

## **EDB Committee**

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**From:** Suzanne Fields <suzmaui@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 04, 2020 10:16 AM  
**To:** EDB Committee  
**Subject:** EDB-87 - written testimony to support verbal testimony on 6-4-2020  
**Attachments:** EDB Committee testimony EDB-87 Fields-HEAL-MNFA 6-4-2020.docx

Greetings Economic Development and Budget Committee members:

I provided verbal testimony by phone today in support of EDB-87. I am submitting written testimony to back up what I shared today with the committee.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns on what I am submitting.

Please confirm receipt of this written testimony.

Mahalo Nui Loa

Suzanne Fields  
Volunteer  
Maui County Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition  
Maui Nui Food Alliance

Economic Development and Budget Committee – In support of EDB-87  
June 4, 2020  
Testimony from Suzanne Fields, Haiku

My name is Suzanne Fields and I am a long time resident of Haiku and a long time volunteer for Maui County's Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition; HEAL.

I am here to provide support for EDB-87 re: grants procedure and easing the ability for small nonprofits to access funding for projects and initiatives that support the people of Maui County.

As a volunteer for HEAL, I have been working to support the development of the Maui Nui Food Alliance.

Hawai'i imports about 85 to 90 percent of its food to support a population of 1.35 million statewide, with just over 166,000 in Maui County. It is said that if there were an emergency and the ports were to close, there would be five to seven days of food in grocery stores. This is alarming to say the least, and the reason why the Maui Nui Food Alliance (MNFA) was created!

The MNFA had a strategic planning session back in May 2019 where over 90 stakeholders from different sectors of the food system came together to express their concerns and provide solutions to the challenges Hawai'i residents face with our current food system. Out of this meeting came a draft strategic plan with specific strategic priorities to help focus the efforts of the alliance.

On February 26, 2020, the MNFA Steering Committee met at the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens in Kahului to discuss the 2020 goals and how they plan to be strategic when it comes to planning for the future of our food system. The Steering Committee members agreed upon the mission, vision and values for the MNFA and outlined ways to achieve the strategic priorities. Those strategic priorities are identified below.

**I am here today because the recent impacts of the pandemic have required that the work of the MNFA has completely pivoted – like most everyone else including those within the agriculture community – to food access issues for the community at large. This has impacted the MNFA's ability to seek funds to support the work. With easier access/a simpler grant process to fund initiatives, like the MNFA, we would be in a better position to positively impact Maui County's food system.**

HEAL has a full time coordinator for our work for Maui County. With the impacts of the pandemic, this individual has also taken on the work of Food Access Coordinator.

**Gaining access more immediately to funds to support a full time Food Access Coordinator for Maui County would truly support the work of MNFA and enable the organization to transition, when it is time, to the planned work to support the future of our food system.**

**AND this would enable Maui County to collaborate more fully with Food Access Coordinators that ALREADY work on Hawaii Island and Oahu.**

Summarized below are the strategic priorities of MNFA. With access more immediately to funding for this nonprofit's work – and while we also contend with the impacts of the pandemic – we can more collaboratively address Maui County's food system issues.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1 – PROMOTING A CULTURE OF HEALTH**

*Guiding Question:* How do we build a culture of healthy habits? What policies can reduce obesity and improve health?

*Goal:* The Maui Nui Food Alliance will develop a strategic agenda to improve the health of residents by cultivating healthy food skills and ensuring reliable access to healthy food for everyone.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2 – PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE FOOD SYSTEM**

*Guiding Question:* How do we prepare for and build a resilient food and agriculture system?

*Goal:* The Maui Nui Food Alliance will develop a strategic agenda to deliberately plan and implement an ecologically resilient, healthy food supply for Maui County that is economically viable for local food and farm enterprises and workers.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3 – ADVOCATING FOR IMPACT**

*Guiding Question:* How do we leverage public and private resources and influence to advance the Maui Nui Food Alliance's shared agenda for the development of a nutritious, ecologically resilient food supply?

*Goal:* The Maui Nui Food Alliance will persuade, educate, and mobilize the public and key decision makers to advance its agenda.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE THIS TESTIMONY TODAY.

MAHALO NUI LOA