

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

MINUTES

April 1, 2026

Mayor Hannibal Tavares Community Center, Social Hall

CONVENE: 6:01 p.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair
Councilmember Kauanoë Batangan, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member

EXCUSED: Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member

STAFF: Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst
Clarissa Macdonald, Legislative Analyst
Richelle Kawasaki, Deputy Director, Office of Council Services
Maria Leon, Committee Secretary
Jean Pokipala, Council Services Assistant
Nālani Fujihara, Hawaiian Communications Specialist
Cara Bolte, Project Assignment Specialist
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

OTHERS: Stephanie Burger
Warren Gouveia
Mateo Leong
Tyson Keating
Daryl Sato
Lyle Rickard
Adriel Yoshioka
Melissa Ramos
Avery Tanaka
Elisha Rabanes
Melanie Edmalin
Zeline Galiza
Charisse Matalines
Arianny Yap-Wilsey
Crystal Henkel
Lilikea Mahoney
Brandon DeCambra
Aaron Reichert

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David Mason
Isaac Jackson
Robert Mulrane
Danielle Evans
Gerry Ross
Robert Street
Taj Berg
Kingston Corba
Aero Campas
Chris Masterson
Ariella Collins
Christina Reichert
Ethan Romanchak
Shayla Ko'omoa
Zayden Collins
Gregory Garcia
Emily Erickson
Ka'io Martin
Annette Niles
Theresa Thompson
Kyle Ellison
Leilani Magee
David Daly
Deb Marois
Tiare Lawrence
Jasee Law
Warren Watanabe

(20+) additional attendees

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

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), and RESOLUTION 26-63)

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . *(gavel)*. . . Hi, everybody. Hi, everybody. Oh, working. Welcome to our first Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee meeting, and we're having it with you in the community. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura. I'm the Upcountry representative here, and I'm so glad to see all of you. This meeting is being conducted, and we...our purpose is to put ourselves with you. So, we want to be in the community, and we're going to every single district, including Lānaʻi and Molokai and Hāna, and today is the first. So, with us today, I just want to introduce Vice-Chair Kauanoē Batangan; and Councilmember Tom Cook from Kīhei;

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Gabe Johnson, who fl...came...not flew...there you are, from Lānaʻi; Chair Alice Lee from Wailuku; Tamara Paltin from West Maui...she is not at her meeting in West Maui to be with all of you today, so thank you, Tamara; Member Rawlins-Fernandez from Molokai; Shane Sinenci from Hāna. And not with us today because she is with her...celebrating with her family a birthday party is Nohelani Uʻu-Hodgins. So, and assisting us with today's meeting is the Office of Council Services Staff, so see all of them there. We also have *Akakū*, Austin is filming, and it's not live, so you're going to...you're going to...

MR. HUTTO: It is live.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It is live? Oh, right. Oh, very good. So, today, all of who are...who are attending BFED Committee residency area meeting, and we only have one item on the agenda, and you can talk about anything on the agenda, any department, any program, robotics, whatever you want, and you'll have three minutes maximum. So, testifiers, when you come up...we're going to be taking kūpuna and children first, and then the rest of the community. As a reminder for today's meeting, as the meeting is all in-person only, oral testimony we'll receive exclusively in...in-person today, so we don't have any online testifiers. We will...we will now take public testimony. Please let Staff know if you would like to testify and sign up at that back table back there. When you do come up, please state your name and what organization you are. And we love to receive written testimony, and you can submit it to us on eComment link at mauicounty.us/agenda, or you can give it to our Staff there if you want to. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes, and beyond that, if you're going to testify, I'll give you another 30 seconds so you can complete your testimony. If you wish to testify anonymously, you can also just say your name is anonymous. We respect that. And thank you, everyone, for your cooperation. I will now proceed with oral testimony. Staff, please call up the first testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Yes, Chair. The first testifier is Stephanie Burger, to be followed by Warren Gouveia.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MS. BURGER: And I have my little stopwatch here, so I've got three. Thank you for letting me go first. MEO Bus system is amazing. I am able to work part-time because of the MEO Bus. Otherwise, I would not be able to be working whatsoever. So, I just got a job a few weeks ago at Maui Christian Academy, and there's no way I could get there from where I live. So, it also allows me the freedom on the weekend to go down to Planet Fitness, which is my gym that I attend. And the call system is amazing and efficient. You...I've never had to wait more than a few minutes getting ahold of somebody at the reception area, making appointments. And then just recently, I think their reminder call system is excellent, the day before. They're friendly, the bus drivers, helpful. Two of my favorites are Arlie (*phonetic*), who has just been hired on, is their youngest Member. And then Loretta (*phonetic*) is, I think, been driving bus there for 20-some years. So, they're always helpful, always amazing, have extra patience and

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extra care when dealing with the...with the...with us. So, I just want to thank you. Again, I would not be working to this day if it wasn't for the MEO Bus system. So, thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Members, any questions? None. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Warren Gouveia, to be followed by Mateo Leong.
(pause)

MR. GOUVEIA: Good evening. My name is Warren Gouveia. Just wanted to mention that Alice Lee was my second girlfriend in high school.

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

MR. GOUVEIA: Second.

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

MR. GOUVEIA: My first girlfriend was Kamalita *(phonetic)* from Waihe'e. Her last name was Closa *(phonetic)*. And loved to pick her up, and I'd sit in the back seat, and she'd sit in the other end of the back seat. And I'd always have to ask her her name, and she'd always have to say, Kamalita Closa. And I'd slide over, and my friends was...that was his brother, they'd all be jealous because I was sitting closer to Kamalita. And the other person I'd like to mention is Shane Sinenci, my kindergarten student in Hāna a hundred years ago. And I always like to remind them that everything he knows, he learned in kindergarten, like the book.

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

MR. GOUVEIA: I'm here this evening to testify for MEO Transportation. Thirty years ago I had a massive stroke, and ever since then, I've been labeled as totally disabled, so I depend totally on MEO for transportation to the doctors, to Nisei, and all other errands that I need to go to. I just want you to try to remember MEO when you work on your budget, and remember them when you start dividing your pie. I used to get the bus, I have a very steep, dry, concrete driveway. And if I ever get into trouble with the law, you can tell them that I have a lot of DNA on...on my driveway.

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

MR. GOUVEIA: I've had so many falls going down, but now MEO is so accommodating, they have a special van that comes out now up to the top of the driveway, and they have a side...side door that I can get in on. I no longer have to walk down the driveway to get into the bus. They are so accommodating. I know a lot of us don't think that we're either...ever going to get old and we're going to use some of these senior services, but believe me, some...we're all going to eventually, either us or our parents, and you would really appreciate MEO if you could maybe even take a day one day and take a ride with

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them on the bus to see some of the things that they do. They are so accommodating, and I'd just like you to remember them when you do your budgeting. I don't know if you all know that today is Captain Cook's birthday, and because of that, I made special arrangements with our generous Chairman, Alice Lee, and she is so accommodating. And in...remembering Captain Cook, before all of you got here, we put a sticker of Captain Cook's eye. There's an eye on one of the seats some of you are sitting on. Don't all knock yourselves out. If you have this eye on your seat that you're sitting on, she has a cash prize for you in an envelope. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I got it.

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

MR. GOUVEIA: You got it. So, whoever has the Cook eye, see Alice after this.

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

MR. GOUVEIA: You can thank Alice, she's always been so generous. Remember Alice was number two.

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

MR. GOUVEIA: You never forget your number one and your number two. Thank you very much. I have to hurry and get back.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: *(Applause)*

MR. GOUVEIA: I need to get back home and my Golden Girls are going to be coming on in a few minutes. I have every episode memorized. I know every line. I love Blanche. What a hot thing. But I also love Rose. Thank you very much.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: *(Applause)*

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any clarifying questions? Okay. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Mateo Leong, to be followed by Tyson Keating.

MR. LEONG: Hello, Members of the Maui Council. My name is Mateo Leong, and I am a fifth grader at Pukalani Elementary School. I have been part of the STEMworks after-school program for five years, ever since I was in the first grade. I am a second year member of the STEM Imagineers Robotics Team. This year, I contributed to my team as a loader and a driver. Through my experience with the robotics program, I was able to participate in the VEX IQ regionals in O'ahu, and we went to Japan two years in a row to compete at the Japan Cup in Tokyo. By attending the STEMworks program, I have learned many important life skills, such as teamwork, problem solving, and how to cooperate with others. I would like the Maui...the Maui County Council to continue funding and even

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increase funding for MEDB so that more kids are able to join STEM and can learn important life skills too. The funds also help our team pay for equipment and helps us to experience unique activities, such as Save a Life Day. We learned about the dangers of...of being distracted while driving, CPR, how to spot a stroke, and how to use an AED. Thank you for your time, and please continue to support our...our STEM programs.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: *(Applause)*

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Tyson Keating, to be followed by Daryl Sato.

MR. KEATING: Aloha. My name is Tyson, and I'm from 1074B on the robotics team. I love robotics because I can learn a lot, such as programming, driving, and building. The robotics impacts our teamwork and talking to other teams without fear or hesitation. But we are here to thank Yuki Lei and others who have donated to Pukalani Elementary to make our robotics team prosper and future generations to learn the STEM engineering process. On behalf of 1074B, mahalo.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: *(Applause)*

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions for the testifier? Member Paltin. She has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Hello? Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Can you hear? Tyson, I just wanted to clarify, did you know that the County of Maui offers a supplemental bonus for engineers? So, if you become an engineer and you come join the County, there's like more money than the private sector.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: A job of the future. Thank you. No other questions. Okay. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Daryl Sato, to be followed by Lyle Rickard.

MR. SATO: Good evening. My name is Daryl Sato, and I am an afterschool STEM teacher and robotics coach at Pukalani Elementary, as well as the full-time teacher there. I'm here tonight to request your continued support for MEDB and to urge the Council to continue prioritizing its funding and growth. Investing in STEM education is not just about teaching kids how to code and build robots. It's about teaching them to think critically, solve complex problems, and adapt to rapidly changing world. Here's why the program is so vital for our County. The modern job market is increasingly driven by technology and innovation. By supporting STEMworks, we're directly preparing our local youth for high-paying, sustainable careers right here in our community. Our program provides hands-on access to resources that many students may not otherwise have. It sparks

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curiosity in children from all backgrounds and shows them that a future in science and technology is within their reach. When we invest in our kids' education early on, we create a pipeline of local talent for our businesses rather than watching our brightest minds leave for other destinations. I've personally seen the impact of our program. Many of our past STEM students who are now in middle school, high school, and college return time after time, again, to help mentor our current students in STEM-related activities. Our current student coach for robotics was once a Pukalani student who loves robotics so much that he decided to continue to this day. Thank you for your time, your dedication to our community, and your continued vision in supporting MEDB and Pukalani Elementary. Our children and our County's future are well worth the investment. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions for the testifier? Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I...I just wanted to clarify, are you letting the students know that the County has many openings in IT and engineering, not just the business, but the County, too, if they want to come back and stay in Maui? We got plenty of openings, there's an engineering supplement, and it's good-paying jobs.

MR. SATO: Yes. Our program not only focuses on robotics, but we focus on the different aspects of technology, as well as we encourage the free-thinking, critical thinking, and problem-solving process. Yeah. We want the kids to stay in Maui to create a better island. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Just wanted to plant the seed that there's a home for them at the County.

MR. SATO: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you, Daryl. I've known him since he was born. I've known him. His mother is my classmate. Thank you very much, Daryl, for all that you do and all that you do for the students. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Lyle Rickard, to be followed by Adriel Yoshioka.

MR. RICKARD: Good evening, Members of the Council. My name is Lyle Rickard, and I'm a fifth grader at Pukalani Elementary School and part of our robotics team. I just want to say thank you to Yuki Lei Sugimura for supporting our team. Because of your support, we get to build robots, learn how to code, and work together to solve problems. One of my favorite things in robotics is working with my team. Sometimes it's challenging, but it's really fun to figure things out together. We also get to travel together for competitions, which is really exciting and fun. It's also some...it's also something I really look forward to. Robotics has become one of my favorite parts of school, and your support helps make that possible for me and my teammates. Also, I got to go on a field trip to the Save a Life Day event, which was a really great learning experience. In the future, I think I might want to do something with robotics or technology, and this

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program is helping me discover that. I hope you will continue to support programs like STEMworks. Thank you for helping our team and supporting students like us. Have a great evening.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? All right. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Adriel Yoshioka, to be followed by Melissa Ramos.

MR. YOSHIOKA: My name...my name is Adriel...my name is Adriel Yoshioka, and I'm thank you...thankful for continuously funding my STEM class. It is important to me because I learned a lot. I...I've become creative and gained lots of friends and developed teamwork, and I'm thankful.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Melissa Ramos, to be followed by Avery Tanaka.

MS. RAMOS: Aloha, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Melissa Ramos, and I am here today representing Pukalani Elementary 'ohana as their Vice Principal. We are currently celebrating 50 years of education. And as we look back at our country roots, we must look forward to the future of our leaders, and they're right here. The MEDB STEMworks Afterschool Program is more than an extracurricular activity. It is the bridge to the 21st Century for our students. Right now, in our Pukalani classrooms, we see unstoppable energy when students engage with this program, whether they are coding their first program or building their robot for the robotics competitions or collaborating in e-sports. They aren't just playing, they are learning. And programs like STEMworks MEDB...sponsored by MEDB ensure that our Pukalani students have the same high-tech opportunities as any student in our country. This program is vital in keeping our kids engaged, safe, and inspired after the school bell rings. I urge you to continue funding for MEDB's STEMworks program. Let's invest in the tools that allow our students potential to truly thrive and bring them back to Maui. Thank you.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Avery Tanaka, to be followed by Elisha Rabanes.

MS. TANAKA: I just got my expander so it might be hard for me to talk. Good evening, Councilmembers. My name is Avery Tanaka. I attend Pukalani Elementary School and I'm in the fourth grade. I'm here to testify in support of Maui County providing funding for all of MEDB's STEM and robotics programs. I've been attending STEM programs for the past three years. I have learned about coding, robots, and engineer...and the engineering design process. During my experience on the STEM research team, I learned how to plan, organize information, and work with others as a team. Their

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encouragement to express myself has greatly boosted my confidence. I have learned many skills that will help me in everyday life. It has also given me ideas on possible future careers. Again, I am here to testify in support of Maui County's funding of STEMworks programs. I ask you to please continue funding these programs. It is vital to me and many other students who can make this world a better place.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Member Paltin has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Avery? Is that Avery? I just wanted to clarify what...what kind of careers are you thinking of at this time, and do any of them include coming to work with us at the County? For the County? We're waiting. I'll...I'll cheer you on. If you need a reference, let me know.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: She's going to remember that. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Elisha Rabanes, to be followed by Melanie Edmalin.

MS. RABANES: Aloha, Maui County officials. My name is Elisha May Rabanes, and I'm here to show my support for continued funding for MEDB because their programs...their programs have directly helped me grow and it has shaped my path in so many ways. When I first joined high school from my freshman to junior year, I joined VEX Robotics and this after-school program has helped me develop critical thinking skills, along with teaching me how to work in a group. It is...it has also helped me gain confidence in myself, but without the funding of MEDB and their resources, it wouldn't have been possible for me to develop these skills. Today I serve as Maui High School's Girls Can STEM President and our club encourages the young students to familiarize themselves with science, technology, engineering and math, and MEDB has funded our STEM Nights that we hosted at these elementary schools and it has allowed them to try on...to try hands-on activities. And because of this support, we've been able to reach students who might have not been sure if they wanted to join STEM, but because they've been introduced to these ideas that they sparked an interest. In addition, I've also had the chance to do a few internships with MEDB. Last summer I worked with Hale Makua, and it has also helped me develop these skills with learning patient interaction, which is something that you can't be taught at school but through experience. And also, we've been able to do internships with teaching middle school students about technology from 3D printing and robotics. These have helped how to...help me realize what it's like to also learn how to teach these younger students about technology. And my story is just one example of how much MEDB has impacted us, and it's important to invest in the future generation because continuing funding MEDB for our programs will give the students the same opportunities that we have to learn and grow. And supporting MEDB means supporting students who want to grow and lead and contribute to their communities in the future. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Well done. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Melanie Edmalin, to be followed by Zeline Galiza.

MS. EDMALIN: Good evening, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Melanie Edmalin and I am a student in Maui High School. I am here today to express my strong support for continuing and expanding MEDB STEM programs. Through MEDB I have had the opportunity to attend STEM events, participate in hands-on activities, and even demonstrate experiments to younger students. With the support and funding provided by MEDB, we've been able to host STEM Nights where we created exciting demonstrations like elephant toothpaste and lava lamps. These activities may seem simple, but they spark curiosity and make science come alive for students of all ages. Seeing the excitement on younger students' faces as they realize that science and technology can be fun and creative has been one of the most rewarding experiences for me. Those moments remind me of how important it is to inspire curiosity at a young age. Because of that curiosity, it helps shape the next generation of innovators and problem solvers. I am also a member of the Girls Can...a club called Girls Can STEM, where our goal is to encourage more girls to expose STEM fields and recognize that there is a place for them in science, technology, engineering, and math. MEDB has helped fund our club and provide supplies for the events we organize, which allows us to reach more students and create meaningful hands-on learning experiences. Because of this support, girls like me are gaining confidence, mentorship, and real world experience that help us envision a future in STEM. Supporting MEDB means supporting opportunities for students across Maui County, opportunities to learn, to lead, and to dream big. I truly believe that continuing these programs will help build a stronger, more innovative community for all of us. Mahalo for your time and for considering continued support for MEDB STEM programs. By investing in these programs today, you are not just funding activities, you are investing in the future scientists, engineers, and leaders of Maui.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Zaline Galiza, to be followed by Charisse Novelyn Matalines.

MS. GALIZA: Good evening, Councilmembers, and thank you for this opportunity. My name is Zaline Galiza, and I will be testifying for the Maui Economic Development Board. I'm involved in Maui High's Girls Can STEM Club, and through MEDB's contributions, we've been able to make a meaningful impact on both my personal growth and my community as well. And your continued support can help sustain and expand these opportunities for more students. One of the most impactful experiences I've had through this program is participating in STEM Nights. This event allows younger students to explore STEM in a fun and interactive environment, which exposes them to different areas of STEM. Planning these events, which rely on the funding that MEDB provides us, has shown me that patience and problem solving is very important, especially when activities don't

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go as expected. Since MEDB has made STEM Nights possible, I've developed skills in communication, adaptability, and perseverance, especially by working with younger kids who are often unpredictable. Collaboration is also a huge part of making STEM Nights successful. With the help of MEDB, we were able to collaborate with three additional clubs, such as HOSA, Math Club, and Science Club. I'm also involved in HOSA, and through this collaboration, we were able to incorporate health-related aspects into activities. By including different clubs, we are able to expose students to a wider variety of STEM fields, helping them discover what they are really interested in. They can explore specific areas that appeal to them, and they're more likely to stay engaged and potentially pursue those interests in the future. Overall, this program has helped me make a meaningful impact on the younger students that we volunteer with, and it also taught me valuable skills that will benefit me in the future. I ask that you continue supporting and funding MEDB so they can continue to reach students and provide opportunities that truly make a difference. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Charisse Novelyn Matalines, to be followed by Arianny Yap-Wilsey.

MS. MATALINES: Good evening, Councilmembers. My name is Charisse Matalines, and I'm a junior at Maui High School and a part of the Girls Can STEM Club. Although I have been in this club for a year, it has taught me ways I could take the initiative, express creativity, and explore a variety of ways to educate myself on science while having fun and making the most out of my time to partake in something that would step me out of my comfort zone. I am involved with the club, ensuring I meet requirements quarterly by setting aside time for it. One of the club's activities is STEM Nights at elementary schools here. At these STEM Nights, we collaborate with other clubs, such as HOSA and Math and Science to assist students with experiments across various scientific fields, including chemistry, biology, engineering, et cetera. Overall, it has definitely influenced the way I approach science, as I could create an engaging environment and provide educational activities with the kids to help them develop an interest in the diverse field of study. I have become inspired to pursue a potential degree in biology, as I typically tend to...as I'm...I haven't been like able to like figure out what I want to do, but definitely this club has like helped me explore more...explore more out there. For this reason, we need the support of funding of the MEDB because it provides funding for Girls Can STEM, allowing us to impact the future generations by creating opportunities to offer a variety of events that could advocate and bring attention to major problems. To motivate, represent, and empower girls to pursue their passions in ways that they can help out and improve the local community with the skills that are acquired through these events, such as resilience, collaboration, innovation, and dedication. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Well done. Member Paltin has a question for you.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just was wondering if you knew that...like, you know, the wastewater treatment facilities involve biology, and...and there's plenty openings and a career ladder. So, if you're unsure of what you want to do, check us out at the County.

MS. MATALINES: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Arianny Yap-Wilsey, to be followed by Crystal Henkel.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, I see some boys in the back. Did you want to sign up to testify? I wonder?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you are? Okay. Good. We're taking students first. Okay. Sorry. Please continue.

MS. YAP-WILSEY: Hi, good evening, Councilmembers. My name is Arianny Yap-Wilsey. I am a sophomore at Maui High School, and I am here to support the continued funding and contributions of the Maui Economic Development Board's program. I am part of the club, Girls Can STEM, where I've had the opportunity to attend STEM Nights and learn through hands-on activities that I would not normally have access to. Through these experiences, I've built skills in problem solving, teamwork, communication, and creativity. These directly connect to my future career, architecture, where designing buildings takes planning, critical thinking, and working closely with others like engineers and clients. Architecture is not just about making buildings look nice, but more so creating spaces that are safe, useful, and meaningful for the people who use them. It also includes thinking about the environment and how a building can have a positive impact on a community. The hands-on STEM Nights I've experienced are helping me see how ideas can turn into real-world designs, which is a big...which is a big part of becoming an architect. Programs like Girls Can STEM give students like me the chance to explore our interests, gain confidence, and see real-world possibilities for our future. Without the support, many of these opportunities would not be available. Continuing to fund this program means continuing to invest in students, in our education, and in the future. Thank you for listening.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I have a quick question for you. You mentioned you're in a class called Girls in STEM?

MS. YAP-WILSEY: Club. Girls Can STEM.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: What's it called?

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MS. YAP-WILSEY: Girls Can STEM.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. How many are in that class?

MS. YAP-WILSEY: It's a club. There's like about...maybe like about 80 students in that club.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's wonderful. You know, they're underrepresented in this, so it's really...I'm really happy you guys are doing something. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

MS. YAP-WILSEY: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Crystal Henkel, to be followed by Hayden Mahoney.

MS. HENKEL: Hi. I just wanted to start with thanking you very much for developing the program in Maui County for STEM. I felt really compelled to come and testify. My daughter goes to Pukalani Elementary. She's in third grade. She's been in the STEM program as long as it's been around. And then she's going to be going to kindergarten next year. And I wanted to relay a memory of how she described her experience with the STEM program, is that about two years ago, her and her friend, I was picking them up from STEM, and I said, how did it go? And they said, well, they said that one of the things they covered was that girls can do engineering and science. And we said, of course they can. Because my mom is an engineer. My mom is a scientist. All that stuff. So, the fact that her mom happened to work as a scientist, I myself am an engineer. They have this example of older like women that have these careers, and they can see that they can do it themselves. But this reinforces that for other people that don't have that in their lives. When I started a million years ago, as an engineer, I worked in an engineering division with 350 people. And prior to me starting there, there were two women. And I remember when I left five years later, there were eight. And people thought, that was so many women in the building. And they were like, we're going to have to do another bathroom. And it was this whole big thing. And it was just a big change. And there has been such an amazing change in our country, in this County, about supporting women in science. And I think this program really does that for a lot of people, exposing them to that, understanding that they can have an interest in that. And I think that's really a good part of the program. I'm going to leave it with that. So, thank you so much for developing the program, and I really hope you continue to support it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next. Anybody have a question?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I just had a question. As an engineer, a women engineer, what would make it attractive for you to come work for the County? We're...we're an equal opportunity employer.

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MS. HENKEL: I am going to be looking into that. I...I have been working for the State, actually. So, I worked for the university for a while.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah, the County is way better.

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

MS. HENKEL: The County's way better. That's what everyone says. I'll get on the job board.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I don't think the State supports MEDB. The County supports MEDB.

MS. HENKEL: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thanks.

MS. HENKEL: Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Hayden Mahoney, to be followed by Lilikea Mahoney.

MS. MAHONEY: Hello to the Maui County Councilmembers. My name is Lilikea, and this is my brother Hayden, and we go to Pukalani Elementary School. I am here to...I am here to share support for MEDB STEMworks After-School Program. Over the past few years, I have been lucky to enjoy learning about robotics, gaming, and 3D printing. And I really loved the semester I spent gardening with my friends, growing herbs, vegetables, and flowers in our school garden. Now I am learning how to play the ukulele, and I have a recital coming up. I have wanted to learn how to play the ukulele for a long time, and I'm really grateful that I am getting to now. Most of my friends would also love to learn how to play, and we want to tell you how important it is for us. My brother is also enrolled in after-school STEMworks, and we wanted to thank you for your continued support of this program. Thank you.

MR. H. MAHONEY: Thank you.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Brandon DeCambra, to be followed by Aaron Reichert.

MR. DECAMBRA: Hi, my name is Brandon DeCambra from Krank Cycles. I work for Krank Cycles, and I work at Kahului one, the Krank Cycle one. And I have fun with my family and stuff, and hang out with Christian guys, and I like bikes. They're fun. And then I

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ride my bike sometimes, and have fun with my friends. Aaron, do you want to say something?

MR. REICHERT: I'm going to say after you.

MR. DECAMBRA: Okay. Cycling is strong for...for us, yeah. Krank Cycles is...is very strong. Yeah. If you have any questions, just tell...tell me, or tell Moose. Aloha.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions for...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. DECAMBRA: You have any questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, any questions? No.

MR. DECAMBRA: No.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. DECAMBRA: Okay.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Aaron Reichert, to be followed by David Mason.

MR. REICHERT: All right. Aloha, County and Chair, Members. My name is Aaron Moose Reichert, the owner of Krank Cycles, as you've already heard. I had my front man here. So, for over 25 years, I've worked directly with youth on the island, mentoring, repairing, and giving away thousands of bikes, right, across the community of Maui, right? And, you know, I'm here to support the funding of the youth program, specifically the Cycle Strong Program, through the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition. You know, and there was a question, like are there places to do this program? Of course there are. I mean, you know, within the mountain bike, we have the Makawao forest, we have Polipoli, we now have our own private lease park in the West Maui that we...the Mountain Bike Club, we've done all on our own with our own money. And so, we have several places to ride, but what we're trying to do is, is we're trying not to take kids to a place to ride. We're trying to meet the kids to show them how to ride. And in this program, you know, it's really important because, like especially after the fires, you know, I firsthand was in Nāpili Park, and we gave away tons and tons of bikes all over the island, but there was kids there that were just in the shelters and as soon as they got a bike, they were instantly transformed out of that trauma, right? And...and so, you know, not just with that, just out of their everyday lives, so...with that displacement. So, you know, this program is super important. It's getting kids outside, getting them moving again, reconnected with themselves, off those phones. You know, there's several kids here that we brought in that we mentor through the bike shop and through the Mountain Bike

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Club, and they'll...they'll testify to what it's done in their lives, you know. And to see these kids not on their phones constantly and outside and doing great things, you know. So, you know, we've already partnered with ourselves with MPD, Maui Police Department, the Parks and Rec. They have programs. They...they have limited staffing. They don't get the reach, so we're hoping to fill the gap and partner with these programs and extend that with this program. I think it could be a strong thing for the whole community. I think we can go to Molokai and Lāna'i with this and...and serve Maui County as a whole wide. You know, if you have any questions, I'm here to answer that, and thank you all for your support.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thanks.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Please proceed.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thanks, Aaron. Are these mountain bikes or e-bikes?

MR. REICHERT: They're...they're going to be pedal bikes, regular pedal bikes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MR. REICHERT: Yeah. Not...not e-bikes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

MR. REICHERT: Thanks for the clarity. And this will get kids off of e-bikes. . . .(laughing) . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. REICHERT: Any other questions?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Do they wear helmets?

MR. REICHERT: With the program, it is with helmets. Especially with the stuff I've done on my own, every bike that we've given away has come [sic] with a helmet. It's very important. That's part of the program. We're going to be teaching safety and how to ride the bike, and then on top of it, taken to the areas to ride the bikes. There's a lot of streets to...to school programs that aren't being utilized. Kids are not riding their bikes to school as they should, so this was hoping to jumpstart things like that in our community.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. REICHERT: Yeah.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. REICHERT: Thank you. Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is David Mason, to be followed by Isaac Johnson [sic].

MR. MASON: Aloha. Aloha, esteemed Councilmembers. Thank you for lending me your ears for just a few moments. My name is David Mason. I've been an educator here on Maui for a little over 20 years now. I'm here in support of the Maui...I'm sorry, the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition's funding for their Cycle Strong Program. There aren't enough opportunities for our kids to be active. There aren't enough organized venues for biking with kids. I grew up in the '70s and '80s riding a BMX bike and going all over the place. And I can tell you, that's one of the things that kept me out of trouble for so long. I was so interested in...into what I was doing. It was also how I started my love for mechanics. I learned to fix my bike, which helped later when I went to fix my car. So, there's a lot of things that kids can...can...can learn about that. And if you're wondering if kids are really interested in getting in biking, let me tell you. Recently I did a survey at my school with my middle schoolers and put a lot of things down saying, would you like this club? Would you like this club? Over 50 percent of my middle schoolers said they wanted to participate in Mountain Bike Club. That is something we do and we do offer from the school, but it's a very short amount of time. And there just aren't enough of those opportunities. They need it for their physical wellness as well as their mental wellness. So, just a brief support of how important I think this could be and what it could be for our kids growing up.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are...are you Malcolm's dad?

MR. MASON: Oh, my goodness. . . .(laughing). . . Yes, I am Malcolm and Antonio's dad.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I remember them from Junior Lifeguards when I used to teach Junior Lifeguards.

MR. MASON: I thought you looked familiar. . . .(laughing). . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Right on.

MR. MASON: Malcolm is doing very well. And he did a lot of biking as well.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Right on. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Small world.

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MR. MASON: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Isaac Jackson, to be followed by Lori Naluai.

MR. JACKSON: Aloha, Council. Knock, knock.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who's there?

MR. JACKSON: Boo.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Boo who?

MR. JACKSON: Don't cry, it's just a joke. Okay. Now that we're comfortable with each other, let me introduce myself. My name is Isaac Jackson, I'm 15 years old and I attend King Kekaulike High School. I support the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition Cycle Strong Program, and I just wanted to come up here and say thank you, and urge you to fund and support the Maui Mountain Bike Club. For...they have given me the opportunity to ride bikes on Maui so that I can stay out of trouble, stay healthy, and have so much fun. And thank you to the Maui mountain bike community for being so kind and welcoming to me. Woo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. JACKSON: Any questions?

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Lori Naluai, to be followed by Robert Mulrane. The next testifier is Robert Mulrane, to be followed by Danielle Evans.

MR. MULRANE: My name is Robert Mulrane, Council. We have a great program. I mean at Maui...at Krank Cycles, everybody's welcome. It's...it's a nice environment. Everybody's friendly there. And...and there's...there's everybody's...come down and support us and that's really it. Thank you.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Danielle Evans, to be followed by Gerry Ross.

MS. EVANS: Hello. Hi. How are you guys? Good? Okay. So, I'm testifying on behalf of MEO Head Start. I am a parent for Makawao Head Start, also a past employee, I was there for like five years. But...okay. So, on behalf of MEO Head Start, I respectfully submit this request for continued funding, consideration, and support in the County of Maui Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. Head Start ensures essential services like early learning,

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healthcare, and family support, especially for those facing challenging...like challenges, like housing instability, low income, and limited childcare access. This ongoing funding would help uphold safe, high-quality classrooms, recruit and retain qualified educators, and provide comprehensive family support services including parent education, case management, and enhanced health and nutrition programs. Lastly, I would like to request for the County of Maui to consider looking into the nutritional quality of the meals being served to the keiki, and potentially looking into creating if not a program that can incorporate high quality, fresh, local-grown foods into daily meals and snacks. This initiative would not only improve the nutritional quality of meals served, but also support Maui farms and strengthen our local food system by keeping food dollars in the local community, create healthy eating habits, and encourage connections between school, farms, family, and culture. And the importance of improving nutrition and MEO Head Start programs ensures that our keiki receive healthy, fresh, and local-sourced meals that support their growth, learning, and long-term well-being. Overall, the County's investment in MEO Head Start is an investment in our future, keiki's future. Yeah. Thank you.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Gerry Ross, to be followed by R. Street.

MR. ROSS: Aloha and good evening, Councilors. Thank you for taking the time to come out into the community, and especially thank you for the time that you're putting in, grueling hours to get this budget all in good shape. My name's Gerry Ross. I'm a co-farmer of Kupa'a Farms with my wife, and our family has been growing food for Maui for 48 years. I'm also the past president and current board member of the Maui Coffee Association. I'm a teacher for the Farm Apprentice and Mentoring Program. We're in Cohort 11 and I've been there since day one, and I'm also a proud and very grateful recipient of an MEO microgrant in the first year that they came out. Maui Coffee Association receives funding through the Maui County Farm Bureau, and we use that for educational events for our farmers, for coffee drinkers around the state, for attendance at the Hawai'i Coffee Association annual meeting, for partial funding of the Maui Coffee Academy, which is an upcoming educational venture that we're in with UHMC, and we also use those funds to put on the always popular Seed to Cup Festival at the Tropical Plantation with an attendance of over 2,000 people. Support from the...of the Maui Coffee Association has also allowed us to kind of stem the tide of pending threats from coffee leaf rust and coffee berry borer, which are nightmares for our coffee farmers, but I think we're gaining the upper hand on that. Through the Farm Apprentice and Mentoring Program, I teach new farmers sustainable farming techniques like we use on our farm. We received 20 inches of rain in the Kona One storm which is, I calculated, that's 1.6 million gallons on our four-acre farm, and I'm proud to report that of that 1.6 million gallons, I'd say 99 percent soaked into the soil. None of it was down in Kihei, it all was absorbed. So, aren't those the types of agricultural practices you would want the community to teach to new and upcoming farmers? So, that Farm Apprentice and Mentoring Program is really important for that. Part of our success has been driven by our on-farm compost and mulch program, which diverts 25 tons of food

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waste a year into compost that we use to build a super resilient soil that absorbs a lot of that rainwater. I hope that the Department of Environmental Management has this on their radar screen in the future. If not, I hope that you will work to push them on this as this benefits for both waste diversion and for food security. In the meantime, we'll continue to divert food waste and build soil, make compost, and we make use of wood chips that we get from groups like Mālama Kula. You just can't beat it, getting free carbon that way, taking wattle and turning it into resilient soil. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Gerry. Any questions? Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Mr. Ross. I was wondering, the...you said 25 tons of food waste. Where do you get that from?

MR. ROSS: I get that from several restaurants that I collaborate with. They buy produce from us, and then we get the...the off...you know, the stuff that they don't use. It's like...it's farm-to-table, but we also use the table-to-farm. And then we are also a resource for people to bring us animal carcasses, things like that. Now that the deer population has gone down, there's not as much roadkill. I used to get a lot of roadkill, but we also divert a lot of carcasses that people would chuck into gulches and we turn that into soil.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, all 25 tons is on the four acres and you just weigh it as it comes in?

MR. ROSS: It's mostly a guesstimate. I have...I can show you the back of my truck. I have all the bins that I picked up today from three restaurants. And, you know, I know about how much they...they weigh. I pick it up twice a week, 52 weeks a year, and that all goes into our compost facility.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then the compost stays on your farm?

MR. ROSS: Yes. Yes. And it's actually the footprint of our department of organic alchemy is only 2 percent of the four acres. So, it's a small footprint, but really large leverage in terms of soil quality, fertility, food security, and lack of erosion.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Fascinating. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. I have a question. Thank you very much for taking my deer carcass. That's how I first met you in Kula. But are...are...do you get funding from Hawai'i Farmers Union or...or what source?

MR. ROSS: Farmers Union pays for contact time when I teach the Farm Apprentice and Mentoring Program.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: And that's the only County funding that you're receiving?

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MR. ROSS: No. Maui County Farm Bureau provides us funding through Maui Coffee Association.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. So, Maui County Farm Bureau and some with Hawai'i Farmers Union.

MR. ROSS: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah. Oh, and MEO grant too.

MR. ROSS: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: First round.

MR. ROSS: We got an MEO grant in 2021.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, you're the success story. Thank you very much.

MR. ROSS: Hopefully one of many.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: You know, that's...that's a lot of different pots. And not many people have been able to reach into all those pots successfully, and you've done it, Gerry. So, what's the secret? How are you able to navigate County funds? It's so tricky. People tell me how hard it is to get these funds, but you seem to be doing it. Are...do you have a...first off, how are you doing it? And are you...a background in grant writing? And then the other thing is, is what about the other farmers in your community, do you get any feedback that they're struggling with getting all the access to these funds? Because we...we give...it's out there. It's just the farmers that I know are struggling with the paperwork and the amount of reporting and everything.

MR. ROSS: Oh, that's a really thick question. We've not had...I mean, we do have a lot of reporting. All of the MCA, Maui Coffee Association funds, the reimbursement requests, that's several inches of stuff that we have to assemble that goes to the Farm Bureau, that goes to the accountant for the Farm Bureau, that eventually goes to Maui Department of Agriculture for reimbursement. The Farmers Union has a really good person in charge there, so I don't really have to do much except talk to people and...and teach them.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: It always comes back to relations, relationships and relationship building and your skill at knowing what...how to navigate this. So, appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

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MR. ROSS: I think a lot of it also has to do...like the philosophy we have on our farm is that we only grow really good quality produce, as that kind of sells itself. And I think if you come across as an honest, respectful human when you're teaching people, things come to your doorstep.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Wise words. Thank you.

MR. ROSS: Thank you.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is R. Street, to be followed by Taj Berg. R. Street?

MR. STREET: Mahalo, Tita. Aloha mai to one and all. Gotta put the makas on, yeah, the aniani. 'A'ole kālā. No money to the Mayor's Office, the Planning Department, and Corporation Counsel Office. No money be allocated. That the Council focus on the relationship of these three County agencies with Leslie (*phonetic*) Dean Wong and Imua Family Services, as well as Brett Davis and CHL. It is their willful and wanted [*sic*] destruction of historic properties within the Historic District number 3, which is Wailuku. One and Two were destroyed by fire, so we only have Three left. That written...that within the Corporation Counsel, Caleb Webb [*sic*] be terminated from the County employment, along with the individual that represented Corporation Counsel on August 2025 in the Cultural Resource Commission. They showed a lack of ethics and a lack of knowledge of what was going on. Now you have knowledge of what has gone on in the Wailuku Historic District, and it's absolutely shameful. Each and every one of you were kept in the loop on what was going on. Alice Lee, I'm disappointed. This is your district. You were kept informed. The honua (*phonetic*), the foundation of the historic district, is to protect and preserve. And that is not what has happened. It is not to demolish and repurpose.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Mr. Street, this is a budget meeting.

MR. STREET: I am...I'm getting to the final product. I have an LCA 3209 coming off of the Wailuku Town kuleana 'auwai system. The question was asked to the State Commission on Water Resource Management, what happens if Wailuku Water Company cannot provide water to us? What happens? We are now at that point. They cannot put back the siphon system that we get off of the Waihe'e Ditch. I have appurtenant rights. LCA 3209. I am entitled by the State Constitution under the Commission of Water Resource Management, I have absolute rights to my water. And right now, I am not going to get my water. And who knows how long? I look at each and every one of you. You were informed about what was --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Three minutes.

MR. STREET: -- going on in the . . .(*timer sounds*). . . Wailuku District, the Nā Wai 'Eha. Okay? You failed.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Mr. Street.

MR. STREET: Excuse...excuse me.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We do not need rude people to speak to the community.

MR. STREET: I am not rude. I am very pointed and direct.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier, please. Mr. Street, no.

MR. STREET: No.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Do not continue.

MR. STREET: This...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, the next testifier is Taj Berg, followed Kingston Corba.

MR. STREET: I refuse to give up this mic. Yuki Lei Sugimura, I refuse to give it up until you can answer the questions. Where is my water?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 7:07 p.m.

RECONVENE: 7:09 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Thank you, everybody. I apologize for that. We will continue on with the meeting and thanks for your patience. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Taj Berg, to be followed by Kingston Corba.

MR. BERG: Aloha, Chair...Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Taj Berg and I am a student from King Kekaulike, and I am here to support the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition and the Cycle Strong Biking Program. Biking has helped me feel more confident, make friends, and stay active and healthy and not get in trouble at school. The program isn't just about bikes. It is about helping the kids stay safe, active, and be part of the community. And I respectfully ask you to support the funding for this program so more kids, I guess, can have this...so more kids like me can have this opportunity. Mahalo for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Fantastic. Thank you. Next testifier.

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MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Kingston Corba, to be followed by Aero Campas.

MR. CORBA: Aloha, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Kingston Corba. I am a student from King Kekaulike High School. I am here to support funding for the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition Cycle Strong Biking Program. Biking has helped me feel more confident, make friends, stay active, and stay out of trouble. It gives me something positive to do after school and people I can look up to. Riding bikes helps clear our minds and feel like ourselves again. It's something healthy, fun, and safe. This program isn't just about bikes, it's about helping kids be safe, stay active, and be part of a community. I respectfully ask you to support funding for this program so more kids like me can have this opportunity. Mahalo for your time.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Aero Campas, to be followed by Chris Matterson [sic].

MR. CAMPAS: Aloha, Council. My name is Aero Campas and I attend King Kekaulike High School. I am in ninth grade and I'm 15 years old. I just wanted to come up here today in support of Maui Mountain Bike Coalition Cycle Strong Program. Biking has been a huge part of my life and it has helped me in so many ways. Last summer I broke my legs riding, both my legs. I wasn't able to walk for seven months, but the whole time I never wanted to quit once. I was dying to get back on the bike to have fun again. I told my mom I'd rather break my legs again than never ride bikes again. That's how powerful my love...my love is for bikes. So, that's why I wanted to come up here and say thank you for your time and support. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Congratulations for your determination. Amazing. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Chris Matterson [sic], to be followed by Ariella Collins.

MR. MASTERSON: Aloha mai kākou. I'm Chris. I'm resident of Pukalani, Director of Exhibits at the Maui Ocean Center, and I want to express great support for the cycle program with Maui Mountain Bike Coalition. I've got exposure with other youth programs with the Hawaiian Outrigger Society, Sailing Society, and the Marine Institute, and where we do the ka'apunis around Kahoolawe. So, I just...I...firsthand experience in seeing what happens, whether it's putting youth in the wa'a, or it's doing restoration on the island, or it's teaching kids how to do restoration for the limu and clean reefs. It's just that opportunity, I think we all know how it grows self-confidence, it learns respect, and they share the kuleana. So, any of these programs that can do that for kids on their feet and not on their phones is...is what I give great support for. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for all that you do. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Ariella Collins, to be followed by Christina Reichert.

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MS. COLLINS: Aloha, County Councilmembers. My name is Ariella Collins and I go to Pukalani Elementary School. I am in fourth grade. I am in support of the Maui Mountain Biking Coalition Biking Cycle Strong Program. I love biking, and it gives me the feeling of freedom.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Christina Reichert, to be followed by Ethan Romanchak.

MS. REICHERT: Aloha, County Councilmembers. Thank you for your time and support. You guys have a lot of decisions to make. My name is Christina Reichert. I'm a therapist, psychotherapist in the community for many years. I'm also a grandmother of three. Ariella was my middle granddaughter. And I'm in full support of the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition Biking Strong Program, as I can tell that it's a huge part of our community to have activities that kids can both build confidence and connection and something that they feel good about, so...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. REICHERT: Question. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any...oh, Member Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Christina. I just had a question. Are...are you aware if this is already in the Mayor's budget and we just got to keep it in, or do you want us to add it in, and what is the amount?

MS. REICHERT: That is such a good question. I'd like to ask someone in the audience.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . looks like the leader.

MR. REICHERT: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Do you know, Yuki?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Or is this part of your...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: No, it's not.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MR. REICHERT: It's already skewed on the Mayor's budget.

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MS. REICHERT: It's already skewed on the Mayor's budget.

MR. REICHERT: And I believe it's 125,000-ish.

MS. REICHERT: I think it's about 125,000-ish. And I really appreciate it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MS. REICHERT: Any other questions?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: It's...it's much easier to try and keep something in than add something in.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, you did half our work for us.

MS. REICHERT: It hasn't started yet. We're hoping to get the funds to start it. So, thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, so it's not in the Mayor's budget.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It is.

MR. REICHERT: It is.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you said it is. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I...I...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . start until July 3rd.

MS. REICHERT: Yeah, the program.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, July 1. Okay.

MS. REICHERT: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: We will look for you. Maybe you can leave your phone number --

MS. REICHERT: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- with the desk. Yeah. You look like you're the boss. I think.

MR. REICHERT: Humble servant.

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MS. REICHERT: Well, I'm the real boss.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you're the boss.

MS. REICHERT: So...yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. We'll get the real boss to give us the information. Thank you.

MS. REICHERT: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's good. All right. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Next testifier is Ethan Romanchak, to be followed by Shayla Ko'omoa.

MR. ROMANCHAK: Hi. Thank you, Councilmembers and Chair, for being here tonight and all of you. Like no empty seats. Thank you so much. My name is Ethan Romanchak. I'm an Upcountry resident and also a business owner for 23 years in ag, specifically the nursery industry. I'm also a board member for the Maui County Farm Bureau and a director at Olinda-Kula Soil Water Conservation District. I'm here tonight to testify in support of continued funding for the Maui County Farm Bureau. I feel like the Farm Bureau gives a voice to individuals, especially farmers who can't follow all the State Leg. You know, if you're...I can't even follow the State Leg. and I'm...you know, like we all...you guys know, but it's crazy what's out there, how many bills. If you work in agriculture, you can't do that as well. So, I've learned that Farm Bureau is such a strong voice for individuals. I think there's this legacy status, legacy in the best terms of the word, where it bridges the old face of Maui agriculture with the everchanging Upcountry especially, but all of Maui as well, no changing landscape. Ag is changing so quickly. So, we get members come in and they get to share their specific concern and send it up. Of course, as you know, Ag Fest was our huge success, and will continue to be with funding. Ag in the Classroom, if you guys haven't attended, I know you're not in second grade, but maybe we can get you a pass. It's an amazing thing that happens every year. And now with the return of the fair, you remember that gym? Remember the melting watermelons on the floor? That's a huge thing, a coalition with the Farm Bureau. There's so many. And then, as Gerry mentioned, all the commodity groups they represent, cattle, coffee, landscape, which is ag, it's ag, and flowers. Everyone needs flowers. So, yeah, I'm here in support of continued funding of Maui County Farm Bureau. Especially with the County Department of Ag and all the way things have changed over the recent years, it's really important to keep Maui County Farm Bureau stronger than ever. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, I have...so Maui County Farm Bureau, just FYI, because I checked, they are supposed to be in the Department of Ag budget and for some reason it didn't get in. So, I'm going to be advocating for it to get in the budget. And I see there's a lot of other testifiers to support Maui County Farm Bureau. Do you know how much they were asking for?

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MR. ROMANCHAK: Well, there's the Farm Bureau line item, and then there's the commodity groups...you know, like so Gerry's coffee and livestock purchases stuff. Roughly 222,000 Farm Bureau --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. ROMANCHAK: -- and then another 100-something for the commodity groups. I think it was 375...375,000 total.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. We'll check. Thank you very much. Do you have a question?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank...thank you, Chair. I know you're well...I know you know a lot of farmers, so what's the word on the street? Is...are they...is it enough funds that we're putting out there? Are people saying they're applying and they're...they're telling them there's no more funds left? Is...have you heard anything? Anybody struggling to get any of the County monies?

MR. ROMANCHAK: Oh, there's so many layers to that question. I mean, I personally...well not personally, but the business used the County Department of Agriculture to do the grant and I'll be honest, it was a little bumpy. They ended up getting the money, but it was bumpy. Then there's the Feds, you know, and the State, and then there's private. You know, there's a lot of wealth --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Sure.

MR. ROMANCHAK: -- on Maui, so which...which level are you?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, County, of course.

MR. ROMANCHAK: Oh, County. Okay. Yeah, the microgrant program has been...I think I've gotten really good feedback. Some of my employees who go home and farm --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Good.

MR. ROMANCHAK: -- have gotten monies from that. Yeah, I think there's room for improvement, but it's great. I mean, I hear a lot of good things. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's good to hear.

MR. ROMANCHAK: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you.

MR. ROMANCHAK: Microgrant's great.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Romanchak.

MR. ROMANCHAK: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Shayla Ko'omoa, to be followed by Zayden Collins.

MS. KO'OMOA: Aloha, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Shayla Ko'omoa. I was born and raised here on Maui, and I'm a mom to a 4-year-old, a 10-year-old, and a 14-year-old. I'm also part of a local family-owned bike business, Krank Cycles. I'm here in strong support of the Maui Mountain Bike Coalition Cycle Strong Program. Through our family business, I've seen firsthand how much biking can impact our keiki in a positive way. It gives them confidence, keeps them active, and creates a healthy outlet. As a parent, one of the biggest challenges is finding activities that are safe, structured, and fun...not just something to pass time, but something that builds independence, discipline, and strong habits. Especially after everything our community has been through with the fires, our kids need more opportunities like this to reconnect, feel strong again, and just be kids. This program is more than biking. It's mentorship, community, and positive direction. To me, this is a prevention. It keeps our keiki engaged, supported, and away from things that could take them down the wrong path. I strongly encourage you to fund this program and invest in the well-being of our youth and our Maui community. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? See none. Thank you very much.

MS. KO'OMOA: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Zayden Collins, to be followed by Gregory Garcia.

MR. COLLINS: Aloha. My name is Zayden Collins and I'm a student at Maui Christian Academy. I'm here to support the...the funding for Maui Mountain Bike Coalition and the Cycle Strong Biking Program. Mahalo for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for testifying. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Gregory Garcia, to be followed by Emily Erickson.

MR. GARCIA: Hi. My name is Greg Garcia. I wanted to wish all you guys one happy April Fool's Day. Good evening, honorable Council and Chair, Members. So, in 2012 I went to prison and I did a lot of rehabilitation while I was in there. I got my bachelor's degree in business administration. I learned how to speak Spanish, and I also helped

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give back to the inmates by tutoring in the education program up there. When I came out in 2024, it was really difficult for me to come out to society. I had a hard time grocery shopping. I always felt like people were looking at me. The first place that I reached out to, I found them online, was MEO. It's the BEST Program. If you guys don't know what the BEST Program is, it means Be Empowered and Safe Together. And coming back out to the community, I wanted to start to do hair, and they helped me to start a career in hair. They got me the funding to enroll at IBS School of Cosmetology, and I started working at Da Hair in Kihei where I'm cutting hair now. I'm doing women's, men's, and children's cuts and color and everything. But they also helped me with transportation. They helped me get a bus pass. I didn't have any transportation when I got out. My mom was there. Ron (*phonetic*) helped me. He was a very big part of my success and where I'm at today. And I really appreciate what they did for me because I wouldn't be here in society if it wasn't for them. So, if you guys can continue your funding, it helps keep the community safe. It helps keep everybody safe by helping people like me that made a mistake. And I really appreciate you guys' time, and thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Congratulations. Thank you very much. No questions. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Emily Erickson to be followed by Ka'io Martin.

MS. ERICKSON: Aloha, Chair and Members of the Council. My name is Emily Erickson, I'm the Executive Director of The Maui Farm. I took over operations of the farm in 2025, October of 2025, after serving for 15 years on the board of directors. Today I'm here to speak in strong support of the Mayor's budget, specifically for The Maui Farm. We're requesting \$323,304 [*sic*]...sorry, \$323,000. The Maui Farm has been in operation on County leased land for 40 years. We serve as transitional housing with a farm component, providing a safe community and a healing lifestyle for families facing homelessness. Our family strengthening program operates five residential homes where we integrate life skills training with the therapeutic power of land and our therapeutic animals. Each home is shared by two or more families, and we currently have eight mommies and 15 keiki living on the farm. Homelessness is at a crisis level in our state. Our families typically come to live with us for about a year. While they're with us, we help them pay off their debt, repair or purchase a vehicle, maintain a monthly budget, secure childcare and employment, and eventually find long-term housing. Our County grant makes up one-third of our overall budget. We make up the remaining shortfall with private grants, donations, and fundraising. The challenge we face is the reality of operating our facility in today's economy. The requested...we've requested a \$43,000 increase from what we had in the budget for the last couple of years. That's a direct solution to inflationary pressures, rising cost of feed, utilities, cost of living salaries, and essential farm and housing maintenance required to keep our five residential homes safe and functioning. Investing in The Maui Farm is an investment in our island community proven by four decades of success. By approving us in the budget, you're ensuring that our Makawao farm remains a place of hope and resilience. I urge the Council to support the Mayor's budget and approval to request our increase. Mahalo.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for being here. Any questions? Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify, the increase is already in the Mayor's budget, or you want to increase what is in the Mayor's budget?

MS. ERICKSON: So, what I saw was our line item from previous, and then...so when we put in for, you know, last June, that number was not reflected but that is the number that we have put in. So, the increase is what we submitted in July.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And you didn't see it?

MS. ERICKSON: I didn't see it in the --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. ERICKSON: -- table that came out, right. We're part of Housing and Human Concerns [sic].

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, if it was like somebody's priority to just add 43,000, that would help you guys out?

MS. ERICKSON: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And...and that's because when you submitted it the first time, it wasn't as bad rising costs?

MS. ERICKSON: Yeah. I mean I think a big one is health insurance premiums, right? That's been really large. Also, originally we...our farm kind of element had shut down before I came on this summer and we've opened that back up. We are...did apply for one of the microgrants for...with MEO to bring back a larger chicken egg laying function at the farm, and...and yeah just cost of living in general.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Everybody loves scrambled eggs, hard boiled eggs.

MS. ERICKSON: You got to have the eggs, girl.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

MS. ERICKSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. Easter.

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

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Ka'io Martin, to be followed by Annette Niles.

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MS. MARTIN: Aloha. Mahalo for being here tonight. I'm glad we can gather in this way. My name is Ka'io Martin. I wear many hats in our community, but tonight I'm here representing The Maui Farm as an executive board member. I'd like to begin with a quote of Charmaine Tavares. The Maui Farm is small and mighty. She is a founding mother of The Maui Farm. It is important we have remembrance and regard for history, especially in these times. Foundations that were set and built with great foresight into the future of what we needed, our needs, and will continue to need more now than ever. Past, present, future. Circulatory. Not linear. Not one-track minded, thinking forward. I share this because I believe we must have awareness moving forward as history has taught us and will continue to teach many lessons. It is now our kuleana as community to come back to that oneness so we can evolve together more sustainable in lōkahi, harmony, and balance. To create a circulatory environment, community, and economy for our brighter future as one with foresight. The Maui Farm is a key aspect, part of the foundation that goes straight to the core of our 'ohanas. The mothers and keiki o ka 'āina. The family strengthening program and transitional housing creates a healing environment where the families can rebuild their lives for lasting success. The...The Maui Farm, it is the only one like it. A true model we must recognize, support, and fund. Our human service agencies, as a whole, must be recognized and funded to ensure the services we provide are able to reach our people. To ensure wellness within our community, it is of the utmost importance. I believe these services should be considered as part of the critical infrastructure of our County and the State of Hawai'i. Let's remember to mālama our 'āina that gives us the breath of hā. Be mindful of the remembrance of the ahupua'a systems, why they were that way. How are we practicing in our own lives and therefore, able to show up in community in that frequency, in lōkahi and pono. I have hope and I live the ho'oponopono way of life. And tonight, on this beautiful full moon, I wanted to speak this in to our community as well as the universe. Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina I ka pono. Mālama. Mahalo. Onipa'a. Kū'ē. Eō. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Beautiful. Anyone have questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Nice seeing you again.

MS. MARTIN: Nice to see you as well. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Annette Niles, to be followed by Theresa Thompson.

MS. NILES: Thank you. Hello, everyone. My name is Annette Niles, and you guys don't know me by now, but anyway, I'm here to ask for some support for our farmers and our ranchers on the deer. We have been totally wiped out. They're just destroying the whole pastures and farmlands. You know, yesterday I went to check on my property, and was walking the whole perimeter looking over and Pūlehu Road, and all I saw was no more farms. No more farms. And this farm...this farms was pretty close to 100 acres of farm, and there was no more farming. And we just losing them, you know. And so, we

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need...you know, even to get support for more grants, we need the grant money for the fencing and stuff like that because we...we're not going to make it. We're not going to make it. This will be grown on Maui no more. You know, then...you know, and getting a pilot program seeding...that's what we're doing that right now. We're just trying to get our grasses. My husband and I have been just going at it, trying to paddock off stuff, trying to grow grasses...because when the deer comes in, they eat all our good grass. When it comes back like it did check yesterday, we have all these daisies, we have all these...all these noxious weeds coming into the property. And that's got to be taken out, redone, and reseeded. So, we really need your support, you know, in any which way we can for the farmers and ranchers. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions for Annette Niles? In the budget...this...in this new budget there is some money for fencing.

MS. NILES: Oh, I hope so.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. NILES: Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, I'll call you. I'll call you.

MS. NILES: Okay. We appreciate it very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: New monies. Yeah.

MS. NILES: Thank you.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Theresa Thompson, to be followed by Kyle Ellison.

MS. THOMPSON: Good evening, Chair and Councilmembers. Thank you for coming out this evening. I am Theresa Thompson. I am the President of Maui Cattlemen's Association. My family has received a \$30,000 grant from Lokahi Pacific. We used it to purchase deer fencing materials. We're working really hard up there trying to preserve our grass for the cattle. I'm here to testify on behalf of the Farm Bureau. Maui Cattlemen's Association gets funds from them. We're one of the commodities under Farm Bureau. And Maui Cattlemen's Association, we're working really hard to raise good beef, and our vice president has gone down and had many conversations with Mahi Pono, and we are now selling our teenager cows to Mahi Pono. They're staying here on the island. We drop them off at the Old Maui High School and they're feeding them, and feeding them, and feeding them, and then they're processing them, and we're feeding our Maui people with our Maui cows. We are so happy not to have to ship these calves off on the boats anymore. It's just such a wonderful opportunity. It's just great. You know, Brendan, he can convince anybody of anything. . . .(laughing). . . Bust out the big guns. Go get 'em. . . .(laughing). . . The Maui Cattlemen's Association, we use our funds that we get through Maui Farm Bureau for research. We do research and we get better pasture,

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grass seed. We do education. We have speakers come in from the mainland. We have clinicians. We have workshops. We bring in a 4-H judge for the farm fair, and he teaches and he helps the 4-H'ers down there build better livestock and understand what they're doing. We bring in feed supplements for the cattle during the drought. We bring in Matson containers of alfalfa blocks and BoviBox, the mineral supplements during the droughts. And it also helps us to support those who need to go to...we have an annual Hawai'i Cattlemen's Convention. It was here on Maui this year, but most years it's on Big Island, and it helps to support us and reimburse our travel and expenses to go to the convention. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Theresa. Any questions? I think I see...oh, Member Johnson, Member Sinenci, and Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Theresa, for your testimony this afternoon...or this evening. How many heads of cattle do you...the...your ranch has?

MS. THOMPSON: We have about 50 mama cows and they produce 50 babies every year. All the cattle ranchers on Maui have cut back our herds over 50 percent. Because the deer are eating, competing for the grasses, we cannot keep the amount of cattle we used to keep because there's no grass. They would all be skinny skeletons walking around. So, we've had to cull the cows, make hamburgers...sell, sell hamburger.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And so, you just rely on...on grass-fed beef?

MS. THOMPSON: Correct, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Got it. Okay.

MS. THOMPSON: It is too expensive to bring in feed and feed animals here. Yeah, we just feed them their grass and try and keep the grass healthy.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Hi, Theresa.

MS. THOMPSON: Hi.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: There's the...Lokahi Pacific is managing the grant that for this last year for I think it was \$1-1/2 million for deer fencing up to maximum \$100,000 for the mid-sized ranches. Are you familiar with that?

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. Good. So, hopefully that will help some of the middle-sized ranches to protect the land. So, I had a question. Are you...are you reseeding pastures or do you like use plow, harrow, and...and throw the grass so the runners grow?

MS. THOMPSON: All. Some places we put runners in, some places we reseed when we get bags of seed from like CTAHR and we try and do with that, or when we clean out a place with the black wattle, then we have to seed.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah. And it's hard without water. So, anyway, thank you.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Theresa, I...I got a question about the feed supplements that you have to bring in. Has the cost of that risen and has the cost of shipping the feed supplements also rose as well?

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Do you have a ballpark number of...

MS. THOMPSON: Maybe doubled. We used to be able to get the blocks for maybe half price, and now it's doubled.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. THOMPSON: And the shipping has doubled also.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: So, it's compounding the affordability.

MS. THOMPSON: It's...it's astronomical, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. That's my clarifying question. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Kyle Ellison, to be followed by Leilani Magee.

MR. ELLISON: Aloha. I'm Kyle Ellison, founding Executive Director of Mālama Kula. And thank you for having me here tonight. I know everyone's been busy in the wake of the

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recent Kona storms. I want to thank the County for their past support and continued support of our operations here in Kula and also, as evidenced by the most recent events, provide some background on the importance of why it's imperative our organization remains funded. Mālama Kula knows the hazards facing Upcountry and is rapidly putting solutions into action. Since our founding after the 2023 Kula fire, we've worked on over 200 different properties across Kula cutting fire breaks, clearing green waste, helping residents establish defensible space, distributing wood chips for erosion control, immediately responding to flood and storm damage, and providing actionable shovel-ready strategies across our entire community. Through our Fire Fuel Reduction Program, we've not only removed nearly 2 million pounds of dead and downed trees and hazardous fuel from our community, but we've recycled and distributed all those wood chips and kept the resource here in Kula for erosion control, soil retention, and agricultural use for local farmers. The amount of wood chips that's been created through this program is equivalent...is enough to blanket 30 acres of erosive hillsides to a depth of over an inch. And given the severity of flooding and runoff we recently experienced in North Kihei, we've learned the importance of making sure soil stays here in Kula before devastating communities and coastlines downstream. Given the lack of practical access to responsible green waste disposal options Upcountry, we launched our Kula Community Green Waste Bin Program, which has supplied Kula residents with 160 roll-off bins that have collectively gathered over 4,500 cubic yards of green waste that's not only helped residents fire-harden their homes, but also reduce hazards to drainage and infrastructure by keeping material out of our gulches. Rather than simply discarding this waste, we have goals of recycling and using the material for a community garden, community farm stand, and community green waste drop-off site, as well as wood chip distribution and pickup. Additionally, the satellite green waste bins have provided an estimated cost savings of over \$20,000 in saved fuel costs that go directly back into the residents' pockets by not having to drive down to the Central Maui Landfill. We're stimulating the Kula economy by providing jobs for a network of over 18 employees and regular contractors, creating jobs and helping us transition away from a tourist-centric economy and providing work that helps us keep local residents on island, supporting and stewarding our community and land while earning a living wage. We're supporting local agriculture by helping residents through a fuels conversion process from nonnative hardwoods such as black wattle and eucalyptus into areas actively planted in crops such as kalo, 'uala, and fruit orchards. We're also working on capturing more of our water. By the end of 2026, we have goals of providing ten Kula properties with capture, storage, and transmission systems of nonpotable water to be used for irrigation as well as fire suppression, as a means of not only reducing the strain on our County potable system, but also mitigating the amount of runoff that's devastating North Kihei with each storm. But perhaps most importantly, we're able to be here for our local community and respond within hours in our neighbors' times of need. Over this past event alone, in the last couple of weeks, we've had crews working on over 80 different properties across Kula, clearing downed trees, freeing residents trapped in homes, shoveling out mud, providing debris removal dumpsters, and engaging multiple wood chipper crews who process the material into a much-needed resource where over 200 cubic yards or 200 pickup trucks of recycled wood chips have been redistributed to 25 different Kula residents for erosion mitigation and ag use. We've cleared and opened

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County roads, including Alae Road, Waiakoa Road, Copp Road, Pulehuiki Road, Waipoli Road, Wahelani Road, amongst others. We're here for our community and are showing up every day. And humbly thank you for the assistance that's been provided, and also ask that our budget requests be considered for an increase and additional support. Thank you. I'm sorry, I know I'm talking fast. That's a lot.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Kyle.

MR. ELLISON: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, what was the budget request that you had wanted?

MR. ELLISON: We...we submitted a budget request for 480,000 and we're in the proposed budget for 280,000, which is the same as this last year's budget, which is very much appreciated. We've rapidly scaled our operations and would humbly request an increase to reflect that scaling.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much. Anyone have questions for Mālama Kula? Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha, Mr. Ellison. Mahalo for your testimony this evening.

MR. ELLISON: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I just wanted to clarify, make sure I heard it correctly. Did you say you had 160 roll-off containers?

MR. ELLISON: Since the start of our program, we've provided 160 roll-off containers for Kula residents, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, not...rotating it around.

MR. ELLISON: Not at the same time. Yeah, rotating. We have four locations that, you know, over the course of time, we've filled up 160 roll-off bins --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

MR. ELLISON: -- at those four locations.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Not that you have 160 roll-off...

MR. ELLISON: No, we don't have a parking lot full of roll-off containers, no.

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

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MR. ELLISON: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

MR. ELLISON: Yet.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Okay. No other questions. Okay. Thank you for helping me because we were stuck at our house.

MR. ELLISON: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: The neighbor's trees fell in our yard and...or onto our driveway and we were stuck. So thanks for clearing off our dead trees.

MR. ELLISON: Happy to help.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. The fallen trees. Yeah, that's one of my priorities, it saved my life.

MR. ELLISON: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Well, not quite life, but --

MR. ELLISON: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: -- thank you very much, Kyle, for all your hard work.

MR. ELLISON: Of course. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Leilani Magee, to be followed by David Daly.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Can you announce again?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Leilani Magee, to be --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, Leilani Magee.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: -- followed by David Daly.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I don't see her here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She had to leave.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

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MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is David Daly, to be followed by Deb Manois [sic].

MR. DALY: Aloha, Councilmembers. Thank you for your time. Nice to see you all again. As you know, I will introduce myself. My name is David Daly. I'm the Director of MEO's Business Development Center. I'm here this evening to thank you for your continued support of Business Development Center programs, our Microenterprise Program, and our Agricultural Microgrant Program, supporting small businesses and small farms throughout Maui County. Since 1999, MEO's Business Development Center has been dedicated to helping Maui small businesses and entrepreneurs grow and succeed. MEO would not be able to effectively run these programs for our community without the strong partnership and ongoing support of the County of Maui. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for your good work all these years. Next...no questions. Thank you. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: The next testifier is Deb Manois [sic], to be followed by Tiare Lawrence.

MS. MAROIS: Good evening, Councilmembers and Chair. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify tonight and for your dedicated public service. My name is Deb Marois, and I serve as the Coordinator for Ho'oikaika Partnership, which is a coalition dedicated to preventing child abuse and strengthening families across Maui County. Today is April 1st and it's not only just April Fool's Day, it is the beginning of Child Abuse Prevention Month. And last year, the Council recognized this with a resolution recognizing the shared kuleana we all have to protect keiki and support our 'ohana and workforce. So, we thank you for that. And along with that resolution, you also acknowledged our work and supported our work with a \$175,000 allocation in the budget, which we've made good use. Unfortunately, though this year we applied through the Department of Human Concerns, we were not included in the Mayor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year '27. And so, I'm here tonight on behalf of the partnership to humbly ask you to please restore and modestly increase that funding. As you know, we were in front of the WASSP Committee in January talking about adverse childhood experiences. And one out of every five adults in Maui County under the...experienced four or more of those before the age of 18. And that statistic comes before the wildfires. Since then, we've, of course, had more natural disasters, so the need has not gone away. One of the things that we struggled with last year is delayed execution of funding and...in our contract, and so we had to pause navigation services, as well as Healing the Healers. We're so happy that we were finally able to restore those. Navigation services full-time restored in February, and we held our first Healing the Healers relaunch just last week. Our funding is only going to last through June 30th, and so that's really the cost, you know, of kind of unstable and fragmented funding. I do want to share a little bit, a couple highlights about the impact that your investment had last year. We were able to make progress on all five of our strategic goals. We engaged dozens of agencies, hundreds of providers to coordinate services and better serve families. Our navigators served, despite all the delays, over 500 individuals on all islands in Maui County, and providing not only connections to other resources but critical needs. We also did outreach to

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nearly 4,000 people through 13 community events, distributing all kinds of public education materials and basic needs supplies. So, where we are now is really asking you to recognize that as a systems change coalition, coordination is a direct service. Without it, our agencies stay siloed, our families fall through the cracks, and every dollar that is invested in the system becomes less effective. So, we really need that . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . coordination function. I just will wrap up by saying the partnership is 18 years old, it's proven, the need is urgent, and the primary challenge we face is not a lack of impact but a lack of stable funding. So, we ask that you do reconsider and include us in this fiscal year's budget. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Can you submit your written testimony to us?

MS. MAROIS: Absolutely. I have a copy and I also did it on eComment.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MAROIS: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions? Oh, Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That was my question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: That was your question. Okay. Member Paltin? Oh, and can you include the budget amount that you're looking and what the breakdown...budget summary?

MS. MAROIS: Yes, I will follow up with a budget summary. Yes. And also an invitation to attend the 'Ohana Fest on Saturday, April 11th. You can see us all in action. . . *(laughing)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What was your organization name again? Was it Kākou for Keiki?

MS. MAROIS: No, they're a sister coalition that we work very closely with, and Maui Support Services serves as our fiscal sponsor as...and is also their fiscal sponsor.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What was your...

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Ho'oikaika.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Ho'oikaika.

MS. MAROIS: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Did you ever get a chance to meet with Human Concerns and ask how come they didn't include you guys?

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MS. MAROIS: Not yet. We just learned last Thursday, I think, when the budget came out, and we're waiting for the letter. We were told we would get a letter from them, and then we, of course, want to have that conversation.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Like a letter either way, like a letter if you're in or a letter if you're out?

MS. MAROIS: That's what they said. My understanding was that was what to expect was a letter, and so we're waiting for that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MS. MAROIS: Of course.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Just, Deborah, did you apply with the Department?

MS. MAROIS: Yes, the Department --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MS. MAROIS: -- of Human Concerns.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MS. MAROIS: Um-hum. We went through the RFP process.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

MS. MAROIS: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MS. MAROIS: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Looking forward to getting more information from you. Thank you.

MS. MAROIS: I will be happy to provide it. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. How many more testifiers?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Two. Oh, okay. Because I wondered if Members wanted a break? Thank you.

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MS. LAWRENCE: I wanted to be the last one. Nah, nah, nah, just joking.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, the one and only Tiare Lawrence. Go for it.

MS. LAWRENCE: Aloha, Councilmembers. My name is Tiare Lawrence, and I'm here to respectfully...e kala mai, some of my things are not on the Mayor's budget, but I'm going to put it out into the universe for you guys to put it in next year's budget. First, I wanted to request funding to develop a revitalization plan for...for Hāli'imaile Park. Hāli'imaile is a growing town, yet the park remains underutilized, not because it isn't needed, but because it hasn't been upgraded. A thoughtful revitalization plan would help transform this space into a vibrant hub that encourages more outdoor activities, supports our...supports our keiki, and strengthens community connection. Second, I'm requesting funding to equip our lifeguards with drone technology. Drones have been useful in assisting lifeguards on O'ahu with rescues. When there was a North Shore rescue where they couldn't find a person, and they were able to use their drone, hover their drone over that person, and help the jet skis to locate where that person was. Also, when there's...you know, there was a great white shark in Kihei. You know, we should...if...if somebody calls in this shark sighting, you want to fly a drone. Keep that drone over there so the jet skis know where to go to push the shark out. So, I feel like this would be useful technology to have in our lifeguard stands. Third, I'm requesting investment in high-speed public Wi-Fi. I know this is in the budget, but it's...we've been talking about it for years. I'm surprised that we actually have good Internet service tonight, because usually this is a dead zone in Pukalani. If you go to Foodland, like your service doesn't work. And I'm saying this because when I was at the Kihei Community Center, I went to a wedding, and during the bride and groom's dance, they tried to play a song off of Spotify, and it didn't work, because there was...wasn't enough Wi-Fi. So, there's several areas of dead zones, including Central Maui Sports Park. Go drive over there. No more Internet service over there. You can't...you cannot go on Facebook. Fourth, I respectfully ask the Council to reconsider continued funding for additional speed bumps. While safety is important, the current level feels excessive and can be difficult for residents, especially those with smaller vehicles. I encourage the County to explore more balanced solutions, such as video-based speed enforcement, which improves accountability and can generate revenue for the County. Upcountry, we're seeing so much speed bumps, and it just seems like...like I mean, you go drive through Waihe'e, Waiehu, I was like...it's like what happened? It's kind of crazy. Lastly, I'm requesting increased grant funding for deer management to support everything that everybody said. As you guys know, I work on a farm. I unfortunately lost...I bought a whole bunch of plants from this guy, who grows the most amazing avocados and mangoes. And I've lost a whole bunch of my trees to deer. I think, yeah, it's great to fund fencing, but it doesn't solve the problem. It just pushes the problem someplace else. So, solution would be to continue the grants that go to like programs like Maui Nui Venison, where they're working on private land, they're processing the food, they have the USDA slaughterhouse. Their...and what they did is they got the grant after the Lahaina fires, but they were able to give all that food to local organizations, they put it into food boxes. They were . . .(timer sounds). . . giving away free meat here

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in Makawao Town. I think that's a great program to fund, and it would help our...our farmers and our...and our ranchers. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Tiare. I also want to thank you for setting up the...the containers that you sent to Molokai...to help Molokai.

MS. LAWRENCE: Oh, yes. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. LAWRENCE: Yeah. Anything I can do to help.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you very much. How many containers did you send?

MS. LAWRENCE: We sent a total of three.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow.

MS. LAWRENCE: Yes. Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Donations came.

MS. LAWRENCE: Yeah. Maui...Maui turned out, Costco and Home Depot turned out big time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. LAWRENCE: Yeah. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay. Anybody have questions for Ms. Wonderful here, Ms. Tiare? No questions?

MS. LAWRENCE: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Oh, next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, the next and currently the last individual to testify is Jasee Law.

MR. LAW: Aloha ka 'aha o ke kalana. April 1st, 1998, Tre' Evans-Dumaran, his birthday. He was a hero, not a fool. Please put some money in there for his family. I don't know if you've got to do like a line item or whatever. The trial is not until next year. So, yeah, just want you guys to remember him. He was my friend.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. All right. Next testifier.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, there are currently no other individuals signed up to testify.

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CHAIR SUGIMURA: Warren Watanabe.

MR. WATANABE: Yeah, I...I wasn't planning to testify because I had my commodity groups here. But for clarification, for Maui County Farm Bureau and the four commodity groups, our request is for 564,000. Unfortunately, yeah, we weren't...we weren't included as a line item, so I believe we'll be also in the competitive grant process under the Mayor's Agricultural Operations, Infrastructure, and Education line item. You know, I just want to say, you know, we are...we are doing our Ag Fest this year, and please mark your calendar for May 30th at the War Memorial Center. Also, our Ag in the Classroom is also coming up. And we'll be hosting close to 1,000 second graders from the Maui schools at Haleakalā Ranch. And Councilmember Paltin, may I have a request? That some...you heard all the students. Agriculture needs the technology. For instance, we...we have only one...I believe, one tractor mechanic on the island. And, you know, he's ready to retire. So, we...you know, can we have some of these students in agriculture? . . .*(laughing)*. . . Engineering? Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Is there a question? Oh, Member Paltin has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Tomorrow night is Pā'ia, I'll tell them I'm going to the tractor mechanics. My other question was of the 564,000, do you know the breakout in each category?

MR. WATANABE: Let me find it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: You can send it to us.

MR. WATANABE: Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Okay.

MR. WATANABE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Are you the last testifier? Tractor mechanic. Okay. The last testifier, right?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Yes, Chair. There are no other individuals signed up to testify this time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, here comes...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: That's Nālani.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh. You're taking down...you're taking down the mic. That's Nālani. She works for us, or with us. All right. This is the last testifier. It ends our meeting. Thank you very much, all of you, for being here. Your...Staff has taken notes and we will

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receive a summary of it. If any of you can submit what you said in writing, it just helps us so that we understand what you asked for. But if there are no objections, this meeting is now adjourned.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS. (Excused: NUH)

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(gavel)*. . .

ADJOURN: 8:01 p.m.

bfed:min:260401-Upcountry:mll:ds

Transcribed by: Daniel Schoenbeck

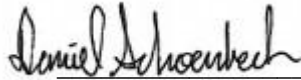
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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 45 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 23rd day of April 2026, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Daniel Schoenbeck