more. Field trips have brought more than 500 Lahaina students to the Hui to engage in art projects and gallery tours. The Hui will continue Art with Heart programming – as funding is available – to meet the greatest needs of the community.

Na Keiki No'eau Program *Expanded from 5 to 7 schools in 2024*

Na Keiki No'eau is an important outreach program that sends the Hui's professional Teaching Artists into 7 Elementary Schools' A+ After School Programs at: Makawao, P_ia, Pukalani, Kahului, and Wailuku. The program expanded in 2024 to serve students at Princess Nahie'ena'ena Elementary and Kamehameha III Elementary Schools in Lahaina. Hui teaching artists share weekly hands-on arts and cultural learning lessons with children in grades K-5. The Hui provides all art supplies and instruction at no cost to the school or participants. The program is offered two times per week at Pukalani, Makawao, Kahului, and Wailuku and once per week at Paia, Princess Nahi'ena'ena, and Kamehameha III throughout the school year. The program currently serves 506 students across the 7 schools. During each session, Hui Teaching Artists work with two groups of children for about 1 hour each, rotating through the groups, so that children are engaged every week throughout the school year. Students work with the same teachers every week and, therefore, can build on art concepts over time. Moreover, the Hui's Na Keiki No'eau Teaching Artists are becoming trusted mentors and confidants for students who are opening up and sharing their life's successes and challenges as they create art. Na Keiki No'eau eliminates cost and logistic barriers to visual arts education by sending teaching artists into students' very own classroom, cafeterias, etc. after school at a time when most are waiting for their parents to pick them up after work.

"Art2Go" Art-Kits *Increased distribution from 150 to 250 kits monthly in 2024*

Hui No'eau's "Art2Go" kits fill an important educational and recreational void that many families are not equipped to fulfill on their own, due to cost, lack of expertise, access to supplies/opportunities, or time. "Art2Go" provides make-at-home art kits, complete with an art lesson and all necessary art supplies designed for children ages 4-10 years old with adult supervision. Provided at no cost, kits are pre-packaged and ready to "take and make" at home, providing much-needed accessible and uplifting educational and recreational activities for Maui County's underserved youth.

Hui No'eau provides 250 kits to children in need each month in collaboration with the following community partners:

- Ka Hale A Ke Ola Homeless Resource Centers (KHAKO): Kits are delivered to Ka Hale A Ke Ola Homeless Resource Centers in Wailuku (50 kits) once per month. Hui No'eau also offers in-person art instruction twice weekly on site at the center, engaging an average of 10 -20 keiki each week. Programming benefits an influx of children and families who evacuated from Lahaina after KHAKO's West Side Center was lost to the fires.
- L_na'i Public Library: Kits (150) are mailed to L_na'i once every month. Once the kits arrive on island, they are often fully distributed within 1-2 days of their arrival, demonstrating the great continued interest and need for visual arts activities in the L_na'i community. Hui No'eau has also offered in-person art instruction on L_na'i, monthly or as scheduling permits.
- Moloka'i Arts Center: Kits (50) are mailed to Moloka'i once every month. Hui No'eau's new collaboration with Moloka'i Arts Center has allowed the Hui to connect with keiki and families in remote areas.

Arts Education Field Trips for Public School Children

Field trips are one of the most effective ways to reach students without resources to participate in art programs outside of school. Programs are provided at no cost. The Hui is available to public schools and preschools as one of their annual field trips. Field trips include a hands-on art lesson (all supplies and instruction provided), gallery tours, demos, and discussion. The Hui provides a stipend for bus transportation for schools for which transportation costs are prohibitive. Annually, field trips engage approximately 1,500 youth of ages 2-18, as well as around 100 teacher and family chaperones.

Foundational Art Classes, Art Camps & Family Programs

Core programs take place at the Hui's studios in Makawao, serving approx. 650 youth annually. Programs take place after school, on weekends, or on school breaks and support foundational arts learning for ages 2.5-18. Family programs encourage children and adults to explore art together; investment in family learning creates generational change. Art camps serve children of working families who need childcare and/or children who enjoy an immersive arts experience. Scholarships are available to families demonstrating financial need.

Youth and Family Art Events and Exhibitions

The Hui hosts two youth art exhibitions each year (August and October) that give Maui youth the chance to exhibit work in a professional gallery. The Hui also collaborates with King Kekaulike High School to present its

annual students' arts showcase; as well as the Ian Walsh Menehune Mayhem Foundation to display artwork by their young surfers. We also collaborate with other organizations to support community events throughout the year, providing art kits and accessible art projects to children who participate.

Thank you for your consideration of support.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:56am 04-01-25

Dave Pollmiller

Harvest Garden LLC

03/31/2025

Aloha County Council Members,

My name is Dave Pollmiller, and I am a farmer and business owner on Maui. I am honored to provide testimony in support of the Maui Farmer Support Network (MFSN) and to express my deep gratitude for the support I have received through its programs.

As a participant in the many programs MFSN offers, I have benefited tremendously from Georgia & Phyllis' support with network and skill building. This support has helped me in many tangible and intangible ways. MFSN is a vital resource for farmers like me, offering not only education and tools but also a strong sense of community. The challenges of farming in Maui's unique environment are real, but having access to mentorship, shared resources, and hands-on training has made a significant difference in my ability to succeed.

I strongly encourage continued support for MFSN so that more farmers can benefit as I have. Investing in our local farmers means investing in Maui's food security, economy, and sustainability. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ke aloha,

Dave Pollmiller

460 Kaluanui Rd. Makawao

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:55am 04-01-25

My name is Julie Matheis and I am testifying in support of Maui Economic Development Board's economic development programs.

Please invest in Maui's future, by funding afterschool STEMWORKS programs for our keiki. I am a mother of Kalama students who participate in different afterschool programming that enriches my children's lives in ways that I could not manage to do without these onsite, engaging programs. These opportunities are important to continue on campus at our public schools, because many of us parents have work schedules that prevent us from easily getting our kids to privately offered, pricey classes elsewhere. It is crucial for Maui's adolescents to have accessible activities afterschool that make them want to achieve great things & contribute to society. Personally, my kids have benefitted and grown from the exposure to knowledge within classes, learned to be persistent as they challenged themselves, forged friendships with other participants, and have been able to participate in amazing events because of the afterschool STEM programs they participate in.

One of my children recently attended Culture Day after STEM fest. This was an amazing experience for the haumana! As they looked at portraits of ali'i, heard stories of the palace, and stood in the room where the queen was imprisoned, they undoubtedly strengthened their connection to Hawaii in a profound and unforgettable way. After Iolani Palace connected students to the lives of Hawaiian monarchs, the visit to the royal mausoleum was so deeply impactful, that I'm not sure I can find the right words to summarize it. Knowing that the lineage of the hula they practice came from those buried at Mauna Ala connected the dancers to cultural traditions in the most reverent way. The tour of the grounds brought even more unique ike and brought forth excellence and mana from these students that will remain with them as they grow. I'm so grateful they were able to participate in these events that perpetuate the heart of Hawaii. Please continue to fund activities like this and make kama__ina your priority. Providing these enriching opportunities to Maui's title one schools is an invaluable, equitable way to align children in the average household here with bright new possibilities for their future.

Mahalo,

Julie

BFED Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 1:12 PM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: Fw: continued STEM funding
Attachments: STEM.docx

From: Shalini Negi <devlal1113@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 11:41 AM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: continued STEM funding

You don't often get email from devlal1113@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)
Aloha,

Please find attached a letter of support for continued STEMworks funding.

Best Regards,
Shalini Negi

Shalini Negi
P.O. Box 239
Makawao, HI 96768
Devlal1113@gmail.com
808 666 3426

April 1, 2025

Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

Dear Honorable Members of the Maui County Council:

I am writing to express my strong support for continued funding of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education programs in Maui County schools. As both a concerned citizen and a parent of two children who have directly benefited from these programs, I believe investing in STEM education is critical for our keiki and Maui's future economic resilience.

My son, who was once hesitant to engage in classroom activities, has undergone a remarkable transformation through his participation in coding and programming classes. Where he once struggled to find his place, he now approaches challenges with confidence and enthusiasm. I've watched him develop problem-solving skills that extend far beyond the computer lab, tackling complex issues with patience and creativity. The structured yet creative nature of coding has given him a medium where he can express himself while building tangible skills for the future. His teachers have noted this positive change, and he now helps his peers navigate difficult programming concepts.

Similarly, my daughter has flourished through STEM-focused entrepreneurship programs. These initiatives have taught her to identify community needs and develop innovative solutions using technology and design thinking. She recently participated in an event where she sold her own product, an experience that has inspired her to continue her entrepreneurial journey by joining local craft fairs. Watching her apply the business and marketing concepts she learned through STEM education to create, promote, and sell her product has been remarkable. The mentorship she received through this STEM program has ignited a passion for entrepreneurship and given her practical skills in product development, marketing, and financial literacy.

Beyond my family's experiences, STEM education serves our entire island in many ways:

1. It prepares our keiki for high-wage careers that can sustain them on Maui, reducing the need for them to leave the island to find meaningful employment.
2. It creates pathways to economic diversification, allowing Maui to develop sectors beyond tourism that can withstand economic fluctuations and natural disasters.
3. It empowers our youth to address Maui's unique challenges through local innovation—from renewable energy solutions to sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation.
4. It preserves Hawaiian cultural values by integrating traditional knowledge with modern scientific and technological approaches, creating place-based learning that honors our island's heritage.

The Maui Economic Development Board's support for STEM initiatives has already yielded impressive results, but continued funding is essential to build upon this foundation. I respectfully urge the County Council to prioritize STEM education funding in the upcoming budget, ensuring these valuable programs remain accessible to all Maui students regardless of their economic background.

By investing in STEM education today, we are investing in Maui's economic resilience, cultural sustainability, and the bright futures of our keiki.

Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to our community's future.

Sincerely,

Shalini Negi

BFED Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 2:26 PM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: FW: Letter to Maui County for Ka'ahumanu Church
Attachments: Maui County Letter of Introduction.pdf

From: Wayne Higa <kahuwayne@live.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 2:22 PM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Letter to Maui County for Ka'ahumanu Church

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

Aloha Maui County Clerks Office,

Attached is a letter I'd like to submit as written testimony on behalf of Ka'ahumanu Church for consideration to the County Council budget meetings. I realize it is too late for tonight's meeting. I am unable to attend tonight. But do plan on being at the Kihei and Wailuku meetings. Should I resubmit before those meetings?

Kahu Wayne Higa
Ka'ahumanu Church
P.O. Box 1403
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii 96793

Phone # 808-244-5189
Cell # 808-446-4649



Ka'ahumanu Church

P.O. Box 1403
103 South High Street
Wailuku, Maui, HI 96793
Phone: 808-244-5189
IRS EIN #: 13-1957221

April 1, 2025

Aloha,

Mahalo nui loa for your support of Ka'ahumanu Church.

Ka'ahumanu Church stands as a noble and virtuous testament to the resiliency of congregation and community in our small town of Wailuku since before the arrival of the missionaries here on the island of Maui. The history and mana of this wahi pana (storied place) located at the foot of Mauna Kahalawai leading to Iao valley was once the Royal Compound of King Kahekili. The last ruling King of Maui before Kamehameha united the islands.

It is not only a place of worship but also a significant cultural and historical landmark here on Maui. The present building was built in 1876. This church stands as a testament to the rich history of Hawai'i and its people. It is a symbol of the enduring legacy of Queen Ka'ahumanu and the early Hawaiian missionaries John Honoli'i and Thomas Hopu. The church's unique New England simple style Gothic architecture adds to the aesthetic and historical value of the Wailuku community.

Through the years, the church has faced deterioration due to weather and age, necessitating restoration work to preserve its structural integrity and historical significance. It's historical significance is matched by its ongoing contributions towards the community, allowing itself to be a gathering place for community events, services, and youth programs. Ensuring that it continues to serve future generations is of crucial historical importance. The proposed restoration project includes critical repairs to the steeple, roof, interior sanctuary, and related infrastructure. These efforts will ensure that the church continues to serve as a safe place for Hawaiian worship, celebrations, and community gatherings.

Many of you in the community have driven by this iconic building. Admired the shade of the monkey pod tree. Enjoyed live music under that same shade. Fed the feral chicken population. Attended funerals, weddings, rummage sales, and other events. It is old and historic building but not a museum. The current building is 149 years old. The congregation still gathers for worship. It is a small and faithful group. We are a part of your community and you are all a part of our community. Many of you know us. We are ohana, friends and neighbors.

Some of you have lived here your whole life but haven't visited or been inside of it. We say to you. E komo mai. Come. Truly it is not as intimidating as it looks. E komo mai. Come. Inside this historic building within your community you find a small Hawaiian church. Nothing fancy but a place that feels like home.

After many years of work restoration and preservation is becoming a reality. Architectural, structural work is now complete. The building permit is complete. A project manager has been hired. Bid request have gone out and have been received. Now we needed funds and it is a lot. The amount needed is \$2,700,000.00.

It has been a long journey to get to this place we are at now. There will be fundraisers. There will be grants written, there will be conversations, there will be begging. Lots of pule (prayer). Over the years we have reminded ourselves that Akua does not want us to fail but to succeed. In God's time. The time is now. The ho'ailona (signs) are all around us.

We humbly ask Maui County Office of the Mayor and the Maui County Council for your support by including funding in the budget for this Historic Building.

We ask our community to support this project with your donations. We ask for your continued support. Support in pule for this project. Support sharing of a grant or other funding source with us. Support in sharing the need with others.

Please reach out and contact any of us to donate or just to kukakuka (talk story) and share ideas.

Kahu Wayne Higa – kahuwayne@live.com



255 KAUALANI DRIVE, PUKALANI, HI 96768
(808) 344-7134

April 1, 2025

Re: 2026 Budget Hearing

Aloha,

First, thank you County of Maui for reconstructing the old Pukalani roads. As the roads are upgraded, it is a big improvement for our residents.

Pukalani Community Association appreciates the efforts to improve our ongoing drought conditions Upcountry and we ask for funding to find solutions to this long-standing issue.

Our 7th annual Pukalani Christmas Fair and Electric Light Golf Cart Parade is planned this year for the first Saturday in Dec.-Dec. 6th. We greatly appreciate the support from Councilmember Sugimura and the County of Maui to help make this event possible and we invite everyone to come and join the fun on Dec. 6th at the Pukalani Country Club from 4-7 pm.

Island-wide concerns that we share are help for the mentally ill, affordable housing solutions, funding to control invasive pests and increasing fireworks/bombs at New Years and 4th of July.

Mahalo,

Donna Clayton, President

Pukalani Community Association

RECEIVED AT DFED MEETING ON 04/01/25
upcountry

TESTIMONY FOR MAUI COUNTY COMMUNITY BUDGET HEARINGS

2-3 minutes

2025

ALOHA, My name is ALAN LLOYD and I live in MAKAWAO. (neighborhood)

I would like to testify on 4 issues facing the Maui County Council. The Council faces Federal budget cuts. I'm asking the Council to NOT cut the budget, otherwise called an Austerity budget, but to increase property taxes on property assessed at \$1 million and above.

We have a SAFETY NET on this island for those moderate income and below. The material conditions of the economy have changed since this Safety Net, of assistance and services, was set up. By reducing the current budget, for any reason, you are reducing the financial assistance and Services to our local population.

ISSUES FACING COUNTY COUNCIL:

1) Increase Rental-Food Assistance funding AND

Delete the Barriers to Rental Assistance, ie have to be homeless, have landlord Cooperation.

RENTS ARE TOO HIGH, AND WE NEED RENTAL and Financial ASSISTANCE. The ALICE Households are struggling to make ends meet.

How about if we take that ½ million proposed by the Mayor and put it towards our local people.

2) Pass RENT STABILIZATION.

RENTS ARE STILL GOUGING TENANTS. \$2300 for a 1 bedroom? WE NEED RENT STABILIZATION.

3) PROPERTY TAXES ARE LOW ON MAUI, AND MANY WITH EXPENSIVE HOMES DON'T PAY INCOME TAXES.

Increase property taxes for property valued over \$1 million.

RECEIVED AT PFED MEETING ON 4/1/25
Upcountry

Many property owners with property valued over \$1 million don't live full time on Maui, and their Principle residence is in another state. So they don't pay Hawai'i Income taxes. That IS unfair to locals that live here, who pay INCOME and PROPERTY TAXES.

If we compare Maui and Oregon, both with Property and Income taxes,

Maui's property tax:

\$1 Million assessed: \$5,870 annual

Oregon's property tax rate:

\$1 million assessed: \$8700 annual

WE CAN AFFORD TO INCREASE OUR PROPERTY TAX RATE, FOR PROPERTY OVER \$1 MILLION.

REQUIRE NON OWNER OCCUPIED TO PAY HIGHER PROPERTY TAXES, TO MAKE UP FOR THE INCOME TAX THEY DON'T PAY.

- 4) Create a 4th Tier for NON OWNER OCCUPIED PROPERTIES, VALUED AT \$10 MILLION OR ABOVE. Tax them at a higher rate then the Tier 3 rate.

AGAIN, WE DON'T NEED TO REDUCE THE BUDGET, AND THEREFORE REDUCE OUR SAFETY NET, THOSE WITH HIGHER VALUED PROPERTY CAN AFFORD TO PAY MORE.

Mahalo for your time.



KULA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

www.kulamaui.org

Jordan Hocker, President – jhocker07@gmail.com

The VISION of the Kula Community Association is to preserve open space, support agriculture, maintain a rural residential atmosphere, and to work together as a community.

The SPECIFIC PURPOSE of this association is to improve the quality of life for the residents of Kula, to promote civic welfare, and generally to benefit the community of Kula.

Kula Community Association BUDGET PRIORITIES for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

****Priority ranked by our community in a 01/12/25 General Meeting****

- 1. Water Supply**
- 2. Wildfire Preparedness**
- 3. Invasive Species Control**
- 4. Children's Safety**
- 5. Kula Recycling**
- 6. Road Improvements and Maintenance**
- 7. Kula Community Center**

Detailed List

1. **Water Supply – Dependable, Quality Water.** The KCA continues to prioritize the creation of a system that **provides dependable quality water** for all our residents and that provides water meters for the Upcountry Water Meter List. We would like to ensure that we have an adequate water supply for all the meters being requested. We encourage the County to ensure that funding is available for water storage alternatives. We support developing new water sources as well as increased treatment facilities. As such, we support funding to better understand Upcountry water system reliability.

In anticipation of a cooperative agreement with East Maui Water Authority, East Maui Irrigation and the State, please consider budgeting for increased amounts of water and filtration capabilities at Kamaole Weir Water Treatment Plant for the use of Upcountry Hawaiian homelands, farmers, and existing resident and future water meters. Please consider including costs for increased water storage and possibly solar energy for pumping water. We request and support future sustainable planning decisions to be made that will account for the safety of vulnerable water lines located in the Kula region. We request that the County fund a proactive inspection of vulnerable water lines and take action to prevent further destruction of them as experienced during major storm events.

2. **Wildfire Preparedness – First Priority should be Prevention.** With our recent experience from the August 8, 2023 fires and the Crater Road fire in 2024, Kula has learned our community was not prepared to survive a wildfire disaster. We continue to need to create firebreaks and have learned we have other needs as well. We need a plan in place to ensure there is water available to firefighters as well as an effective method of communicating with the community. We need the county to address fire hazards on public property and enforce laws related to private property. We need emergency supplies. We request funds be budgeted to both create and implement emergency plans, address emergency communication needs, construct and maintain adequate firebreaks. We ask that the county advocate for working civil defense sirens that can be heard throughout Kula. To ensure safety, we would like additional firefighting equipment as requested by the fire department to be available to fight a fire and maintain water storage tanks at higher elevations above the upcountry area. We request that the county engage and work with community groups such as Mālama Kula and Kula Community Watershed Alliance, who are working on and have expertise in this area.

3. **Invasive Species Control – Eliminate Axis Deer & Other Feral Ungulate Threats.** The KCA strongly supports efforts to control, reduce and manage the invasive species Axis deer, and control, reduce, and eradicate other invasive species, especially the Little Fire Ant, coqui frogs, glycine (also known as Tinaroo), and chickens.

Axis deer are by far the biggest concern in the Kula community. The deer are eating pasture land that should be available for the ranches' cattle operations. Deer are destroying many small farmers' crops. They impact the gardens of many residents. They are a significant danger to automobile traffic. They contribute heavily to the erosion that occurs mauka to makai. While we acknowledge that Axis deer are also a food source, we see the significant threats they incur to our community when they are unmanaged. So far, the County has been unable to reduce this problem.

We support increased funding for Maui Invasive Species Control (MISC) and other programs. Glycine/Tinaroo weed is a particular problem Upcountry, as the weed attaches itself to Jacaranda and other trees and eventually kills them. Coqui frogs are a major concern as neighboring Haiku and Maliko Gulch are facing severe problems that could lead to the spread of the frog to Kula and the rest of the island.

4. **Children's Safety.** The Council should ensure that actions are taken to construct the connector sidewalk to the existing Lower Kula sidewalk, in the vicinity of Haleakala Waldorf School. There is no safe way for the children and their parents to walk between this school on Lower Kula and the Kula Gym and community center facilities. The County is encouraged to cooperate with the State to complete sidewalks that connect Kula Elementary School to residential areas within one mile of the school. The high traffic on Kula Highway indicates the need for a crosswalk with flashing lights from Rice Park to Kula Country Farms. Speed limits need to be enforced.

5. **Kula Recycling.** We request that the County:
- a. establish a recycling site in the Kula area;
 - b. establish a location for the disposal of appliances, tires, TVs, etc. at the central landfill or similar central Maui location, which is easier for Kula residents to access than the current Kihei location, to keep this kind of trash off our roadsides; and
 - c. support and expand organic composting capacity for purely non-toxic materials, e.g., green-waste, restaurant waste, etc. in the Kula area.
6. **Road improvements and Maintenance.** Because the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) emphasizes federal and state projects, we would like the Department of Public Works to establish a priority list on its website of County roads that need to be repaved and those planned for slurry treatment within each district of the County and then budget to build the highest priority road improvements. We also request funds be budgeted for the proactive cleaning of culverts.
7. **Kula Community Center – Repairs and Upgrades.** The Kula Community Association (KCA) wishes to sincerely thank the Mayor and the Council for appropriating the funds and completing the purchase of the Kula Community Center. It took many years, but we now have a wonderful investment for our community's future. Mahalo!

Now that the County has purchased this facility, it will be necessary to make some previously deferred repairs and upgrades. Some of the community center's needs include the installation of Wi-Fi internet capabilities and a movable raised platform with steps.