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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

April 2, 2026

Ms. Rogerene “Kali” Arce, Director
Department of Agriculture
County of Maui
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Ms. Arce:

SUBJECT: **PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET FOR THE
COUNTY OF MAUI** (BFED-1) (AG-02)

May I please request you be prepared to answer the following questions at the Council’s Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee meeting of **April 9, 2026***. This will enable the Committee to comprehensively review the FY 2027 Budget.

May I further request that you transmit your response to bfed.committee@mauicounty.us by 4:30 p.m. on **April 8, 2026**. **Date is subject to change without notice.*

Overall

1. Please define “circular agro-economic system” and “sustainable regional agricultural system.” (Page 103, Program Budget) (TC)
2. Please provide the most recent annual report to the Mayor and the Council “on the County’s overall performance in meeting agriculture objectives and any barriers that could be addressed by ordinance,” as required under Section 8-18.3, Revised Charter of the County of Maui (1983), as amended. (Page 103, Program Budget) (TC)
3. Please list the long-standing agriculture programs that were formally housed in other departments that are now operated by the Department. Has the Department included the resources needed to manage these programs in the FY 2027 Budget? (Page 105, Program Budget) (YLS)

4. Relating to the Agriculture Program, Goal #1, item 1: (Page 108, Program Budget)
 - a. How does the Department plan to develop two new agriculture incentive programs in FY 2027? (GJ)
 - i. Will they be established through special funds or revolving funds? What revenue source will be used? (GJ)
 - b. Please provide the outcomes of the four grant workshops conducted in FY 2026. (NUH)
 - c. What services are provided during these grant workshops? Does the County provide them, or are partners involved, such as Lokahi Pacific? (KB)
 - d. What metrics are used to assess participant success from these grant workshops, including the number of attendees who submit grant applications? (NUH) (TC)
 - i. Does the Department collect feedback from the participants? Please explain the kind of data the Department receives and analyzes. (TC)
5. Relating to Agriculture Program, Goal #1, item 2: (Page 109, Program Budget)
 - a. What data supports the FY 2026 Estimate that 20 percent of projects that received grants in the previous year are still operating? Why is that percentage so low? (KB) (NUH)
 - i. To date, what percentage of projects that received grants are still operating? (NUH)
 - ii. How will the Department ensure long-term sustainability and continued operations of these projects, whether grant-funded or not? Please provide the corrective actions the Department plans to implement to address this low percentage. (NUH) (TC)

6. Relating to Agriculture Program, Goal #2, item 1:
 - a. Please provide the Department's progress in developing a new farmers market and farm stands for FY 2027. Has a location been determined?
 - i. Will the Department provide ongoing support to this farmers market or stand? If so, what funding or E/Ps are needed to execute this goal? (Page 109, Program Budget) (GJ)
7. Relating to Agriculture Program, Goal #2, item 2:
 - a. Please describe the Department's plan for developing community cooperatives or agriculture organizations in FY 2027. What will the Department's ongoing role be, including the funding or E/Ps needed to support this work? (Page 109, Program Budget) (GJ)
8. Relating to Agriculture Program, Goal #3, item 1:
 - a. Please explain the importance of educating "stores and markets about monetary food assistance programs" and how the Department will achieve this goal. (Page 110, Program Budget) (TC)
9. Please explain how the Department will implement every measure under Agriculture Program, Goals #2 and #3, for FY 2027. (Pages 109 to 111, Program Budget) (TC)
10. Relating to Agriculture Program, Goal #4, item 2:
 - a. Will the Department coordinate with partnering agencies to deliver these educational trainings and programs? If so, which ones? (Page 111, Program Budget) (TC)
11. Relating to Agriculture Program, Goal #4, item 3:
 - a. Please define "agricultural management systems" and describe how the Department will measure its success. (Page 111, Program Budget) (TC)

12. Relating to the Department's presentation at the Council's Agriculture, Diversification, Environment & Public Transportation meeting of March 12, 2026: (Page 1-3, Budget Details) (TP)
 - a. The Department's presentation noted the P-00705 Park Project Coordinator, Index Code 918223A—an FY 2026 expansion position—was being reallocated to a part-time Park Program Specialist to collect crop and economic data. Please explain why this is not reflected in the Budget Details.
 - b. The Department awarded P.B. Sullivan Construction, Inc. the contract for the Kula Agricultural Park Booster Pump Relocation Project on January 6, 2025. Has the project broken ground and will it be completed by January 6, 2027?
 - c. The Department awarded Goodfellow Bros. LLC a \$17,375,000 contract to build a 2.4-million-gallon water reservoir for Agriculture Parks in January 2026.
 - i. When is this project expected to break ground and when will it be completed?
 - ii. Will the Kula Agricultural Park and the Upcountry Maui Ag Park have access to the reservoir? If no, why not?
 - iii. Because the reservoir was anticipated to cost more, is there a funding balance still available for the Upcountry Maui Ag Park? Please explain.
 - d. Following the enactment of Act 185, Relating to Feral Chickens, is the Department aware of measures other counties have implemented for feral chicken control and education programs, including their funding sources?
 - i. Has the Department considered feral chickens for food for either humans or pets?
 - e. Has the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Pacific Islands Area Grant for Strategic Conservation Solutions through Partnership been awarded? If so, what is the start and end date for the Agricultural Conservation Liaison position?

- f. Several County-owned lands cleared by the Maui County Emergency Management Agency for wildfire-risk reduction are zoned Agriculture. What are the Department's plans to partner with individuals or organizations to use the land?
13. Does the Department have a biosecurity plan with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture & Biosecurity? Please explain.
 - a. If yes, what funding is needed for the County's ports of entry and exit, including composting facilities? (TP)
14. Regarding the Department's response dated April 2, 2025, to the Council's Budget, Finance, and Economic Development's correspondence for FY 2026:
 - a. The Department listed the Agriculture Emergency Response Plan with Tetra Tech as their number one priority for FY 2026. Please provide a status update.
 - b. Development of the Department's Dashboard and Mapping was the Department's second FY 2026 priority. Please provide steps to access the Department's Geographic Information System Mapping Dashboard.
 - c. Please provide an update on the Department's progress to contract a nursery grower to propagate coconut trees. (Page 18, AG-01 (FY 2026)) (TP)
15. What are the remaining steps to finalize the Department's draft administrative rules? (TP)
16. Does the Department require a Maui County Code amendment to further support agriculture, aquaculture, and value-added producers? Please explain. (Page 105, Program Budget) (TP)

Salaries and Wages (Category "A")

1. Please provide the job description for P-00840 Research Analyst, Index Code 918223A, and the projects the position would be working on. (Page 116, Program Budget and Page 1-3, Budget Details) (GJ)

2. For P-00674 Secretary to Boards/Commission and P-00676 Value Chain Coordinator, Index Code 918223A:
 - a. Have position descriptions been created? If yes, please provide copies.
 - b. Please describe what steps remain before open recruitment. (Page 1-3, Budget Details) (TP)

3. For P-32337 Grants Coordinator, P-32485 and P-32744 Grants Management Program Specialist III, and P-00772 Grants Management Program Specialist IV, Agriculture Program, Index Code 918223A:
 - a. Please explain why a Grants Management Program Specialist IV is needed and how it differs from a III.
 - b. Does the Grant Coordinator and Grants Management Program Specialist III apply for grants to further the Department's mission? If yes, how many grants have been applied for and received to date in FY 2026?
 - c. How many grants does the Department administer? (Page 115, Program Budget and Pages 1-3 and 1-4, Budget Details) (YLS)

4. For Salary adjustments, Index Code 918223A:
 - a. Please explain why the Department is requesting to reinstate the Council cut from FY 2026. (Page 1-5, Budget Details) (TC)

Operations and Equipment (Category "B")

1. For Contractual Service, Index Code 918223B: (Page 1-6, Budget Details)
 - a. The base request is \$200,000 for grant application program and monitoring, with additional funding requested for the same purpose. Please explain the program and how it supports grant applications and monitoring. Provide a cost breakdown and explain the need for additional funding in FY 2027. (NUH) (YLS)

5. For Maui County Farm Bureau, Index Code 923032B:
 - a. Please explain why there is no line-item appropriation for the Maui County Farm Bureau. (Page 1-9, Budget Details) (YLS)
6. For Micro Grant Data Collection, Index Code 923040B: (Page 1-10 Budget Details)
 - a. Why does the Department need a separate grant for data collection instead of requiring the program's grantee to conduct the data collection? (YLS)
7. For MEDB STEMworks, Index Code 923054B: (Page 118, Program Budget and Page 1-11, Budget Details)
 - a. Please explain the grant's scope and why it is listed under the Department of Agriculture. (TC)
 - b. Please provide additional details about the Ag Business & Technology Internship Program, including how the program supports the Department's mission, strategies, and operations. (NUH)
8. For the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, Index Code 923011B:
 - a. What research projects have been completed in FY 2026? Please provide a summary of these projects and explain how they have enhanced Maui County's agriculture industry.
 - b. What research is being focused on for FY 2027? (Page 122, Program Budget and Page 1-8, Budget Details) (NUH)
9. Several of the Department's grants support animal enforcement, control, and support. How closely does the Department work with its grantees to achieve the Department's set goals?
 - a. How effective were these grants in FY 2026 to address axis deer mitigation and other feral animals, including chickens? Please explain the outcome.

- i. How does the Department manage ongoing community complaints regarding feral animals? (Pages 118-119, Program Budget) (NUH)
10. Please list all grant applications received in FYs 2026 and 2027, including the organization's name, program name, grant amount requested, and the grant amount approved, for the following:
 - a. Agriculture Operations/Infrastructure/Education, Index Code 923018B;
 - b. Agriculture Recovery, Index Code 923024B; and
 - c. Local Food Purchasing Incentive: Farm-to-Family Grant, Index Code 923041B. (Pages 1-9 and 1-10, Budget Details) (GJ)
11. Which of the Department's 24 grants, totaling \$15,625,000, for FY 2027, will be competitive? (Pages 118 and 119, Program Budget) (KB)
12. Please explain the Department's ideal timeline for closing out grants, given that FYs 2023 and 2024 grants are still in progress. What is the Department's ideal ratio of grants, or total grant funding, per each Grant Management Program Specialist III? (TP)
13. Please explain why the Department's Budget Details uses two different Index Codes to identify the Department, including 918XXX and 923XXX. (YLS)
14. Relating to the State of Hawai'i, Department of Agriculture grant award, formerly CBS-7898, Kula Agricultural Park Phase I Expansion – Upcountry Maui Ag Park (FY 2024): (Page 123, Program Budget)
 - a. Formerly listed as a CIP project in the FY 2024 Budget, the State of Hawai'i Department of Agriculture provided a \$10,160,000 award. What is the status of that award? (YLS)
 - i. Please include an update on the environmental assessment, including roads, fire protection, and electricity that were part of the CIP. When does the Department anticipate the Upcountry Maui Ag Park to open? (TP)

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- b. Has the County expended the funds and received reimbursement from the State? Who is responsible for monitoring these funds? (YLS) (TP)

Budget Bill

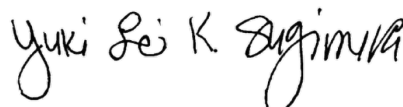
1. For Mitigation of Axis Deer and other Feral Animals grants:
 - a. Lokahi Pacific may administer each grantee up to \$100,000, for up to 500 acres of fencing. Please clarify if fencing is the only allowable mitigation method under this grant. (Page 5) (KB)

May I also request that you restate each question followed by your corresponding response. Include any attachments or exhibits. Please ensure your response is clear and legible by using a minimum 12-point font throughout so Committee members and the public can easily read the document once it is posted.

To ensure efficient processing, please duplicate the coding in the subject line above for easy reference.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Should you have any questions, please contact me or the Committee staff (Kirsten Szabo at ext. 7662, James Krueger at ext. 7761, Jarret Pascual at ext. 7141, Clarissa MacDonald at ext. 7135, or Pauline Martins at ext. 8039).

Sincerely,



YUKI LEI K. SUGIMURA, Chair
Budget, Finance, and Economic
Development Committee

bfed:2027bgt:260330aag01:clm

cc: Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr.
Budget Director

BFED Committee

From: BFED Committee
Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2026 9:51 AM
To: 'Rogerene Arce'
Cc: 'Michelle Santos'; 'Zeke Kalua'; 'Lesley Milner'; 'tiare.p.horner@co.maui.hi.us'; 'kristina.cabbat@co.maui.hi.us'; 'Shirley Blackburn'; 'Janina Agapay'; 'koa.hewahewa@mauicounty.us'; 'Kahea Ueshiro'
Subject: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BFED-1) (AG-2)
Attachments: 260330aag01 (AG-02).pdf
Importance: High