

WAI Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 9:54 AM
To: WAI Committee
Subject: FW: Bill 90 (2023) - WAI Committee Referral

From: Jen Mather <jen.mather@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 9:45 AM
To: Thomas M. Cook <Thomas.Cook@mauicounty.us>
Cc: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>; Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>; Yukilei Sugimura <Yukilei.Sugimura@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Re: Bill 90 (2023) - WAI Committee Referral

Aloha e Councilmember Cook,

My name is Jen Mather and I am writing to you today about Bill 90 (2023) relating to the undergrounding of utilities. I was invited to the White House and have just returned from Washington D.C. where invitees took part in the 29th Communities in Action forum to discuss what the Biden-Harris administration has contributed to our communities here in Hawai'i, what the Federal plans are moving forward, and what can be done better. We were able to meet and talk to various Federal agency leads including FEMA Administrator Criswell. Two of the Federal participants that spoke directly to infrastructure and resilience were National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi and National Security Council Senior Director for Resilience Jennifer DeCesaro. Both of these individuals highlighted and stressed the importance of being proactive in our planning and hazard mitigation to protect and preserve our communities. Advisor Zaidi mentioned things like managed retreat and protecting our infrastructure which is why I am writing to you today.

Bill 90 (2023) was introduced at the County Council meeting of October 6, 2023 and was referred to the Water and Infrastructure (WAI) committee which you chair. With the inevitable prospect of new construction and rebuilding Lahaina on the horizon, I believe it is imperative for the conversation surrounding the possibility of undergrounding to be had in committee. I had the chance to have a quick discussion regarding this with a few IBEW leaders at the forum, as well, and they are interested in the proposal. I think it would be beneficial for the community and the county to delve deeper into this option and would be grateful if you could schedule it on your agenda for your next WAI meeting which I recognize will most likely be after Budget.

I appreciate your commitment to our community and Maui County and look forward to being able to hear the information and testimony regarding Bill 90 (2023) at the WAI committee meeting.

Mahalo nui a mālama,
Jen Mather
(808) 298-5596