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

September 8, 2020

Honorable Michael P. Victorino
Mayor, County of Maui
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Mayor Victorino:

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE EFFECT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, RULES, CARES ACT, AND RELATED ISSUES (EDB-85)

It has become evident the County will need to take dramatic steps to navigate through the immense economic fallout and social implications the COVID-19 pandemic has caused. High rates of unemployment, the breakdown of traditional school settings, and uncertainties tied to the return of tourism—which of course has been our County’s dominant industry—have raised concerns over our systems.

After meeting with community groups such as Kua`āina Ulu `Auamo and with the adoption of Resolution 20-114, titled “PRIORITIZING MAUI COUNTY BUSINESSES AND HIRING LOCALLY FOR PUBLICLY FUNDED JOBS AND PROJECTS,” there have been suggestions of how the County can drive the creation of new systems, industries, jobs, and opportunities. It will take a community to overcome this pandemic and the fallout from it.

May I please ask for you to take some of the ideas that are presented below, to use COVID-19 funding for new pathways, into consideration.

Funding for the following positions, items, or facilities:

- Food access coordinators (Molokai, Lanai, East Maui, West Maui, Central Maui, South Maui, and Upcountry)

- Increased food distribution (expand efforts to include other nonprofits while still maintaining support for the Maui Food Bank and Feed My Sheep)
- Additional ventilators and hospital expansions such as off-site birthing centers
- Temporary public medical facilities (mental health facilities, quarantine facilities, etc.)
- Additional housing for the homeless to prevent homeless sweeps and the spread of COVID-19 with a focus on infill versus new construction
- Continued and additional rental and utility assistance programs
- Grant writers to provide assistance to nonprofits to expand services needed due to COVID-19
- Purchasing recycled and new digital devices for students in need and absorbing associated costs not covered by the DOE
- Additional mobile hygiene units for homeless

Fund nonprofit programs and program expansions in the following areas:

- Food production
- Food distribution
- Mental health
- Homelessness prevention and assistance
- K-12 alternative education programs
- Addressing the digital divide in Maui County
- Outdoor gyms to prevent COVID-19 spread and encourage resident health and wellbeing
- Direct service providers for older adults and individuals with disabilities in community settings
- Soup kitchens to provide meals to those in need
- Food pantries
- Increasing efforts to provide wireless internet access to students, including mobile and stationary internet hubs, and assistance for monthly internet service fees
- Electronics repair and refurbishing

Fund emergency re-training programs with focus in the following areas, to put hospitality workers back to work:

- Forestry
- Plant-based medicine
- Cultural-resource management
- Plant and tree propagation

- Food production
- Processing and distribution (agriculture)
- Invasive species removal (land-based and ocean-based)
- Stream and ecosystem system restoration
- Native plant propagation
- Fisheries observation and management
- Beach cleaners
- Reef management and coral propagation
- Aquaculture
- Energy production
- Energy audits
- Green energy system conversion
- Sustainable community food systems
- Climate change sciences and studies
- Soil regeneration
- Carbon sequestration
- 3D printing and rapid prototyping services
- Software development
- Alternative construction and packaging materials
- Virtual teaching
- Computer systems design and related services
- Mental health sector
- Electronic repair and refurbishing

Renegotiate union contracts to allow for County employees to focus on the following tasks:

- Food production
- IT service for the community
- Social work
- Child protection services
- Child welfare officers

Honorable Michael P. Victorino
September 8, 2020
Page 4

Please feel free to contact me to discuss more or to work together to find additional solutions that will benefit the communities we both serve. I would also be happy to connect you directly with the Kua`āina Ulu `Auamo group as well.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keani Rawlins-Fernandez', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

KEANI RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ, Chair
Economic Development and Budget
Committee

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