

Resolution

No. 24-161

URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO PRIORITIZE
THE INCREASED PRODUCTION AND
EXPANSION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF
RECYCLED R-1 WATER TO PRESERVE
POTABLE WATER FOR THE CONSTRUCTION
OF HOUSING IN THE COUNTY OF MAUI

WHEREAS, water is a scarce and valued commodity that must be preserved and conserved to ensure the sustainability of future generations; and

WHEREAS, adding to a housing crisis that has been severely exacerbated by the August 2023 wildfires, the Island of Maui faces chronic potable water shortages, delaying the construction of hundreds of affordable-housing units in West and South Maui; and

WHEREAS, the reliable capacity of the County's water system in West Maui is 4.12 million gallons per day, but the demand in West Maui prior to the August 2023 wildfires was 5.6 million gallons per day; and

WHEREAS, as of March 2024, post-fire water usage in West Maui is 3.59 million gallons per day, yet the Department of Water Supply is responsible for providing water at the pre-fire demand level of 5.6 million gallons per day; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Water Supply estimates that the County's pre-fire usage per person in West Maui was around 228 gallons per day per person; and

WHEREAS, by adding just one million gallons of potable water to the County's water system, the Department would be able to support the construction of housing for approximately 4,587 people in West Maui; and

WHEREAS, the Department anticipates all existing water sources will be allocated for the reconstruction of residences and commercial

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structures in the West Maui burn zone and the building of temporary housing through 2027; and

WHEREAS, the Department plans on developing 3.4 million gallons per day of water source in West Maui, but it will take between one to four years before any new water source is available; and

WHEREAS, parks, golf courses, hotels, and condominium properties in West and South Maui are ideal users of R-1 water because large quantities of potable water are used primarily for irrigation; and

WHEREAS, the Lahaina Wastewater Reclamation Facility, the County's only wastewater treatment facility in West Maui, produced 4.5 million gallons per day of R-1 water, while disposing an average of 3.16 million gallons per day of treated wastewater through injection wells, according to pre-fire calculations; and

WHEREAS, South Maui, an area also lacking potable water, could benefit from using R-1 water from the Kihei Wastewater Reclamation Facility for landscaping, agricultural, and irrigation purposes instead of potable water; and

WHEREAS, a portion of treated wastewater effluent from County wastewater reclamation facilities are disposed of through the use of injection wells; and

WHEREAS, in addition to costing less than potable water, the use of R-1 water would reduce the need for fertilizer because of its nutrient content, resulting in long-term savings for all users; and

WHEREAS, the public has expressed interest in expanding the applicability of R-1 water, as illustrated by:

- the Countywide Policy Plan, to: "Promote the reclamation of gray water, and enable the use of reclaimed, gray, and brackish water for activities that do not require potable water";
- the Maui Island Plan, to: "Maximize the efficient use of reclaimed wastewater to serve nonpotable needs";

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- the Kīhei-Mākena Community Plan, to: “Reduce the reliance on injection wells for wastewater disposal. Require the use of reclaimed effluent – a procedure which is safe, economical and environmentally sound – for irrigation of golf courses, parks and landscaped areas”; and
- the West Maui Community Plan, to: “Identify and encourage potential new users of recycled water, including parks, golf courses, and agriculture, and expand recycled water storage and conveyance systems in West Maui to increase the reuse of recycled water”; and

WHEREAS, additional infrastructure is necessary to enable the production and additional distribution of R-1 water to reduce the County’s reliance on injection wells and achieve meaningful results in building affordable housing for County residents; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it urges the Administration to prioritize the increased production and expansion of the distribution of recycled R-1 water to preserve potable water for the construction of housing in the County of Maui;
2. That it encourages the Mayor and Director of Environmental Management to invest in R-1 water production at the Kahului, Molokai, and Lāna‘i Wastewater Treatment Facilities, along with the expansion of the R-1 distribution system in West and South Maui, and explore public-private partnerships to expand the distribution network for R-1 water in West and South Maui;
3. That it encourages the Director of Environmental Management to provide to the Council an annual report on the progress made and investments necessary to expand R-1 water production and distribution; and
4. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, Managing Director, Director of Environmental Management, and Director of Water Supply.

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "C".

TOM COOK