

Great Committee

From: Nohe M. Uu-Hodgins
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 2:34 PM
To: zurica@oha.org
Cc: Great Committee
Subject: RE: Testimony of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs - Reso 23-194
Attachments: OHA Testimony - Resolution 23-194 - MCC - Developing A Comprehensive Recovery and Resiliency Plan in Response to Maui Wildfires of August 2023 - 092723 - Final.pdf

Aloha Zuri,

Mahalo for your written testimony. I am including our GREAT Committee staff.

Nohe

From: Zuri Aki <zurica@oha.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 5:39 AM
To: Nohe M. Uu-Hodgins <Nohe.Uu-Hodgins@mauicounty.us>; Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>
Cc: Thomas M. Cook <Thomas.Cook@mauicounty.us>; Gabe Johnson <Gabe.Johnson@mauicounty.us>; Tasha A. Kama <Tasha.Kama@mauicounty.us>; Alice L. Lee <Alice.Lee@mauicounty.us>; Keani N. Rawlins <Keani.Rawlins@mauicounty.us>; Shane M. Sinenci <Shane.Sinenci@mauicounty.us>; Yukilei Sugimura <Yukilei.Sugimura@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Testimony of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs - Reso 23-194

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Aloha mai e Chair U 'u-Hodgins a lāua 'o Vice Chair Paltin, a me nā Councilmembers,

My name is Zuri Ka'apana Aki and I am the Public Policy Manager of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, submitting OHA's testimony in **support** of Resolution 23-194 (GREAT-14) – a copy has also been uploaded through eComments.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to testify on this critical issue,

Zuri "Z" Ka'apana Aki, J.D.

*Public Policy Manager (Advocacy)
Office of Hawaiian Affairs*

Email: zurica@oha.org
Mobile: 808-554-1011
Office : 808-594-1908

560 N Nimitz Hwy #200, Honolulu, HI 96817

www.oha.org

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RESO 23-194

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PLAN IN RESPONSE TO THE ISLAND OF MAUI'S TRAGIC WILDFIRES OF AUGUST 2023

Maui County Council
Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee

September 27, 2023

9:00 AM

Council Chamber

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend to the Board of Trustees the position of **SUPPORT** on Resolution 23-194, which proposes the commitment of the Maui County Council to the development of a comprehensive recovery and resiliency plan in response to the catastrophic wildfires of August 2023 in addressing the immediate and long-term needs of residents for recovery and healing, while working toward County disaster resilience.

OHA wishes to express its deepest aloha for the people of Maui, particularly those who have endured loss due to this tragic event. While words may offer limited solace, it is within the collective spirit of resilience that we find hope. In the face of adversity, our communities have shown time and again their remarkable ability to come together, heal, and rebuild. The people of Maui are an exemplary testament to this.

As the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians¹ and tasked with ever-seeking the betterment of conditions of Native Hawaiians,² OHA provides these insights to bolster the Council's sincere efforts in meaningfully and responsibly addressing Maui's most urgent needs as we collectively move forward.

Ua lehulehu a manomano ka 'ikena a ka Hawai'i (Great and numerous is the knowledge of the Hawaiian people). Native Hawaiian culture is the Indigenous Knowledge of Hawai'i, with a collective trust of scientific research spanning millennia – it is integral to the development of all effective strategies in the State.

In light of the expressed need to consult with relevant experts, OHA takes this opportunity to emphasize the incalculable value of Native Hawaiian voices as an inseparable component of Native Hawaiian Knowledge – voices that have carried geographically rooted traditions across countless generations, often serving as the last bastions of proven knowledge that seamlessly connect our history to the present and maintain the capacity to guide us forward into the far future.

¹ HRS §10-3.

² Haw. Rev. Stat. §10-3(1) and (2).



RESO 23-194
DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PLAN IN
RESPONSE TO THE ISLAND OF MAUI'S TRAGIC WILDFIRES OF AUGUST 2023
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OHA further underscores that Native Hawaiian wisdom holds relevance across all aspects of our existence, carrying immense potential for profound and transformative change. his invaluable knowledge isn't confined to the past; it remains dynamic and continually evolving. Those entrusted with carrying forward these traditions seamlessly navigate multiple realms, facilitating a breadth of understanding that is vast. This multifaceted insight significantly enriches our capacity to address both current challenges and those that lie ahead.

Just as Native Hawaiian Knowledge holds immense value in Maui's recovery, the restoration of the ancient natural systems, which for millennia have shaped the cherished Native Hawaiian sense of place, is equally paramount. The integrity of Maui's natural environment and the natural-cultural resources upon which Native Hawaiians depend has been devastated by unsustainable practices – meaningful and responsible recovery cannot happen unless the wrongs of the past are made right.

OHA is resolutely committed to standing alongside the Maui County Council in their pursuit of recovery and resilience. OHA's kōkua is rooted in the belief that the synthesis of Native Hawaiian Knowledge, community unity, and mālama 'āina will forge a path of healing. Together, we can envision a future where the timeless resilience of the people of Maui and the wisdom of their ancestors unite to shape a landscape of strength, vibrancy, and sustainability. OHA is dedicated to providing ongoing support, to work alongside the Council and the community to ensure that Maui's recovery encompasses not only the rebuilding and restoration of our shared physical space, but also the revitalization of those intrinsic metaphysical realms³ that underpin the foundation of Native Hawaiian traditions.

OHA appreciates this opportunity to testify on this measure and to offer this insight to the Council. Mahalo nui loa.

³ Considering the grand scope of cultural relevance and importance, from wahi pana to wahi kapu and beyond. Our loved ones who have passed are always with us, sometimes occupying space beyond what we can see.