

AGRICULTURE, DIVERSIFICATION, ENVIRONMENT, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

August 7, 2025

Online Only via Teams

CONVENE: 9:02 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Chair
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member (Out 11:40 a.m.; In 1:36 p.m.)
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member (Out 2:13 p.m.)
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member (Out 12:32 p.m.; In 2:26 p.m.)
Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Member (Out 11:20 a.m.; In 1:36 p.m.)

STAFF:

Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst
Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst
Criselda Paranada, Committee Secretary
Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney
Lenora Dineen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Offices

Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office
Christian Balagso, Council Aide, West Maui Residency Area Office
Buddy Almeida, Council Aide, Makawao-Ha‘ikū-Pā‘ia Residency Area Office
Zhantell Lindo, Council Aide, Molokai Residency Area Office
Bill Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

ADMIN.:

Kali Arce, Director, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(7))
Koa Hewahewa, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture
(ADEPT-1(7), -1(8), -1(9))
Lauren Nelson, Food Access Coordinator, Department of Agriculture (ADEPT-1(7))
Kristie Wrigglesworth, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of Corporation
Counsel (All)
Kaiea Medeiros, ‘Āina Advocate, Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources (ADEPT-1(8), -1(9))
Jordan Hart, Executive Assistant Office of Recovery (ADEPT-1(9))
Zeke Kalua, Executive Assistant, Office of the Mayor (ADEPT-1(8), -1(9))

OTHERS:

Kirstin Kahaloa, District 6 Representative, Hawai‘i House of Representatives
(ADEPT-1(9))
Dr. Richard Kim, Administrator, Plant Industry Division, State Department of
Agriculture (ADEPT-1(8), -1(9))

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Jacob Muise, CEO/Co-Founder, Maui Nui Venison (ADEPT-1(8))
Kamanani Conklin, Policy Specialist, New Ventures Advisors (ADEPT-1(7))
Jonathan Sprague, Co-Director of Conservation, Pūlama Lānaʻi (ADEPT-1(8), -1(9))
Lance DeSilva, Maui Branch Forestry Program Manager, Department of Land
and Natural Resources (ADEPT-1(8))
Carly Wyman, Senior Food Systems Research Specialist, Swette Center for
Sustainable Food Systems, Arizona State University (ADEPT-1(8))
Carolyn Auwelo, Rangeland Management Consultant, ʻĀina Advocates
(ADEPT-1(8))
Jason Hew, District Conservationist, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural
Resources Conservation Service (ADEPT-1(8))
Keiki-Pua Dancil, Senior VP of Governmental Affairs and Strategic Planning,
Pūlama Lānaʻi (ADEPT-1(8), -1(9))
Lori Buchanan, Molokai community advocate (ADEPT-1(8)); Coordinator, Molokai
Maui Invasive Species Council (ADEPT-1(9))
Warren Watanabe, Executive Director, Maui County Farm Bureau (ADEPT-1(8))

Testifiers

Jasee Law (All)

(40+) additional attendees

PRESS: Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .(*gavel*). . . Aloha. Will the Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, and Public Transportation Committee meeting of August 7th, 2025, please come to order. The time is now 9:02 a.m. Members, in accordance with the Sunshine Law, if you're not in the Council Chamber, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today. Minors do not need to be identified. Also, please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. Remember to silence all cell phones. Good morning, everyone. I look forward to chairing a productive meeting. I'm Gabe Johnson, your Committee Chair. Also joining us today is Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci. Aloha, Councilmember.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Hey. Aloha, Chair. Hau'oli wau o ma'ane'i. And there are no testifiers in Hāna, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Good morning. I see Council Chair Alice Lee on the call. Aloha and good morning, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aloha, Chair. Manahuhu [*sic*] from the Paiute Nation, which is close to Nevada, and that's the reason why all of us Hawaiians learn how to play Paiute when we're, like, four years old. Good morning, everyone. I'm home alone in my workspace.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. And moving on to Committee Member Tom Cook.

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Aloha, Councilmember. Manahuu. Is that...am I saying that right, Councilmember?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Hu--huhu.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Manahuu.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Manauu...huhu. There's no testifiers in the Kihei Office. And I'm happy to be here, let's get to work.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great. Thank you, Councilmember. Let's move on to Councilmember Tamara Paltin. Aloha and manahuhu, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka, manahuhu kākou. I'll try not to be too hu'ū today on reaching events.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, boy. The plot thickens. Okay. Let's move on to Committee Member Yuki Lei Sugimura. Aloha and good morning, and manahuhu to you, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Aloha, everybody. Manahuhu sounds like a...yeah, it does sound like a game, doesn't it? But thank you, Chair Lee. Looking forward to a productive meeting. Nice to see all of you here, as well as in the Chamber. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. Of course, Committee Member U'ū-Hodgins will be joining us shortly, and our non-voting Committee Members are always welcome. That would be Councilmember Tasha Kama, as long as...well as Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. From the Administration, Department of Agriculture, we have with us today, Director Kali Arce, Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa, and they're for Adept-1(7), Adept-1(8), and Adept-1(9). Lauren Nelson, Food Access Coordinator for Adept-1(7). From the Department of Management, Office of Recovery, we have Jordan Hart, Executive Assistant, Adept-1(9). From the Office of the Mayor, we have Zeke Kalua, Executive Assistant, Adept-1(8), and Adept-1(9). From the Department of Ōiwi Resources, we have Kaiea Medeiros, 'Āina Advocate, Adept-1(8), Adept-1(9). Until last Friday, Kaiea was an Agriculture Advocate in the Department of Agriculture, so thank you for all of your hard work there. And from Corporation Counsel, we have Kristie Wigglesworth, Deputy Corporation Counsel. From the Committee Staff, we have Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst; Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst; Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney; Criselda Paranada, Committee Secretary; Lei Dineen, Assistant Clerk; and Jean Pokipala, Assistant Clerk. Today on the agenda, Members, we have three items. We have Adept-1(7), Maui County Food Security; Adept-1(8), Axis Deer Mitigation; and Adept-1(9), which is Maui County Biosecurity. These items are informational, and no legislative action will be taken today. Thank you, Members and Administration, for being here today. Members, so we can maintain quorum, please let me know if you need a bio break or need to step away so I can ensure we have enough Members online to proceed or determine if we need a recess. And let's begin with public testimony on all the items of the agenda. Oral testimony via phone or video conference will be accepted in addition to in-person testimony. Individuals wishing to testify in

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person may sign up with a Staff member at the entrance of the Chamber. For those joining the meeting via Microsoft Teams, please let Staff know you wish to testify using the raise-your-hand function. Once you have been added to the testifier log, Staff will lower your hand. Testifiers wanting to provide video or audio testimony should have joined the online meeting via the TinyURL link or by calling in the phone number noted on today's agenda. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link at mauicounty.us/agendas. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item. If you're still testifying beyond that time, you'll hear a second timer to go off after 30 seconds. I'll kindly ask you to complete your testimony. We ask that you state your full name and organization, but if you prefer to testify anonymously, Staff will identify and refer to you as Testifier. Please also indicate the agenda items or items in which you're testifying on. Once you're done testifying, or if you do not wish to testify, you can view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us/agendas. Thank you all for your cooperation. The Chair will maintain decorum at all times. Any person who behaves in a manner that disrupts, disturbs, or impedes the orderly conduct of any Council meeting can, at the discretion of the presiding chair, officer, or a majority of present Councilmembers, be ejected or banned from Council meetings or, if participating remotely, muted or dropped from the meeting. Examples of disruptive behavior include heckling, shouting, use of profanities, threatening, or slanderous remarks made to any Member of the Council, Staff or general public. Committee Members, I'll now proceed with oral testimony. Staff has been monitoring individuals joining today's meeting by phone and by video, and we'll do our best to take each person up in orderly fashion. Staff, do we have any testifiers today?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, we see an individual approaching the podium.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. LAW: Jasee Law. Aloha. Hold on, my brain's not working. Aloha kakahiaka. That's it. I look at Councilman from Hāna, and he reminds me of the Hawaiians every time. Aloha *Akakū*. Aloha kākou. Yeah, I've got confidence in you, Mr. Johnson. Thank you for working for the County, and these are three very important items. And thank you, Department of Agriculture. That's like, whenever I think about the food insecurity and what's going on with the ships and everything, I get like...it kind of stresses me out a little bit, but seeing you guys up here kind of reduces. And so, I want to thank Ambassador out there for reminding me of...because I was just going to skip over because I know you want to get to work, but then when there were no testifiers, I feel like I've got to say something. But so, the axis deer thing, so the United States tells me I can't get a gun, so then they tell me I've got to buy their food, and I can't hunt. I can hunt if I get a bow and arrow, but, I mean, there's a reason why guns were invented, so that's my thing. I'm not...my...my complaint's not against you, it's a complaint against the people who made laws where it says law-abiding citizens like me cannot get a gun and go hunting. Thank you for your time. I give the rest of my time to the Hawaiians.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Members, do we have any clarifying questions for our testifiers? Seeing none. Thank you for your testimony. Staff, do we have any more testifiers today?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, Staff has not received any further requests for testimony at this time. Would you like me to do a last call?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, please.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: This is the last call for testimony at the beginning of the meeting. Three...two...one. Chair, seeing no individuals wishing to testify.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING . . .

ITEM 1(7): MAUI COUNTY FOOD SECURITY (Rule 7(B))

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, seeing there's no more individuals wishing to testify, I will now proceed with the agenda, which is ADEPT-1(7), Maui County Food Security. Members, the importance of food and nutrition security for our community cannot be overstated. Ensuring our residents have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food is a foundation of a healthy community where everyone can thrive. It's a guiding goal in which informs efforts to improve our food system, support agriculture, and maintain our lands and natural resources. Unfortunately, the data shows that our community is struggling with food insecurity. Costs of living continue to increase and have outpaced the wage growth. Housing costs are astronomical. And as they say, rent eats first. A survey last year found that 60 percent of Maui County residents and 70 percent of fire survivors report cutting back on groceries and food due to financial reasons. This impacts us all, but our vulnerable and historically marginalized communities are especially impacted, making this an equity issue. Compared to general population, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos are more likely to experience food insecurity. Households with young children and school-aged children are more likely to be food insecure, and fire...fire survivors are more likely to be food insecure. And the students at the UH Maui College, our next generation of leaders and workers, also report to be more likely to be...to experience food insecurity. Yet our Federal administration is moving in the wrong direction, cutting billions of dollars from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which so many of our families depend on. On the upside, this plan by the Department of Agriculture gives us a blueprint to improve our food systems so that our farmers, constituents, and natural resources can thrive. This Council has been supportive of many efforts to make our community more food nutritional secure, such as increasing funding for agriculture and farmers, supporting programs like the ALICE Initiative, Kama'āina Credit, farmers market vouchers, and environmental grants, and passing legislation like Bill 75 and 76, which allows farmers more opportunities to build successful agriculture ventures. You can find a copy of this plan posted on Granicus. After the presentation today, I hope we can be inspired to take further action. The food systems touches so many different

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areas. And by taking action, we not only help our community become more food secure, we also work towards the longstanding goals of community development, economic growth, cultural preservation, and sustainability. Members, if there's no objections, I'd like to designate as a resource persons under Council Rule 18(A), given their expertise in the lead technical writer of the Food and Nutrition Security Plan, Kamanani Conklin, Policy Specialist with New Ventures Advisors. Any objections, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let me jump in here right here and recognize Councilmember U'u-Hodgins has joined the call. So, welcome, Councilmember U'u-Hodgins.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Good morning, Chair. Good morning, everyone. I'm at my private residence. I do have one minor. Well, he's soon to be not a minor in a few days, and my husband is home.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you for that, and welcome aboard. Okay. So, Ms. Nelson and Ms. Conklin, thank you for being here. Please proceed with any opening remarks or presentation.

MS. ARCE: Aloha, good morning. Thank you for allowing us to present the Food Nutrition Plan. Food system planning addresses the County's heavy dependence on imported foods...imported foods. Our islands are more than ever vulnerable to climate change effects, disruptions in the supply chain, and price fluctuations, which are caused in part by the imposed tariffs. The Maui Nui Food Security and Nutrition Plan provides proposed solutions through its objectives and action plans on some of the ways that we can strengthen and improve our food system. The work of the Department in developing the plan has set the State into momentum in focusing and improving the state's food system by signing into law SB1186. The new Hawai'i State law establishes the Statewide interagency food systems working group, who will engage in Statewide planning to develop government's protocols that facilitate county and moku-based planning efforts to develop a State-level food system. We all can start now by supporting farmers and local producers, supporting food access, protecting natural resources, expanding value-added production, and integrating indigenous knowledge. These initiatives are just a portion of the Maui County Food and Nutrition Security Plan, which prioritizes the needs of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Through the Department, I believe Maui County has set the State in momentum to initiate the State law SB1186 with the Maui Nui Food and Security Plan, which we have already begun implementation. Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Director Arce. I appreciate your presentation. Does anyone else in your Department want to speak? Is that Deputy Koa Hewahewa has some? Go ahead.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, welina mai kākou, aloha kakahiaka kākou, everybody in attendance, Chair, Committee members. I'm going to take my time a little bit, just because the

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importance of understanding not just the statistics but really the reality that we face with hunger and food insecurity within our community. So, bear with me. Before the presentation, I do have some remarks. So, mahalo for allowing our team this time to present our Department's Food and Nutrition Security Plan, really a colossal effort led by our fabulous Food Access Coordinator, Lauren Nelson, along with Nani Conklin over here, our Food Policy Specialist with Ventures. What is that? Yeah, New Ventures Advisors. So, mahalo nui. Really, really appreciate the work. I mean, tireless work, day in, day out. I mean, I seen...I seen the...the effort, and it was beyond the effort. So really appreciate them developing this really, truly with our beloved community. So I just want to applaud their efforts, our Department Staff who supported and contributed to the plan. This plan will strongly guide our Department's efforts to hopefully respect, serve, and end food insecurity. Although efforts are moving, this still really is just the beginning. As today we present the plans, our goals, objectives, priorities, and action steps to reconnect the community to healthy and accessible food system. In my opening remarks, I wanted to share the gravity and the weight of our food insecurity situation here in our County and how it impacts us. Here in Hawai'i, and I've said this before on the floor, like our social and political system really evolved...evolved around our connection to our environment and to our food systems. So how did we become so disconnected? We came from a place that was food secure to a place that, you know, the highest rates of food insecurity. So, whether we know it or not, every one of us are connected by our food. What we consume, what we eat is so very important to who we become and to who we are. Culturally rich, nutrient-dense food is supposed to be a fundamental human right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But what I see currently is far from the truth. Food is only getting extremely harder and harder to access. The hard reality . . .(inaudible). . . is what we have been forcibly displaced and disconnected from accessing healthy lands that enables us to grow and be connected to our foods our ancestors were. I know and understand that it is a privilege to be able to choose what to eat or what diet or challenges or if we want to be a vegetarian or pescatarian. It's a privilege, but the reality is one-third of our households are food insecure here in Hawai'i. One in five children go hungry right here in our own home. So denied access to healthy food degrades our quality of life, and we need help. We need to be better as a government, as a County. And if we work together to change the negative socioeconomic statistics, we will all in some shape or form contribute or are victims to. Food insecurity reaches far into our community and has impacts way beyond our comprehension, and it contributes to severe physical and mental impacts, health impacts in our community, increasing risk of chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular heart disease, hypertension, poor oral health, educational disadvantages, behavior problems, increased cost to healthcare, all the way to the depletion of our natural and cultural resources, our current housing crisis, and the social well-being, and ultimately our quality of life. So, Chair, I'll share a few statistics, and then I'll touch up on a couple more to get us up out of our seats so we can comprehend and...and pay attention. For those viewing, that I said earlier, one...one-third of our households in Hawai'i experience food insecurity. One in 10 households reported going a full day without any food for a month or most of the months. Anxiety running high was reported by almost forty percent of households. And you spoke about the ALICE population; 46 percent of the households struggle with

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consistent food access here in Maui County compared to 28 percent Statewide. And we are a mixed...mixed plate of blended cultures who have become disconnected to traditional foods. Food insecurity disproportionately affects over 40 percent, as you shared, of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, Latinas, and our Native American communities. Forty...40.2 percent of households below the poverty line experience hunger. Fifty-five percent of food-insecure individuals are ineligible for Federal nutrition programs, pointing to a gap where benefits may not cover high cost. Over 60 percent of food insecure individuals delay filling prescriptions or took less money to save money so that they can eat. Now, more current data that we just got over from the Food Bank. So, the Food Bank, being on the frontline, has the most up-to-date statistics on food insecurity in Maui County. This week, Ashley Gonzalez and Mahealani Carbonell of Maui Food Bank shared that the need for food in Maui County is much greater now than previous of August 23. The demand on the Food Bank has been great since the fires. Maui Food Bank has more than doubled the amount of food they distribute. Now, take that into consideration and understanding, which is currently 635,000 pounds a month, up from 250,000 pounds a month pre-August 23. The number of our neighbors that Maui Food Bank serve has...has increased 174 percent since July of 23, from 15,000 a month to 41,000 Maui County residents going to the Food Bank each month. So, since 2023, the amount of fresh produce Maui Food Bank has distributed has nearly tripled from 70,000 to 220,000 pounds per month. Maui Food Bank survey shows that the community wants fresh and local food whenever possible. So, in closing, the Maui County Food and Nutrition Security Plan was designed to be our County's roadmap to build this resilient food system that feeds our communities. Food security is the most critical component of our community's well-being. Our community's ability to access healthy food determines their quality of life and their children's ability to learn and thrive. That's why we're so passionate. With Federal funding cuts threatening our critical food safety nets, including cuts to the Food Bank and SNAP programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs, our community is at great risk of not being able to afford groceries and going to bed hungry. It only takes one generation, our generation, to break this cycle of food insecurity and poor health. And this plan outlines a collective vision for Maui County and all of our community partners working to end hunger so that we can work together to increase our neighbors' health, lifespans, quality of life, and emergency preparedness. So that's in closing. I take this real personally. I'm on a personal journey to really try. I don't know how many of us could raise their hands in the room or who's attending that can say we are at our optimum self because we're putting foods into our body that our genetic memories understand and can process, you know. So it's a personal issue. This is just my feelings, but...and it's my story. Tired of being a statistic, you know, tired of being a victim that's been displaced from our food systems. And we want to try to do the best that we can within our Department to help contribute to access to land so that our farmers can farm and we can get healthy foods that we know where...where it comes from. So that's my closing. E ola and I'm looking forward to hearing the presentation from Nani and Lauren. So, mahalo for having us today. Aloha.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much for those wise words, Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa. So you want to move down the line or do you...okay. So go ahead. Green button's on,

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and you're ready to go, Ms. Nelson.

MS. NELSON: Aloha, Chair Johnson and the ADEPT Committee. Mahalo for welcoming us here today. I'm...

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

MS. NELSON: I don't see a green light. Oh, here. Perfect. I'm Lauren Nelson, the Maui County Food Access Coordinator. And it's my pleasure to also introduce Kamanani Conklin, the lead technical author of this plan and a food and agriculture policy consultant with New Ventures Advisors. Today we're happy to share the finalized 2025 to 2030 Maui County Food and Nutrition Security Plan. Nutrition security is the most critical component of our community's well-being. With Federal funding cuts threatening our critical food safety nets, including food banks and SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, our community is at great risk of not being able to afford groceries. And as Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa stated, at great risk of going to bed hungry. In 2023, Hawai'i Food Bank reported that 31 percent of Maui County residents were food insecure, meaning that they do not have enough access...do not have access to enough food to live an active and healthy life. The number of our neighbors that Maui Food Bank serves has increased 174 percent since the fires in...in August 2023. And their numbers have risen from July 2023, being 15,000 served per month to, now, 41,000 Maui County residents rely on the Food Bank for food each month. The Food and Nutrition Security Plan outlines a collective vision for Maui County and all of our community partners working to end hunger so that we can work together to increase our neighbors' health, quality of life, and emergency preparedness, and build food system resiliency across our islands. The purpose of the Maui County Food and Nutrition Security Plan is to ensure that all Maui County residents have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. This plan acknowledges the power of local food systems as a driver of health, cultural connection, and resilience, especially for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. The key themes that guide this plan are responding to community need; prioritizing getting local food to local people; supporting traditional Native Hawaiian food systems and foodways; reducing dependency on imports; prioritizing equity, justice, and long-term solutions; supporting elders and families with young children, and supporting our rural communities in Hāna, Molokai, and Lāna'i. This plan takes a community-based food systems approach, looking at the people and processes that influence how food gets to our plates, looking at farming inputs to food production, aggregation, processing, distribution, to access and consumption. This plan highlights the role each sector has in ensuring food security and including the role that we all play as consumers. Anyone who eats is part of the food system and can be part of shaping its future resilience. I want to take a moment to thank Kelsey Ige for her gorgeous work as the plan's graphic designer. She created this infographic detailing community-based food systems and all the graphics in the plan. This plan was designed for our community by our community. It was developed through a multi-year process engaging hundreds of Maui County residents, including farmers, ranchers, fishers, hunters, foragers, educators, and public health

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professionals who participated in our comprehensive food system needs assessment, food summits, and community gatherings. We sought feedback from Maui County's diverse communities and worked with many community partners to publicize and lead these sessions. To understand distinct regional needs, we held talk-story style sessions in each district of Maui County. These conversations directly informed the plan's four goals, objectives, and actions. And Nani will share the goals of the plan and its structure.

MS. CONKLIN: Aloha mai kākou. My name is Nani, and as a descendant of many Maui civil servants and farmers and an aspiring and beginning farmer myself, I'm honored to share how my team translated all of the community input we received into actionable program and policy strategies found in the plan. The plan is guided by these four main goals, which reflect the top themes and priorities that came up most frequently in the community needs assessments and talk-story. First, ensure all residents have access to nourishing, culturally relevant foods at all times. Second, support producers and expand food production to create an abundant self-sufficient food system. Third, build vibrant local food economies and profitable career pathways for producers and food system workers. And fourth, promote healthy, resilient ecosystems and responsible resource stewardship. These goals are interconnected because we cannot have food security without farm viability, local food production, fair jobs, and living wages for food system workers and healthy ecosystems. Each goal has multiple objectives, which each focus on a distinct part of the goal. And each objective has several actions embedded within it that are very specific policies and programs. Action leads are local nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies who have committed to leading progress on a specific action. So these are the allies that the Department of Agriculture has cultivated to implement the plan. Many action leads already have community-based programs or other initiatives they can build on in order to complete their action. So this is deeply connected to work that is ongoing. And I'll briefly summarize the first two goals and show examples of the objectives and actions. The first goal is focused on different ways to increase food access and the different kinds of food our communities need to thrive. The objectives and actions relate to home food production like gardening and raising animals; access to wild foods through hunting, fishing, and gathering; and being more prepared for emergencies by establishing emergency food storage hubs and providing classes on food preservation methods. Actions also relate to gleaning and food recovery programs, community gardens, free food fridges, and many other things that we heard directly from community members. So to give you a sense of what this looks like, here are a few actions from goal one, objective four. They include offering culturally relevant cooking classes, food as medicine programs that help to treat chronic disease, resources that help residents cook healthy when time and money are tight, and establishing more fresh food grocery stores, farmers markets, and farm stands. Many of the action leads that you see here are groups already doing this work or those who have capacity to begin it, and they have deep community connections that will help them be successful. And I'll go a little bit quickly through the next goal and then Lauren will take from there, just to keep us on time with the presentation this morning. So the second goal emphasizes supporting producers and expanding food production because we cannot ensure food security for all if we're not growing the foods our communities eat, or if resources like

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water and land are not better managed, or if farmers constantly run into permitting roadblocks. We heard time and time again from community that one of their top priorities for food security was directly supporting producers, both in their ability to produce food, but also in their ability to provide for themselves and have a livelihood here in Maui County. So these objectives highlight the need to improve water infrastructure and management, diversify food production, and increase the amount of food grown for local consumption, expand access to agricultural land, help producers navigate regulations and permitting, expand key infrastructure for food systems, and increase access to ongoing advancement and resources for producers. And briefly highlighting the fifth objective under this goal, you can see actions related to commercial kitchens, cold and dry storage facilities, food hubs, and aggregation centers, and slaughterhouse units for rural areas. I'll turn it back to Lauren for the last two goals.

MS. NELSON: Goal three of the plan focuses on building vibrant local food economies and profitable career pathways for producers through increasing farm viability, increasing access to markets for local producers, assisting food system entrepreneurs to grow and sustain their businesses, and creating educational pathways to develop future generations of producers. I want to highlight the second objective under goal three to increase market access for local producers. Our actions focused on increasing markets for producers, supporting transportation and promotion of local food products, and farm-to-school efforts to get local food into cafeterias. Goal four, to promote healthy ecosystems and natural resource stewardship, focused on promoting soil health and food waste diversion, managing invasive species populations, and supporting mauka to makai resource management. Here I want to highlight under objective 4.2 the importance of coordination with many partners including the Maui Invasive Species Committee, Moloka'i Invasive Species Committee, Hawai'i State Department of Agriculture, and CTAHR when tackling large invasive species threats like coconut rhinoceros beetle. Nani will share more about our work to gain community feedback and to understand each district's needs and to prioritize the plan's objectives.

MS. CONKLIN: Mahalo, Lauren. We didn't end community engagement after drafting these objectives and actions. To ensure the plan reflected community needs and priorities and would be realistic to implement, we sought public input through two rounds of community feedback and discussion with County agencies, partner organizations, and potential action leads. One round of feedback included a prioritization survey because while we developed the goals and actions based on input from all parts of Maui County, we wanted to understand how each region would prioritize the plan. So we created a survey that allowed Maui County residents to select their region then rank the objectives by what they felt was most urgent to work on. The plan includes these tables that show what respondents from each region prioritize for each goal, which we hope can help representatives and community groups identify what to focus on first.

MS. NELSON: The Food and Nutrition Security Plan also aligns...many of our goals and actions align with existing community plans, the comprehensive economic development strategies, our climate action resiliency strategies, Aloha+ Challenge actions, and the UN sustainable development goals. Appendix A in the plan, on page 43, demonstrates

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how specific actions to support food systems also support established priorities in areas such as community development, economic growth, climate resilience, and culture...cultural preservation. In addition to the actions included in the plan, community members also identified these key policies that would support the plan's goals and a more just food system for Maui County. These represent advocacy opportunities for action leaders and allies, and they highlight the need for affordable housing, rent control, land access, and financial benefits in education because food security is deeply tied to financial security. This plan is large in scope. We cover the full food system, and it's greater than the work of a single division or department. We need to work together on this. The plan will be carried out and co-led by community partners, including nonprofits, small businesses, and government supported projects working to build better food systems for Molokai, Lāna'i, and Maui. The Maui County Department of Agriculture will oversee the advancement of the plan and our goals through ongoing coordination with the action plan...with the plan's action leads. Each action lead will collaborate with our Department to develop indicators to measure and monitor each action's progress, and we've already started this process. The plan's progress will be communicated through an annual report, which will share the status of each action, progress on each of the action's indicators, and any barriers impeding success. The annual report will also note any changes or additions to action leads as this plan grows and evolves as our community and food systems grow and evolve. The report will flag the need for additional interventions, collaboration, and resources, and the reports will be shared on our Department's website for the next five years each year and also at the Maui Nui Food Summit. And we invite you all and all Councilmembers to attend the Maui Nui Food Summit on Friday, October 10th. We'll have the registration survey available online on our website this next week. In addition to overseeing the advancement of the plan, our Department is focused this year on piloting produce prescription programs, initiating a local food access program for kūpuna, and increasing the amount of land used to grow canoe crops, including 'ulu, niu, and kalo, among other projects, including our grants program to increase economic opportunities for producers. Please let us know if there are any actions that you would like to champion. We also invite each Councilmember to join us to meet for a one-on-one discussion about their district's top food security needs and what can be done to improve nutrition security in their area. We also want to take a moment to thank our Council for supporting our work and the work of Maui Food Bank, Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike, Grow Some Good, and so many other action leads who are carrying out vital work to build nutrition security and educate our youth on how to grow food. We encourage anyone interested in getting involved with the plan to reach out to our office or to contact action leads directly. All of the action leads' contact information can be found in our Ag Resource Directory on our Department's website. From shopping at the farmer's market to volunteering in lo'i kalo restoration events, there are so many ways that each of us can get involved and help improve our island's food security. Read our list on how to get involved on page 42 of the plan. You can find a copy of the plan on our Department's website or through following this QR code. If we listen to the wisdom of our community, I believe that Maui County can end hunger within our lifetime. We look forward to working together with you to advance the actions in this plan to build thriving, food-resilient futures for our islands. Mahalo for your time.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Well first off, thank you guys so much for your presentations and your words. Really appreciate it. Your Department's doing great. Thank you so much. Okay. Let's move on to public testimony just for ADEPT-1(7). At this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise-your-hand function and will be called up upon to testify. Staff, do we have any testifiers today?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, Staff has not received any requests for testimony at this time. Would you like me to do a last call?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, please.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: This is a last call for testimony on ADEPT-1(7). Three...two...one. Chair, seeing no individuals wishing to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, seeing there's no more individuals wishing to testify, I will now close public testimony for this item and accept written. Any objections, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(7). . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's proceed with the agenda.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objections.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. ADEPT 1(7), Maui County Food Security. Let's enter the discussion on this. I propose a three-minute round for each Councilmember. We'll start down the list. Vice-Chair Sinenci, followed by Committee Member Nohelani U'u-Hodgins. So, Vice-Chair Sinenci.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Hey, mahalo, Chair. And again, mahalo to the Department for this. This looks awesome. Great job, you guys. Appreciate this. And I...I guess it's a...you know, it's a document that we can work, all the different communities can work off of. When we...when we were discussing and creating the Department of Agriculture, we didn't have all the details. And...and so, having this booklet is really helps us moving forward towards food security. So, great job. Mahalo for this. I also wanted to mahalo the efforts of the Department coming out to East Maui. And we're happy to say that during this budget, we got the acquisition of a site for the Food Aggregation Center in Hāna. So...so, that was another milestone for our community. So, mahalo for that. I guess, Lauren, you did mention about getting foods from...to within the school system. And I know that has been one of our challenges, to try and get local foods within the State Department of...of Education. So, has there been any, you know, traction in...in, I guess, meeting all of...all of the State standards, those types of things?

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. NELSON: We are still far from the goal of reaching thirty percent local procurement by 2030, which is the State's goal. But there is momentum moving forward. And we are partnering with Weston Yap from the School Food Nutrition Services Branch to progress that effort and get more farmers connected with and compliant to be able to source to schools. And there's...there hasn't been as much momentum as our advocates want to see, but it is moving forward. And I...and I do feel hopeful that the next five years will...we'll see bigger changes.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: All right. Great. Those are good news. And then, you spoke about the Food Bank and just the increase of food that is...that is moving through the Food Bank. And...and...and I'm seeing it personally as it...it reaches out to all the families throughout the entire County. So...so, thank you for that. The...I think what the Food Bank does, because it...it lets all the nonprofit agencies, they get to shop, they get to go. And so, these nonprofits are creating their own networks of kūpuna, of children that they...so I think that is the important thing when...when these local agencies, they know the people, they know who they're taking the food to, they know those families that...that require, you know, food and are...are...and are food insecure. So, anything else about networking? Can you speak to . . .(timer sounds). . . to that networking?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. NELSON: Well, I think food is inherently about relationships. And something that we saw come out of COVID was just this combined desire to work collectively across our food system. So we saw the formation of food hubs and Food Hub Hui, and just an expansion of aggregation, and then connecting that local food to our food bank and the food pantries that they support. I think that our community has the right connections. They understand the need. The top food requested at almost all the food pantries across Maui County is just fresh produce --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. NELSON: -- and local proteins. So we know this, we have the relationships. It's really about having funding to support local food purchasing so that we can lift up our farmers while also ensuring that local families have access to local food.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Okay. We'll move on to Committee Member U'u-Hodgins, followed by Councilmember Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, guys, for your presentation. It is a little heartbreaking to hear some of the statistics. And I know it's a reality for so many people. How can we...like, knowing all of that and doing all of this,

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how can we just get to, like, the super basic goal of making sure people are just straight up eating? Like, you know, I mean, I think we...I was at the ERC the other week, and they were talking about cold storage, which I know you mentioned. Is there a way we could, like, have a permanent farmers market? Like, I remember growing up with the big chill in Kahului, and if we, like, could imagine what that might look like, but just, like, have a co-op of farmers, like how the artists have their own stores, and they just take turns working at it?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. NELSON: Let's do it. That sounds great.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Good.

MS. NELSON: Permanent...permanent farmers market models work very well across the world. We see many examples, like in Spain, rain or shine, they can operate the farmers markets. Let's do that. Expanding our cold storage is expanding our resiliency and ability to respond to emergencies. And it helps the viability of our farmers.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, and trauma with food, it can last generations. Like, my dad grew up hungry, so his one goal was to make sure we didn't. And then we were the house that, like, had the outside fridge, and my mom would buy Tiger's Milk bars for the entire neighborhood kids to come and grab if they were hungry because, you know, it's a real, real issue, and it just messes with your whole everything. You can't think, you can't study, you can't do any of it. So I'm here for it. It is so...like I said, it's so sad because I love to eat, and I heard Deputy Director saying things that are, like, culturally relevant. And lucky for me, I'm Hawaiian, Japanese, Italian, so all of my favorite foods, apparently, is good for me. So I'm happy to figure out how this, you know, permanent farmers market, like, would work because, rain or shine, just a permanent store of our local foods and produce and all the things. Let's work on that. I would love to see it. I'm happy to help. Thanks, Chair. I don't really have too much other than thank you and...but good news.

CHAIR JOHNSON: It's a great...great...great suggestion, Councilmember. Okay. Thank you. Let's move on to Councilmember Tom Cook, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your presentation, and I really like this. This is enduring. It was, like, not just a pamphlet. I can recognize the work, the professionalism that went into it and also the commitment to basically a living, viable document that's going to work. So I'm really glad that the effort, not just the effort, but the substance that this conveys. I want to thank Deputy Director for your...your heartfelt, your words. This resonates so deeply through our community. And although this is a huge problem or challenge, I look at this as a great opportunity. It's, like, this is a basic food and something that everybody has in common. My sister-in-law has a restaurant. My wife's really into food. I'm super spoiled because we eat all the time, and I know how expensive food is, especially fruits, vegetables, and the

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escalation in the costs. It seems possibly that part of it is the...the...the distribution aspect of it. I mean, anybody that is providing a service needs to provide...make a profit to enable them to be able to continue that service, and so the people who grow it, and then all of the food chain. So, the community farmers market sounds great. Hopefully the Department can help with some of the potential regulatory aspects of that because that's one of the challenges, I think, that we face all across our government is that the things that we're trying to enable, the things that we're trying to promote is we're also creating hurdles. With good intentions, health is important, but what's the low-hanging fruit as far as for the Council to be able to help and a message for me to be able to take to my community? What would...what do you say?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. NELSON: So, we would be happy to go in more depth about South Maui's needs with you in a one-on-one meeting but also just to lift up key priorities in the plan. There's a reason why we're championing food as medicine programs this year and kūpuna food access programs.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. NELSON: And if we also look at the many programs that our grants are able...our ag grants program is able to support. There's so many needs across the board for our farmers. Mainly, they just need access to capital, really. And with farming, a rising tide lifts all boats in that if we support our farmers, we will support food security. So we'd be happy to discuss those priorities, what we're working on, and then also your specific district's priorities too . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . moving forward.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So if I could just, in closing, real quick.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So as far as capital, where the County Council can continue and where our County could do is if we can be foundationally, kind of like funding and enabling to get it to some scale and some consistency. So, thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great. Okay. Thank you, Councilmember Tom Cook. Let's move on to Chair Lee, followed by Councilmember Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Again, thank you to the group for such a great presentation. I personally I'm not interested in plans that say we should do this, and we should do...I like plans that say we are going to do this, and we are going to do that. Now, a couple of things you talked about the Food Bank needing way more donations. I would suggest that your Department coordinate a competition amongst all County departments and each department every month would have to spearhead a drive. So the idea is that at the end of the day, they either get a prize, like a department, or some kind of special recognition. I think, you know, you need to look around at the resources

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you have, and we are your resources. Secondly, the same thing for seniors. The senior programs generally have a lot of seniors who want to do projects. And let's say at Kaunoa, we have an extra one acre that is not being used. It could be used as a community garden for them to grow things, you know, so for...for other seniors. And you can do that for Lahaina, you can do that for Kihei, you can do that for any of the senior sites. Same with the youth. Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Boys and Girls Clubs, they would...they could have additional space where they congregate, and they could have activities where they grow their own food. You know, it's...it's time that we take it upon ourselves to do the work rather than wait for somebody else to do it for us. And this...this would be truly a community effort. So, these are some ideas and suggestions I hope you consider. I think they could work very well. Thank you. Do you have any comments?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department? Go ahead, Director Arce.

MS. ARCE: Thank you...thank you, Chair. Some of the things that you had mentioned I had explored early on in my prior career. You mentioned about Kaunoa. Well, on Molokai, we have Home Pumehana, and my sister runs that agency. And she always had the land there. But the challenges are the mobility of the seniors to reach the...the gardens. And they're limited to funding. So if, you know, the county could assist those kinds of infrastructure with that, then they would be able to utilize those gardens. And for the farm-to-school programs, we understand that the funding is being cut. And University of Hawai'i CTAHR has a really great program that's going to be cut in September. And how the Council could help is to approve some funding so we could adopt that program, like how I had adopted Lauren's farmer program into the Department. And that would serve --

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Director? Director?

MS. ARCE: -- Lāna'i and Molokai.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Director, my time is limited. Director, my time is limited. The one acre is adjacent to...it's right at Kaunoa. So they don't have to travel to go, you know, create this garden. And secondly, you can count on the Council. If you...if you come up with proposals, of course, we're going to support you. So, you know, that shouldn't be an issue. The idea is you come up with viable programs and...and we'll be there. Okay. Thank you.

MS. ARCE: Yeah, that's perfect. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Thank you for that discussion. Okay. Well, let's move on to Councilmember Paltin, followed by Council Vice-Chair Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Hello. I forgot to mention that I'm streaming live and direct from the Lahaina Residency Area Office, and I have Christian Balagso over here with me, who lives on a farm. But as for needs for West Maui, obviously it's water. And I...I...I think

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that our district would benefit from a community commercial kitchen. You know, a lot of times there's, like, events, and we have a lot of mākuā that are, like, chefs. But the food needs to be prepared in a commercial kitchen, you know, for, like, fundraisers and things like that. Lahainaluna does still have a boarding program, I believe. They...they have an ag program. My son is taking ag this year, so any kind of partnerships there would be great. I know they can't make the boarders work how they used to, like way back in the day. But if someone has a love for farming or gardening, I don't think they can stop them from doing that in their free time and, you know, like, obviously, partner with existing organizations like Kaiāulu Initiatives. They've been having a little struggle there. But I think, too, support of just growing 'ulu and, to me, mangoes. Lahaina really used to be known for mangoes. They do well in, like, this kind of dry climate and stuff like that. And then, you know, with a community commercial kitchen, you can make the value-added products for your farmers market. I'm from Hilo. They have kind of a semi-permanent farmers market over there now, so something along those lines. But also, when we were in Philadelphia, they turned this old train station into, like a market, and they had like all different kinds of foods that are unique, and then like, little vendors. And then in the corners, they had groceries, you know, like you could buy fresh fruits and stuff like that. So maybe if the County was a sponsor, I don't know if we have OED right now, but just to have a big area like that in Lahaina, kind of like how Ohana Marketplace used to be in O'ahu before that shut down. But, like, if a nonprofit or the County can sponsor the big space, and then just, you know, not corporations as much as local small businesses would be good. But I'm not sure. I...I know that the...I've seen the...the ag teacher for Lahainaluna surfing Kā'anapali the other week, and, like, if...if they could just be supported with programs, whether it's aquaponics or whatever it is, and...and maybe even getting the word out through social media about like how cool agriculture is. I know there's composting going on already in the schools over here, and just building up the things that we do have and identifying the shortages would be...would be good because, yeah, I know a lot more people in...in Lahaina would like to farm Kamehameha Schools land . . .(timer sounds). . . but water is a big obstacle.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department, you want to respond to that?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And Honokōwai. DHHL. All of it, water is the obstacle.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. NELSON: I...I did just want to highlight the role that our ag teachers play. Thank you so much for lifting that up. I...I will say that many of the ag teachers I've spoken with will fund out-of-pocket supplies for their own classrooms, outdoor classrooms, indoor classrooms, both, throughout the year. And any investment that we can make in our ag teachers is an investment in our future farmers and our food system. Thank you so much for highlighting that.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, good point. Okay. Thank you for that. And let's move on to Councilmember Sugimura, and myself will be last. Councilmember?

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COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. Excellent subject. I'm glad to see the progress, and I love your speech. I can feel your heart. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Director and Deputy. So, I got that email from you, and I do want to schedule a meeting with you talking about the needs of Upcountry. I'm looking at your...your goals, and you have highlighted our districts, right, and as to what was, I guess, the priority, and I noticed that we are not in every single one of your goals. So I want to...I just want to learn more. And as you may or may not know, I'm fortunate to go to Upcountry Farmers Market, and I set up a table, and I talk to...and I know, you know, just from being there for the...since 2017, I've been there a lot and have seen many same vendors and the work that goes on there, but I want to learn how to...how to help them more, I suppose. They look...they look like they're thriving, and they, you know, have repeat customers, you know, just whatever. They...they look like they're fine, but maybe you know more than...than what I can tell by talking to them on a monthly basis. That's one. Number two is Upcountry, you know, we have the Kula Ag Park, which thank you very much, Department, for working on it. It's existing farmers still has concern about Bill 160, Chair, which I told you we're going to work on and try to improve it, and the confusion that I understand that's going on, I'd like to correct it, is that because we don't have the new ag park done, and we're looking for committee members from the new ag park, which doesn't exist, is getting our counts very confusing. It's hard to get to quorum. I think that's what's happening. So, one. Number two is finances. I think that there's that 10...10 million that was just released from the State, and one day probably get an update because I know you've been working on probably years, any...any help that you need for that, as it looks like, you know, land is one of the priorities for...for Upcountry, right? And so, if there's all this land, and we're not doing anything with it, let's figure out, is there a better use for it? I'm not sure. And I appreciate this, just because it'll help us direct where we need to go. So I look forward to meeting with you and thank you very much for bringing this forward.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Council Vice-Chair Sugimura. All right. So for my time, of course, there's a lot of things that we have done in this previous budget to, you know, address this issue. So I'll just jump right into...into the questions. Has the Department been in touch with the Maui United Way about implementing the \$12 million ALICE...\$12 million for ALICE families to support food access and vouchers? Are you guys working with them?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Nobody.

MS. NELSON: Not yet, Councilmember.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. NELSON: We intend to, and we appreciate your Farm to Families funding as well, that you allocated. And so, we are in the process of having that grant application approved for Farm to Families, the separate funding, to also support the ALICE community.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. I'm going to ask...pivot...pivot on a different topic, but does this plan allow us any kind of Federal funding? Quite often, Feds say you need to have a plan before we give you this pot of money. Does this open any pots?

MS. NELSON: That's a great question. In today's landscape, I would still say we are...we're still working to understand the full scope of USDA funding cuts and what is...what will be available. Some grants are coming back online, or they're being unfrozen, but we still don't have the full scope of what services are available. We hope for this plan to support our entire community in accessing grants. That's why we included Appendix A to show how, if you are working on a component of our plan, we wanted to show...wanted grantees, farmers, even our own Department to be able to show all the goals that this work carries forward. An investment in food systems is an investment in our whole community and all of our community's priorities. That being said, it depends on the grant because some need --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. NELSON: -- an engineering plan.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure. I'm going to pivot...pivot again. Status of the \$1 million Farm to Family Local Food Producing Incentive Grant Fund that was passed in this year's budget. Do you guys have an update?

MS. NELSON: Yes. So we're currently waiting for our grant application to be approved, and a press release is going out next week. On Wednesday, August 20th, at 4:30, we're having a webinar with information about the Farm-to-Families Grant, and we encourage everyone interested to participate. We'll update our website tomorrow with more information.

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's wonderful news. Really excited about that. Great job. Thank you. How about aquaculture? We often talk about it, but it seems like such a burden with State regulations, all the things that are involved in that. We're funding wetlands and 'āina work with Cody Nemitz [sic] in South Maui, is the site of ancient fishponds, and it's the site of an ancient fishponds as well. So opportunities to restore the ecosystem and cultural heritage is there while creating a food source. Is that something you guys are working on?

MS. NELSON: Fishponds are highlighted in the plan. It's...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. NELSON: Oh. As we know, fishponds can return 100 times more protein than wild catch, and they're integral to cultural land use, too, and makai resource networks. I am actually not sure if our current round of grant funding funds fishponds, but we can --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

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MS. NELSON: -- get that information to you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great. Director Arce, did you want to add or was...

MS. ARCE: I just wanted to say, Chair, that, you know, . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . we did talk about those. We did talk about aquaculture and addressing it, as well as livestock, but we...we just haven't reached that capacity yet, though.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

MS. ARCE: It's, you know, in the future.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Well, thank you for that. That takes us to the end of the first round, Members. Does anyone wish to have a second round by a show of hands? Okay. We do have some. So, go ahead, Committee Vice-Chair Sinenci.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. Just a follow-up on...on your...your questions about the State. Have...has the Department shared this with our State representatives and even our congressional members? Because I do know that Senator Hirono, I think one of her, she's on the Agriculture Committee, as well. So, I mean, to...to Chair's point about Federal funding, and then I was just thinking with Member Paltin about some water issues. Is the Department looking for some...maybe some big infrastructure projects like water for...for Lahaina or for, you know, again, more aggregation? Huge. I'm just looking for the big monies.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. ARCE: For the Upcountry Maui Ag Park and Kula Ag Park, we're planning to build a larger reservoir. And right now, the status is getting the plans done, and then we got to get the money.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. Councilmember Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. My first question is about deer, but how big a reservoir is planned?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. ARCE: 2.5 million gallons a day.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Good...good start. I'm pushing for that multiple 50 million gallons. It's like big money, but a huge benefit to the community for generations. So how is it going as far as, like, with the axis deer? That are we...is that getting incorporated into

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our food network? I know there's been advances with the harvesting and the processing, and I heard that it's a high-dollar export item right now.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Councilmember Cook, that is an item on the agenda coming up.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Oh, okay.

CHAIR JOHNSON: We'll probably have a deeper discussion on that, but you can certainly respond to that, Department, if you'd like to.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah. I think we have a lot of subject-matter experts going to be coming in on that topic later, so if you like have any more questions, then...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: No. I'll...I'll relax on that one.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: As far as like the funding cut, order of magnitude ballpark, what was the funding cut from UH that are in that arena?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. ARCE: Yeah. Thank you for that question. We didn't get that information. We are meeting with their new administrator next week. Koa and I will be meeting with Surendra, so we'll be able to get that figure. Basically, it would be the salary and operations, and we can provide the information later.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. And then as far as like with the seniors acknowledging their limitations, but, like, raised-bed gardening, which potentially is for the seniors and for schools, and that...that kind of joy and...and chemistry that happens when people start growing stuff, and even if it isn't for volume, it...it's sort of like floating the boat. My daughter just came home with a cherry tomato plant. She was all excited, and I was like, yeah, yeah, you know, anything, you go. So Upcountry...is Upcountry water is going to be, they're working on the reservoirs. They are building...like, I thought it was 50, but it's over 100-million-gallon reservoir for Kamole, and so it's going to enable storage, and they're increasing the filters. So there's hope Upcountry as far as being able to significantly increase the source within the next two years. I'm excited about that, and that's where a lot of families have land. That's the other aspect is land acquisition and being able to do that. So are...are you working with...like, is it your circle of influence for commercial, district commercial kitchens?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Department?

MS. ARCE: We are . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . sorry. That's the...one of the next steps is to do an inventory and survey the communities. I know before the Department got started, Lānaʻi had a start on a community kitchen, but that's some area that we are intending to work

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on to do an inventory and find out the needs in the community.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, that...that is a big impediment. I mean, my family, I know my sister-in-law has a restaurant, and Kihei has some good farmers markets, and...but being able to make the food and be able to sell the food, that's sort of a big gap. So that would be a big help. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Councilmember Cook. Any other hands for our...for our Department? I have.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Member Paltin.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, Member Paltin, was your hand up there?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, sorry. I just was wiping my mouth.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Sorry. All right. Well, I have a question for you, Department. Let's find that section in here. It is 1.5.7, aligning public transportation and schedules with food access locations. I find that fascinating. That's...that's thinking of a...that's really, you know, creative. So how's the progress on that? Is there a place where we can view a GPS map with overlays of routes, residential centers, and food access points? How's that coming along?

MS. NELSON: Mahalo for your question, Chair. We are in the process of working with our fabulous County GIS team to create a food access map showing all grocery stores and farmers markets. And I've met once with our Department of Transportation Director and Deputy Director, and they have agreed to...to overlay bus routes on the food access map and then adjust routes as needed.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, that's wonderful. That's good news. You know, that's part of our subject matter in this Committee. So as you guys move along, maybe there'll be an update. And you never know, we'll have a public transportation, or Department of Transportation and Ag coming in here talking about how you...how you get people to the food. That's wonderful. Thank you for that. So Members, I want to kind of say, like, what's next for us? What could be...you know, we kind of have a path. We could codify this. We could put it in the Countywide Policy Plan. We could write a resolution to adopt. It really depends on moving forward. In my...I...I spoke with...my team spoke with David Raatz about putting it in the Countywide Policy Plan gives it a bit more teeth. I kind of like that route. So we're...we're going to have discussions and see what would we...what would be the smartest way to go forward. But I really just want to thank the Department for you guys' efforts on this. This is really well done. You know, hats off to you guys. Good job. And I think that ends the discussion. I don't see any other hands. So I think, Members, if there's no objections, the Chair will defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

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ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Well, why don't we take a break, and we switch out some folks? So why don't we come back at 10:23 a.m. So ADEPT recess is in...or ADEPT Committee is in recess until 10:23 a.m. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

RECESS: 10:13 a.m.

RECONVENE: 10:25 a.m.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Will the August 7th, 2025, meeting of the ADEPT Committee return to order. I hope we're refreshed. The time is now 10:25 a.m. And we're moving on to a big topic with a lot of thorns and horns.

ITEM 1(8): AXIS DEER MITIGATION (Rule 7(B))

CHAIR JOHNSON: This is Aix Deer Mitigation, ADEPT-1(8). Members, Hawai'i State...Hawai'i House Concurrent Resolution 200.SD.1 was adopted by the State House of Representatives during its 2025 legislative session. It urges the State and county departments of agriculture to take meaningful action to address axis deer overpopulation. A copy of this resolution is available on Granicus for your viewing pleasure. Some of the actions urged by the House include making meat inspections and certified processing more accessible and affordable and convening a joint task force to investigate and develop plans to make locally hunted axis deer meat affordable to process and distribute to the community. Also on Granicus, you will find a report created last year through the Arizona State University, Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems titled "Axis Deer Impacts in Maui County, Strategies for Mitigation & Long-Term Management." This report estimates that there are 145,000 to 167,000 deer across Maui County with economic losses of 50 to \$275 per deer. Deer damage crops, harm native biodiversity, and denude the landscape, contributing to mud floods and impairs nearshore waters. There are significant impacts, but as we discussed under the last item, our community has a great need for accessible and affordable nutritious food sources. By addressing axis deer overpopulation in a collaborative and thoughtful manner, we have the opportunity to address the two issues while creating a new industry, not only in food, but other value-added products and utilizing all parts of the deer, like hides and antlers. Discussions about how to make this happen has been ongoing for many years. So today I brought together a bunch of our experts and community resource working on this issue so we can get an update on efforts to mitigate axis deer and to understand better how we can address any gaps in solutions. Members, if no objection, I'd like to designate as resource persons under Rule 18(A) given their expertise in axis deer mitigation, and there's a lot because we have a large robust panel here, so give me a moment. We have Dr. Isaac Maeda, Administrator of the State Department of Agriculture, Biosecurity, Animal Industry Division. Dr. Richard Kim, Administrator of the State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Plant Industry Division. Lance DeSilva, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Maui Branch

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Forestry Program Manager. Darren Phelps, State Director, Hawai'i USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services, Hawai'i Program. Jason Hew, District [sic] Conservationist, Kahului Field Office, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Services. Carolyn Auwelo, Rangeland Management Consultant, 'Aina Advocates. Carly Wyman, Senior Food Systems Research Specialist, Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems, Arizona State University. Jonathan Sprague, Director of Conservation [sic], Pūlama Lāna'i. Dr. Keiki-Pua Dancil, Senior VP of Government Affairs and Strategic Planning, Pūlama Lāna'i. Lori Buchanan, Molokai Community Advocate. Warren Watanabe, Executive Director of Maui County Farm Bureau. And Jake...Jacob Muise, CEO and Co-Founder of Maui Nui Vision...Venison. Any objections, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, that's a lot. So, let's see if Miss...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objections.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. If Ms. Wyman is on the call, if you're on the call, you can unmute your...let's see.

MS. WYMAN: Hi. Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: There she is.

MS. WYMAN: Hello. Carly Wyman here. Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. She's unmuted, and we don't...I don't see the camera. Okay. There it is. All right. Now the floor is yours. Thank you so much for joining us.

MS. WYMAN: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. I will go ahead and share my screen if I can. Let's see. Sorry, one moment.

CHAIR JOHNSON: And Staff, we have given her access to allow her to share the screen? Okay. All right.

MS. WYMAN: Okay. Can you all see my slides here?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, we can. Thank you so much.

MS. WYMAN: Okay. Mahalo. Yes, good morning. So, thank you so much for having me. My name is Carly Wyman, and I'm with the Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems. This report was produced by a group of our master students last year, and I was advisor on the report and did some additional research as well. I just want to share a few of the points from the report. However, if you're interested in seeing the longer full report, you can find it at this QR code here or at the link. And I believe these slides will be made available too if you need to find that link. So I really just want to focus mostly on the

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regulations around commercial harvesting and processing, both at the Federal and State level. And then I want to talk about what some of those bottlenecks are, as well as around meat donation and what those regulations and bottlenecks might be. And then some great information based on population growth rates based on removal rates. So this is...this is a lot, but I'm going to try and break it down as best I can. So when we're thinking about harvesting axis deer for commercial sale, there's a few Federal regulations that come into play. The first being the Federal Meat Inspection Act. So this governs the processing, packaging, and labeling of amenable animal species for human consumption to ensure healthy, safe, and properly marked meat products in interstate and foreign commerce. So amenable species includes cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, and other equines. So not axis deer. So axis deer are considered a non-amenable species under the FMIA. And so, inspections are considered to be voluntary. Now this word "voluntary" is a bit misleading because in order for axis deer meat, for venison to be sold commercially, it does indeed need to undergo inspection. However, voluntary just means that...that the processor bears the burden to pay for that out of pocket rather than the USDA providing that inspection free of cost. This law also does allow for states to establish their own meat inspection services at the...at the state level, but such meats can only be sold intrastate, so within Hawai'i. And then I just wanted to provide this link to an FSIS directive. That's the Food Safety and Inspection Service. Forgive me if I'm using too many acronyms today, but the FSIS is an agency of the United States Department of Ag, and this guidance document provides guidance on the requirements for voluntary inspection of exotic species if you're interested in reading more. So, essentially, the main bottleneck that our students identified is the high cost of voluntary inspection. So as a non-amenable species, again, the inspection, the processor must pay for that cost out of pocket. And when our students interviewed Jake Muise...I don't want to speak for him, but at the time, he did let us know that it was costing their operation upwards of \$10,000 a week just for those inspections alone. So, the cost alone can really be prohibitive for small-scale processors. There's also just a shortage of USDA inspectors locally. This is a bit of the chicken and the egg problem. So, the USDA is not going to provide inspectors locally unless there's enough demand for...from processors for those inspectors. And at the same time, processors aren't going to increase their output if there's a shortage of inspectors. Let's see. Okay. There's just two other Federal laws I wanted to touch on, the first being the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. So, this act requires that livestock must be slaughtered by way of a single blow that renders the impossibility of any further pain to that animal. So, in the context of the axis deer, this means a single gunshot to the head and requires that inspectors observe each and every kill to verify this. So...so this really does limit the amount or the types of slaughter that can enter the commercial market. And then we also have the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, specifically the current good manufacturing practice portion of this regulation. So, this regulates the safety of human food, all human food within the United States, and it requires that food must be prepared from sound, wholesome, raw materials and handled under sanitary conditions. So...so those are certainly good goals. And...and it does seem to allow for the intrastate sale of game meat as long as it's prepared in this...in a food-safe manner and from...from good ingredients. And then, at the State level, we have the Hawai'i Meat Inspection Act. So, this is very similar in language to the Federal regulation, and it

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defines amenable species and non-amenable species. And again, axis deer are considered non-amenable under this regulation. The, you know, the Hawai'i Meat Inspection Program has been defunct since 1995 due to a lack of funding. And in both 2023 and 2024 there were efforts made at the Leg to re-implement the inspection program through funding them four full-time positions.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. I won't.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And we going to lunch.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

CHAIR JOHNSON: On sec. Chair Lee? Oh, good, she's muted. Thank you.

MS. WYMAN: Okay. Perfect. Yeah. So...so there were efforts to...to fund for (*phonetic*) full-time positions to re-implement the...the Hawai'i Meat Inspection Program. I think it went a little bit further in 2023 than it did in 2024, but ultimately it did not pass. But were...were there to be full-time positions to re-implement this...this law that's on the books, that would go a long way in increasing the amount of inspections that can happen locally and at least allow for...for axis deer to be inspected and sold within our islands. And then we have Hawai'i Administrative Rules, Section 11-29-8, which adopts the Food and Drug Administration's good manufacturing practices, which I mentioned on the previous slide, so essentially making the sales of non-amenable meats legal intrastate. And then I also wanted to mention this last one. I'm not going to read the whole title of that one, but from Part 2, Chapter 123, no person shall sell or offer for sale any game mammal or parts of the carcass of any game mammal taken from any public hunting area. So, it's not currently legal to harvest axis deer from public areas and then resell those commercially. So that could be something that the State considers changing, and in other...in some other places it is legal to do so. And then I also wanted to share this data, which comes from another source. This was a survey conducted in 2014 of over one hundred Maui residents, and they found that there was really high support for commercial harvesting of axis deer. Over seventy percent of those surveyed support commercial harvesting as a management action for axis deer on Maui. And then I did just want to share also the Hawai'i Department of Ag estimates it would cost around a million dollars to restore and recalibrate existing slaughter and processing infrastructure to accommodate for axis deer. So, this is a few years old, this estimate, so it is likely higher at this point. In terms of mobile slaughter units, they do appear to be the most economical option. They're estimated around 250,000 to implement a trailer facility. However, with added equipment, waste disposal, chill and storage units, plus shipping, as we know, it can easily triple the startup costs. And then mobile slaughter units must meet the same Federal inspection requirements as brick-and-mortar facilities but with less output. So that's something to keep in mind as well. And then I want to quickly cover meat donation regulations as well. So, at the Federal level, on the left here, it is legal to donate food. This...the Good Samaritan Food

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Donation Act abolished liability for those who donate foods in good faith, including meats, so it is legal Federally. However, at the State level, it's a bit more strict. So in 2023, H.B. 1382 was introduced and passed at the State level, and this regulation allows for the donation of game meat as long as it was harvested in a food-safe manner and the meat must have been processed according to Federal law. So, with the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act in mind, this seems to indicate that any game meat not instantly killed by a single shot cannot be lawfully donated. And further, the language is vague, so it's unclear whether voluntary inspection is required under the Federal Meat Inspection Act or if simply the...the good manufacturing practices law is...suffices, which says that it was prepared in a food-safe manner. So essentially, meat that is donated has to meet the same stringent requirements as that which is for commercial sale. And so...so addressing some of these bottlenecks within the legislation could make it easier for hunters to donate meat. And again, it is stricter at the State level than at the Federal level, or it appears to be, based on the...based on a reading of the regulations. And then this is my last slide. I just wanted to share, this data comes from Hess & Judge, not from our...our team, but we created this table just to kind of clearly lay out the...the population growth rates as determined by the removal rates of axis deer. So I think many of us already know that the population is estimated to grow at over twenty percent per year with...with no removal. At a 10 percent removal rate, so if we're removing 10 percent of the population at a ratio of three females to two males, we...the population would still grow at around 10 percent. However, if 30 percent of the population is removed at the same ratio, three females to two males, that's when we'll start to see a reduction in the population of around 13 percent per year. And you can see here, at an increased ratio of four females to one male, we'll see about a 22 percent reduction rate when 30 percent of the population is removed per year. So this was a model that these authors developed. However, I think keeping these...these rates in mind can help to adjust the target reduction rates as the years go by and helping to ensure that...that population levels are at a healthy size. So once again, here's the QR code if you would like to view the full report. I know that was a lot of information in a short time, but I just wanted to really focus on the issues around regulations for harvesting. So please do feel free to reach out with any questions as well. My email is there. And thank you for having me today.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Wyman, for your presentation. And yeah, there's a lot of information in there. I really appreciate it. We'll go through some of the other presenters, and then we'll get into discussions. We'll probably call you up for more discussion as it comes along. So, thank you once again. And we're going to move on to our next presenter. That would be from Pūlama Lāna'i, Dr. Dancil and Mr. Sprague. And if we can allow them to turn their cameras and mics on. So, Dr. Dancil, Mr. Sprague, if you're on the call. Okay.

MS. DANCIL: Aloha kakahiaka.

CHAIR JOHNSON: We hear your voice, and we see a presentation. Do we have her camera on? Is...is it on? Okay. There she is. Yeah. Okay. The floor is yours, Dr. Dancil.

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MS. DANCIL: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair Johnson, Vice-Chair Sinenci, and Members of the ADEPT Committee. Mahalo for the opportunity to be here today and to share Pūlama Lānaʻi's perspective on ADEPT-1(8), the broader issue of axis deer management. At Pūlama Lānaʻi, we're focused on one mission: to build a sustainable future for Lanaʻi by preserving our culture, building economic opportunities, stewarding our lands, and investing in people. Our vision is a self-sustaining, vibrant island community where people and future generations thrive. As many of you know very well, axis deer are a growing challenge across Maui County. There have been standing emergency proclamations since 2022, and we are now on the twenty-second emergency proclamation. At Pūlama, we've benefited greatly from this emergency status. It's allowed us to deploy our toolkit in an expeditious manner. You'll hear about a case study during today's presentation. The unchecked deer population causes serious problems, overgrazing that damages native plants and ecosystems, increased erosion threatening watersheds and reefs, higher fire risk from dry, degraded landscapes, and strain on infrastructure and natural resources. At Pūlama Lānaʻi, managing axis deer is not just conservation. It's a strategic investment in our island's future. It's part of our long-term strategy and touches many areas: land stewardship, restoring ecosystem harmony, protecting native plants and animals, and rebuilding watersheds. Food security that we heard from earlier, responsibly harvesting deer meat for the community, resorts and restaurants. Economic opportunity, protecting resorts, the island's economic engine, and supporting local jobs and conservation, landscaping and restoration. Cultural preservation, safeguarding cultural sites for future generations, and community engagement involving local residents through education and stewardship, building a shared kuleana. This work reflects our deep commitment to e mālama ia Lānaʻi, to care for Lānaʻi as it cares for us. It's about healing the land, building sustainable future and helping our community thrive, not just managing deer. We believe that caring for the land and community go hand in hand to create a thriving island for generations. I am joined today by Jonathan Sprague, co-director of our conservation department, who will share details about our axis deer management initiatives and the measurable outcomes of the tireless on-the-ground work of our dedicated team on Lānaʻi and our partners. Though they are not here with us today, it's their commitment, perseverance, and deep sense of mālama ʻāina that drives this effort and creates lasting impacts on land and community. Mahalo again for the opportunity. I'll turn it over to Jonathan.

MR. PRAGUE: Thank you, Keiki-Pua. Good morning to the ADEPT Committee. And thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to present. A little bit of background about some of the work that we do on Lānaʻi vis-à-vis axis deer. So why are axis deer so hard to manage in Hawaiʻi? And really what it comes down to is that at least as of 2025, there are exactly zero tigers on the landscape in Hawaiʻi. And the reason this is important is because axis deer are a species that in their native habitat experience up to 40 percent mortality in the first 12 months of their life. And when you take them from that place and you bring them to a place like Hawaiʻi where there are no predators, it is up to people to make up the difference. On Lānaʻi, we have sort of figured that we need to remove about 35 percent of our does every year just to break even with reproduction. Ms. Wyman brought up the Hess & Judge study. I wasn't going to go into that, but our work is very

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much in line with theirs. We make just different assumptions about where that mortality comes from. But regardless, it's a big number. And if you don't make that sort of...make the balance of new animals every year, you end up into a curve that looks something like this. So this is a model of the axis deer does on Lānaʻi between 2012 and 2020. The initial data point comes from a thermal camera survey that was done by Jake Muise guys in 2012 that estimated 7,000 does on the landscape. And in the model, we put a birth rate of about 1.2 fawns per doe per year, as well as our harvest data, and assumed about a 25 percent underreport on harvest, which is fairly standard for hunters. And the reason this curve is important to understand is because it really points you towards the amount of resource required to manage the species in place. So, in 2012, we estimate we were about 500 animals short of making that 35 percent removal year over year. And because we were that 500 animals short in '12, '13, '14 going forward, by the time we hit 2020, it was a 4,000 animal a year shortfall. And the reason why it's under...important to understand where you are in that curve is because unless you understand what your management goals are, the tools required to address a 500-animal shortfall are not the same tools that would be required to address a 4,000-animal shortfall. And that's just on Island of Lānaʻi. So, we invest a lot in trying to monitor our herd. So, we currently participate in surveys with DLNR that occur every six months. This is a visual count, 500 feet on either side of a flying helicopter over predetermined transects. This work has been ongoing for the last twenty years. And this work is good at providing data to infer long-term trends and relative abundance, but it is not accurate enough to give you some actual numbers or point you towards a target harvest for a given year. So, we have invested through our Kuahiwi a Kai program and NFWF in trying to refine the protocol for coming up with a better estimate of abundance on the landscape. We worked with NFWF and a group called White Buffalo to do a concurrent game camera study and thermal camera drone-based study on about 8,000 acres of the windward side of Lānaʻi. For what it's worth, that initial pilot study showed between twenty-one and thirty-two ungulates per kilometer squared. And we are currently trying to figure out if these two tools are usable in concert to apply to the rest of the island to come up with some of these targets. Part of monitoring on Lānaʻi, too, and understanding the impact of deer and sheep is understanding how those species impact our vegetation because honestly, the ability of plants to grow on the landscape is probably the most pressing and important long-term management challenge that we face on the island. This is work was done again through the Kuahiwi a Kai NFWF program to a USGS cooperator by the name of Lucas Fortini. And this map is a two-meter square resolution vegetation analysis of the entire island. And the reason this tool is important is because it allows us to both retrospectively look back and see how vegetation has changed over time as deer populations have changed over time. It will also give us the ability to assess, going forward, the impacts of our management actions on the ground. A little bit about our ungulate management toolkit. So, I talk a little bit about fences. So fences are, on Lānaʻi, vitally important. When I speak with members of the public about how we try to manage on the landscape, we say we want the right number of animals in the right places. So for instance, there is no need for us to have deer in the upper watershed. And so, Lānaʻi, we maintain about sixteen miles of existing fence. Those are the white lines on the map there in front of you. And then we have about seventeen miles of planned fencing, half of which is under construction

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or already funded, and the remainder of which we're trying to find internal funding to complete. To give you a sense, these fences are expensive. We estimate it costs between \$60 and \$100 per linear foot to put a fence in on the ground. And then of course, once you put a fence in the ground, the fence is only so good as your ability to maintain it and your ability to do management work on the inside of the fence. A fence does not stand alone in terms of managing deer on the landscape. A little bit of a case study. So one of the fences we've completed in the last five years is the Hulopo'e-Mānala fence. And a couple of things on this. This fence was considered worth the investment because of the number of things that it could protect in a relatively concentrated area. So this section of coastline has multiple SHPD-accepted preservation plans. It is an important section of coastline from a cultural perspective. It is home to the Hulopo'e Beach Park, which any of you who have been to Lāna'i know is a cherished resource for the community on island. Just off the coastline is the Marine Life Conservation District. And by limiting the amount of sedimentation that comes down on the coast into those coastal waters, we are helping to preserve the marine environment. The headland that goes up towards Pu'u Pehe is home to over 1,500 'ua'u kani in the colony there, also a resource that is important to the species within the State. And it is, lastly, also where the resort and the associated amenities are. This fence was not inexpensive. It was about \$1.5 million investment. And that was company funds solely. And we continue to invest in maintaining that fence and also trying to get the deer and sheep out as expeditiously as we can. A note on this too is this fence probably would not be constructed at this point if it weren't for the emergency proclamation with Governor Ige that has continued on through Governor Green. That was instrumental in allowing us to expedite the construction of that fence and start this work. A little bit about harvest. So we also participate in the voluntary USDA harvest. We do it about twice a month. And in a given year, we harvest 150 to 200 deer. That is solely for on-island consumption. The economies of scale don't really make sense for us to export. So we...we keep it here. And I'll speak a little bit to it at the end. But honestly, Ms. Wiseman covered...or Wyman, excuse me, covered the cost that can be associated with running that program. But it is expensive. We also maintain a full-time professional control staff. These staff manage the hunting on island as well as going out at night to do night-based focused control on does within fenced units. And they harvest about 300 deer in 2024. And we make every effort we can to donate those animals to the public and make sure that that meat's being put to good use. But honestly, those numbers, you know, 200 for USDA and 300 animals for professional control, pale to the importance of utilizing our hunters and managing the species on the landscape. I would argue that Lāna'i is the most accessible island in the State of Hawai'i when it comes to hunting deer and sheep. Two-thirds of the island is actively hunted. We hunt 365 days out of the year. That does come at a cost. It comes at a cost both in, you know, some of the wear and tear on our roads and some of the friction points maybe between off-island hunters coming to our island and participating in the hunts. But it is worth the effort. I'll also note that one-third of Lāna'i, 30,000 acres, is licensed solely to the State of Hawai'i as a game management area to help serve their mission of providing those opportunities to the residents of the State of Hawai'i. But the most important part is they do...they take about 2,900 deer off the landscape every year. So if you're trying to hit that 35 percent removal and breakeven at least with population

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growth over a given year, they are a crucial piece of the puzzle. The other thing I'll note too is that it's available for kind of all strata, right? So we have everything from the Lānaʻi Culture and Heritage Center running community hunts for local Lānaʻi residents on 20,000 acres of the windward side of the island that is free of charge and seven days a week to members of the public who can rent out these areas at a day rate to the lottery-based hunts over on the CGMA side. So with that, in short, I'm really just going to echo kind of the observations that Ms. Wyman had about some of the challenges of bringing these products to market and just sort of second her observations. First and foremost, USDA-FSIS is a remarkable partner. They have been absolutely fantastic and valuable to us, especially through COVID. The only challenge is that it is expensive, and it can be hard to get them to, maybe, some of the smaller producers. And I think finding ways of expanding their availability would serve the County well. And then I'll just second that if there were ways of finding opportunities for hunters to contribute, either through sale or through donation of their catch, similar to how fishermen can go out and get a tuna and sell it to a restaurant, if there are ways of finding to do that safely, because there are legitimate concerns about health and human safety, I think that would go a long ways towards further utilizing hunters and their role in managing these species. With that, I'm just going to close out by saying that none of this work is possible, to the extent that it is completed, without our partners. And we are not alone in this management. We never have been, and...and we never will be. So a huge mahalo to these other entities and others who are not listed in working with us to make sure that we can help keep our island ungulate populations in check. And with that, I yield. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Sprague, for that presentation. I really like the graphics that Miyazaki anime looking, and one hunter looked like you. Okay. So we're going to move on to the next one. So as...I just want to thank you guys. Hold on. We're...we're going to get to more presentations, and as we get through them, when we're all done, we'll get into the discussion. So...okay. Let's move on to hear from Ms. Buchanan, and she's here in the Chambers today. So we always love to hear from Ms. Buchanan. And if you're ready, the floor is yours.

MS. BUCHANAN: Hi. Aloha. I didn't think I was going to be up in the front row, but I've been taking notes over here. Aloha. My name is Lori Buchanan. I was born and raised on the island of Molokai, and I wear many hats in my community. But today, the hat that I am wearing is as a community advocate and a Native Hawaiian. And so, I just heard two presentations, and...and sitting here, I kind of know what else...what lane everybody else is...is driving in. So, my lane is going to be the cultural perspective of being the stakeholder in all of this. So, when I was invited to come last week to this, I said, in reference to what? And of course, the Chair did a good job at saying it's because of the House resolution. So next...next slide. So I had to look at this house resolution, and I copy and pasted. Actually, somebody else did it for me. And it really...it really says to Maui County what they're asking you to do. And so, I'm...I'm glad the Chair...Chair read it and took to heart what they're asking you to do. They're urging you to do meaningful action. And then they suggested...they have two suggestions of processing facilities, increase the amount of in-State, and we just heard a really good report about

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that from Arizona. So, they also want you to convene a joint taskforce. Well, I'm pretty sure we had one taskforce. So just for a little back story, I've been involved in axis deer and stuff for over twenty years. And so, moving on, next slide. I just put it in here to...to show that this is taken out from the actual law that they're asking us to do. And so, they want you to submit a report of the program's accomplishments, which I guess is the taskforce that you're going to form, I'm assuming. And they want a report including accomplishments, barriers to the accomplishment of the program with its findings, recommendations, including any proposed legislation to the Legislature no later...no later than November 30, 2025. Isn't that in three months? Okay. So, thank you, Legislature, for giving us our task. So, I just wanted to kind of do outreach because I know where everybody else is coming from. So, you heard that this...this is number 22 of an axis deer emergency proclamation. So, if you look on there, I highlighted March 23, 2022, as...as the date of the first emergency proclamation. Well, what was going on in March 23, 2022?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Drought.

MS. BUCHANAN: We were in COVID.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, yeah.

MS. BUCHANAN: Right? I couldn't get into the Legislature. It was locked up. There was no public nothing going on at the time. So, this is when all of this started to occur. And as I read the whole many pages of this proclamation because we in number 22, and I saw all the dates, I highlighted in red August 8, 2023_LF. That's the Lahaina fire, guys. So, in the middle of all of this great emergency proclamations going on, we had COVID, we had the Lahaina fire. So pretty much my notes was that all of this was done without stakeholder and community input, period. And next slide. So, I looked at this emergency proclamation and it did several things. There we go. And I'm not going to go into all of them, but I had to highlight them, right? Because it...it impacted me as a Native Hawaiian, as a subsistence practitioner, as a cultural practitioner, because I highlighted commercial slaughter, decreased population, determined role of axis deer play in the outbreak of bovine tuberculosis. So, they did plenty of things. Here's the whole list. I...I went painstakingly through every list and saw what the Department of Ag did and what the Department of Forestry and Wildlife did. And what the emergency rules allowed it to do was basically throw everything out, including Section 6E Historic Preservation, Chapter 343, even the County stuff and administrative and organizational rule, SMA. Everything was covered under the emergency proclamation. So, within these...this time frame, starting in 2023, three years, a lot of work was done through using the emergency proclamation, next page, including large amounts of funding. And we're not just talking little bit funding; we're talking millions and millions of dollars in funding went everywhere. It went through low-interest loans to farmers, which is awesome. It went to DOFAW for a whole bunch of axis deer mitigation. It went to proposals from private landowners to participate in axis deer control, and on and on and on and on. And then, again, I underlined the suspension of laws. And all this occurred without stakeholder input. So next page, next slide, findings of fact. I'm trying

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to keep this really short. And I put so much verbiage in here because you know how people tell you, hey, can you send the PowerPoint to me? Well, all of this is now on the record. And so, findings of fact and considerations, and this is from my own brain. Number one, traditional and customary rights. Right out of the Hawai'i State Constitution, I highlighted subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes. And these provisions indicate that the State Constitution does not regulate culture out of existence. Rather, it supports and protects cultural rights, privileges, and tradition. And then also out of the constitution is conservation and development of resources, Article XI, Section 1, for the benefit and present future [sic] of generations to protect Hawai'i's natural beauty and all natural resources with their conservation and self-sufficiency of the State. So all I wanted to...to really say today was that little blurb at the end where I say many native Hawaiians of Molokai believe the practices of subsistence gathering of axis deer on Molokai to be a protected cultural practice. They also believe axis deer was a gift from their king specifically for Molokai as evidenced by its intentional introduction and kapu placed on the axis deer. Many Native Hawaiians and non-Native Hawaiians on Molokai consider axis deer a natural resource that is protected by the State. Deer hold a special status on Molokai. And Molokai humbly requests to be a stakeholder in continuing discussion on this subject matter because what I think I'm not going to hear today is the word spirit and spiritual for culture. And the people of Molokai have now been interacting with axis deer for over a century, about...almost 160 years. We use it for everything you can think of. And when you go to a baby lū'au and the party favors and the table decorations are deer horns, you really know the importance that this ungulate has played on Molokai. Is it invasive? Yes. Is it out of control? Yeah. There's many complex issues as to why we're here today. So instead of just telling you all the problems, I'm going to share what I believe, two things. Number one, I believe we most certainly have the tools right now, today, as I sit here, we have the tools to drastically reduce the number of deer population on Maui, on Molokai, wherever. We have the tools. No question. What is the deterrent and what is the blocking? You heard, oh, money, it's this, it's this. And I've thought about this for twenty years, and I've interacted in many, many levels with State government, and it is political and community will. And by that, you know, somebody always say, oh, Mahatma said this, if the people lead, the leaders going to follow. Well, nobody has asked the people. That's the problem. So when I say community, that's why I look forward to forming a task force. Even if the report in three months said, hey, we're forming a task force. At the same time, we...we're looking at all these other options because the people of Molokai feel ownership of their axis deer, right? Somebody told me, oh, if you guys own them, then when I bang my car, I going come sue you, then? And I said, I reminded them that our deer are on Hawai'i State public lands that we no consider our ceded lands, right? So it's a bigger issue than what is just on the surface. So I've been quietly sitting here for twenty years, waiting for real leadership to come forward, not Department of Ag, not the Department of Forestry and Wildlife, because both departments have dual mandates, and they have not stepped up in all these years. Twenty-two emergency proclamations, millions of dollars spent, and they came out of session this year with, hey, Maui County, why don't you guys do something meaningful about your deer problem? Well, maybe we could have if we had the \$30 million that was spent over the last twenty-two emergency proclamations where you threw all the

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guidelines out the window, we could have actually done anything we wanted to and would have been fine. So I hope nobody puts me in the corner of the champion of axis deer because maybe some of you don't know that I was a manager of the...I think maybe the only successful deer eradication in the State of Hawai'i when I was an interim manager of the Big Island Invasive Species [sic]. And our team actually shot and killed the deer. And I did it, and I was behind it, because I knew, being raised on Molokai with axis deer, driving over Saddle Road, Big Island, I saw, oh my gosh, if axis deer is allowed to proliferate on the Big Island, we in trouble. And so, I was 100 percent behind that. And the invasive species committees focus on incipient pest species, right? Nip it in the bud before it gets out of hand. Prevention is key and the most cost effective. Thank you very much. I appreciate and thank you for having me here today, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Ms. Buchanan, for your words and your history. I love it. I love to hear it. You come in with facts, as usual. So, thank you once again. Okay. So, moving right along, we're going to hear from our State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. From that Department, we have Dr. Maeda and Dr. Kim. And Staff, if we can unmute them, let them turn their camera on. We'll be ready to hear them once we see their cameras coming on and unmuting themselves.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, Dr. Kim is on the phone.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. MCKINLEY: And he is unmuted on our end.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Dr. Kim, are you able to speak? If he's on his phone, what's the number to push unmute? Is it star six?

MS. MCKINLEY: Yes, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So push star six and you can unmute yourself if you're on a phone.

MR. KIM: Hello. Can you hear me now?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, we can hear you now.

MR. KIM: All right. Thank you so much. This is Richard Kim. I'm a new Plant Industry Administrator for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Welcome. Welcome. Are you ready to speak?

MR. KIM: And I...I had not intended to speak anything at this point. I have...I have not prepared anything to present today.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Well, we're going to use you as a resource, Dr. Kim. So, do you want to do any opening remarks or you just wait until we jump into discussion and we

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can ask you questions?

MR. KIM: We can jump into the...the questions.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much, Dr. Kim. I'll move on to the next presenter. And once we get into discussions, I'm sure we might have some questions for you. So, thank you so much for joining us.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Chair?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, no.

CHAIR JOHNSON: There you go.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Was...was Dr. Kim for the third item or he's also for...for this?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, he's also for this.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. So, we'll wait for our discussions to...and deliberations for...and if we have any questions for him, we can certainly ask him. So, thank you so much for joining us, Dr. Kim. We're going to move on to our...our next presenter, which would be from the USDA, Mr. Phelps. Mr. Phelps, are you on the call? And Staff, can we unmute and turn their camera on as well?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, we don't see anyone signed in that we can identify as Mr. Phelps. Mr. Phelps, if you're on the call, could you please raise your virtual hand on Teams? Chair, it doesn't appear he's on the call.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. All right. Well, let's move on to our other USDA resource, Mr. Hew. Is Mr. Hew on the call?

MS. MCKINLEY: Yes, Chair. He's unmuted on our...our end.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, there he is. Aloha.

MR. HEW: Good morning. Thank you for having me. I don't have a formal presentation, but if you'd like some opening remarks, I'd be happy to provide some.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure. Feel free. The floor is yours, Mr. Hew. Thank you.

MR. HEW: So, yeah, as mentioned, I'm the District Conservationist here on Maui for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Our mission falls a little bit outside of direct, you know, control of axis deer. Our leadership has initiated the Maui Nui Range Health Initiative, which is for all three islands within Maui County. We...it started in 2024, which we did not really implement here on Maui because of the wildfires. We had to shift our priorities to deal with that. But we do have the initiative still active for this next...for our next fiscal year. The intention of it is to provide landowners, and mostly focused on ranchers, to provide infrastructure to create, you know, pens where they could trap and dispatch animals. So that would include fencing, watering, you know, stock water systems to lure them into these...these corals or pens, planting of grasses, things like that. Also dealing a little bit on the waste management side of it as well, of...of what they do with the carcasses. So we do have that available for our next fiscal year. There are a couple of ranchers here on the island that have...have utilized it. We...unfortunately, we can't, you know, provide any information about those...those contracts. But just so people know, we do have that available as an initiative. Also, we have our normal Farm Bill programs where we, you know, help increase, you know, management of livestock, which is very much so affected by these feral ungulates. But, you know, we do have, like, forage and biomass planting practices and things like that to help try to mitigate these. And we realize, as an agency, that fencing, as mentioned before, is just one tool in the toolbox. It's not a standalone practice, it won't solve this issue, but it's a tool in the toolbox that we can use to try and, you know, mitigate the massive environmental impacts that these axis deer are having.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Hew, for that opening remarks. Sounds like you guys are doing a lot. And when we get into discussions, I'm sure the Members might have some questions for you. So, appreciate you joining us today. Thank you so much. All right.

MR. HEW: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Now we're going to skip over to our DLNR representative, for Mr. DeSilva. He's been with us quite some time, and I love the work he's doing. So, Mr. DeSilva, if you're ready, the floor is yours.

MR. DeSILVA: Good morning, Committee. Thank you for having me here. Just like Ms. Buchanan, I didn't realize we're going to be up on a panel like this, so I didn't have any formal presentation. But what I will say is State DLNR Forestry Division is in support of HCR 200, trying to figure out ways to increase utilization of the meat, processing plants, and whatnot. I am here. I'll be here to answer questions on what has been going on. A lot of people might not know what...what we've been doing. It's a lot. It's a lot to do in one or two years. You know, we got money through legislation, as it was mentioned. Not as much as people think we got, but we got money. And with that being said, you have to utilize it in a year. You know, a good thing, as Jonathan, I think, Pūlama mentioned, the emergency proclamation allowed us to do what we could

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do with the amount of time we had with the money. And we could probably go on and on, on what's been going on in the last, but we have programs that we've been putting on, same as what presenter right before me mentioned was providing traps for people, incentivizing landowners to allow hunters or themselves to get incentivized to remove animals from their property. And we've always stated this, that we're not in it to eradicate. We obviously know we're not going to eradicate. I think we all can agree that eradication is probably...is not a thing. But we can reduce the populations to an acceptable level. Now, what that acceptable level is, that's what we're all still trying to figure out, right? Like, socially, how it affects us socially, how it affects us ecologically, economically, it's a fine balance. There's not one right answer. We've stared at this problem, you know, for years. And we're still trying to come up and we're still learning. That's another thing. We're still learning. You know, that's why I was telling Zeke, when they say we're the expert panelists, I get a little uncomfortable. But because I don't think I'm an expert. I just got tasked to do...to do a lot of work. And we've been working with partners. And Ms. Buchanan said to work with the community members, and I...and I agree wholeheartedly. Have we done that to the fullest extent we could? I would admit, probably not because of time constraints that we've had. Is it our intention to do so? Yes. And I was just telling her about some other stuff prior to...to us going live, that that is the intent because we do realize it is part of the community. How does that play a role? It is part of our economics and people, you know, subsistence and...and whatnot. So as far as that, from our point of view, that's what I can provide to this group. I don't claim to know everything, but we have been doing a lot of work for the community. And I've met with a lot of us here on the panel about the different programs that we've had going on in the last, I would say, two years, year and a half to two years. I will say this, though, just real quick numbers. It was nice graphs to look at and whatnot. But for Maui Island, last year there were 21,500 animals removed, deer, from Maui Island. So just as a kind of a number to keep up there, which is a lot. And thanks to various programs, various businesses, one in particular I won't say, but they've done a lot of removal as well. To...to...it's like a comprehensive approach, right? There's not one answer for everything. You know, if this approach gets us 1,000 animals, that's 1,000 animals less. If this approach gets us 10,000 animals, it doesn't matter who's gaining. To me, I look at it, it doesn't matter who's removing 10,000 versus 1,000. Heck, for that matter, whoever removes twenty from their own property, it doesn't matter. It's...it's all of us have to get together and get to that goal. And it's not a competition. Although some people, you know, sometimes they go, oh, we did this, we did that. It's not about that. And that's why I want to say that too. I'm up here not to say who's doing what and who's not doing what. We shouldn't look at it that way. We should look at it what can we do all together --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. DeSILVA: -- to reduce the number and not eradicate the number. And like I said, I'll be here to address questions that I can answer, what we've been doing, and do the best that I can.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. DeSilva. I can...I can hear your passion, and we

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need more folks like you. So, thank you so much for that. Okay. We're going to move on to the Maui County Farm Bureau. Mr. Watanabe has joined us today. Many Members know him and have seen him testify a thousand times. He's very comfortable in the Chambers. So Mr. Watanabe, feel free. The floor is yours. Push up to turn the mic on.

MR. WATANABE: Good morning, Chair Johnson --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Good morning.

MR. WATANABE: -- Members of the Committee. Again, my name is Warren Watanabe, Executive Director of the Maui County Farm Bureau. The Maui County Farm Bureau appreciates this opportunity to provide comments on House Concurrent Resolution 200, Senate Draft 1, urging the State Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture of the County of Maui to make further meaningful action to address the axis deer overpopulation. We offer these comments as follows. A sustainable, comprehensive strategic plan, coupled with a pragmatic implementation plan is critical to bring Maui's overpopulation of axis deer under control. There are many steps, including fencing, currently in effect today. However, what happens outside of the fence? This is where the comprehensive plan is critical. The plan needs to include the entire community, large and small landowners. Private and public interests must all have input in the planning process and ultimately have buy-in with a commitment to be an active participant in the implementation activities. The buck stops here means each and every one of us. Leaving it up to your neighbor or government will not solve the problem. There is a demand for products from the deer and there is room for participation by the larger community. Food safety needs to be a priority, and the process needs to be simple. Depending on Federal inspections results in limited access by potential producers. This must be simplified. Other states have recognized that the move to slowly depend on Federal inspectors does not work and many states have re-institute...re-instituted state inspectors. Liability issues must also be addressed. Hawai'i has passed...has passed legislation to hire state inspectors. We need to push to see these measures implemented. After inspection, we need processing facilities that will make products user-friendly. The Food Bank sees deer as a valuable protein source, but it needs to be delivered in a form that can be distributed to their customers without further processing. Reasonable inspection procedures will facilitate expansion of local value-added activities that will incentivize active management of the herds. This increases local employment as well as the economy. Work with an entrepreneur to prepare animal food, including for the animal shelter. As mentioned earlier, the deer provide important protein for the Food Bank and other agencies serving the poor. The model exists for us to adapt to work for Maui, and I am citing one program that...one of many programs that I think Maui and Hawai'i County can adopt, or the State of Hawai'i-- Hunters for the Hungry. The congress of Hunters for the Hungry project is a collaborative initiative aimed at addressing food insecurity through the donation of game meat. This was established in the early 1990s, and the program encourages hunters to donate venison and other game to food banks and shelters. It operates in various states across the United States, often in partnership with local wildlife agencies and food

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assistance organizations. The objective is to provide nutritious protein sources to individuals and families in need, to promote...and to promote responsible hunting practices and wildlife management. The impact of the program has...has successfully contributed millions of pounds of meat to food banks, helping to alleviate hunger in communities. And it also raises awareness about food waste and the benefits of utilizing wild game. This program has hunters that can participate by donating their harvested game to designated processing facilities that prepare the meat for distribution. Many states offer incentives or programs to facilitate those donations, including tax deductions or processing fee reimbursements. The next agenda item references a County-level biosecurity plan. The deer management plan should be a part of this plan. And the plan is only as good as it is used, not sitting on a shelf. An implementation plan with pragmatic measures of accomplishment is critical for its success. The Maui County Farm Bureau is committed to continuing working with our Legislature, as well as Federal and local governments and the community to reach a solution that protects our communities and the environment. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Watanabe. Members online, I think the...what Mr. Watanabe just read into the record should be coming to you by email, but you heard him say it on the floor, so it's in the record. And I thank you so much for your...your opening remarks, Mr. Watanabe. All right. Let's now hear comments from Ms. Auwelo. Auwelo. Ms. Auwelo, are you on the call?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, we don't see her on the call.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. MCKINLEY: If she is, please raise your hand on Teams. Chair, I don't see her responding.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Well, we're always open to any folks who come in a little later, can join us at the end of this. So, let's move on to Mr. Muise. Am I saying that name correctly? I'm sorry. If you're on the call, Mr. Muise?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Muise.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Muise. Sorry. I'm sorry. Mr. Muise, beg your pardon.

MR. MUISE: No...no worries. Aloha, Chair Johnson. Thank you for the invitation to speak today. I was looking at the HCR 200 language, and I thought to myself, if I only have five minutes to be useful today, what you know, what could I provide that would actually, you know, potentially help this conversation moving forward? And it looks like a few other people are on the same track, especially Mr. Watanabe, who just spoke to some of these programs that exist in the other states. So over the years, I've seen different language introduced through bills, and...at both at the County and State level. But there are currently...and I double-checked this morning; there are currently 43 other states that have Hunters for Hungry program. All of those states, although there's little bit of nuance, all of those state programs are operated in the exact same manner.

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And we've...I've seen this discussion for years and years, and why recreate the wheel? It's like they are very well-supported across those states. They're...like, it allows hunters the opportunity to donate meat through a food safety program, which is really important. If we look at, you know, what are some of the key metrics for the long-term management of this animal, food safety is a big, big, like, part of that. So those...those...those operations are really simple. The state subsidizes the processing of those animals through both tax incentives, but like a fee. And then hunters able to drop off that animal that is then processed, and then, through a food safety program, that can go to a nonprofit. And we currently have...not including Maui Nui, we currently have eight registered facilities throughout Maui Nui that could do that. And they're...although I haven't been inside each of those facilities, my estimation is those facilities could currently handle all the processing we need to bring more food to community. So to kind of directly address the language in there, the USDA requirement does not restrict hunters from helping to manage axis deer populations and get more venison to the community through that program. And if that was subsidized tomorrow, that could, like, literally start tomorrow. There's a very, very clear pathway to that. So when I think about, like, what action can we take right now that helps feed more community members, 43 other states do it. Why recreate the wheel? It's something that we can be doing right away. And, of course, happy to answer any other questions about what we do. But I wanted to at least acknowledge that point, knowing that it's something that we can do tomorrow to significantly increase the amount of food for community.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well, thank you so much for your opening remarks, Mr. Muise. I appreciate that, and I certainly have some questions about the food safety program when we get into the discussions because I agree with you, we don't want to recreate the wheel because that takes time and deer populations are exploding. So, I appreciate that. So, hold on as we get into the deliberations, we'll probably come back to you. And let's move on to our next presenter for...from our Administration. Deputy Director Hewahewa, Mr. Medeiros, and Mr. Kalua, do you have any opening remarks?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, I'll just start off. No...I'll just save time for the deliberations to take place but just wanted to shout out to Carly. Mahalo nui for a fabulous opening presentation. First, coming into the Department with this Administration, I think Carly was the first meeting that I had in the Department. Our Department is very new still yet, just made three years in July, but one of the first meetings that we did have was with Carly, Kathleen Merrigan, and Kū'ike Ohelo [sic], I believe, and that was, like, really one of the first initiatives we took as to, like, when ASU came to the table with the Department of Ag and asked what is one of the biggest potential issues or conversations we can have that their students could have a capstone study done with, axis deer rose to the top. So they just did solid work. So shout out to the students, Carly, the advisors, everybody, Leanne (*phonetic*), Kami (*phonetic*), and the rest of the students did some incredible work. And then on our side, you know, we just...we don't have a regulatory arm, but our Department is built on advocacy and education, and of course, we have an expanding grants department where I think we are contributing a lot via protecting our crops and increasing crops by some of the fencing programs that we had with the

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Department. So, I don't have much to add to the conversation but be here to answer any questions. Well, mahalo to all the presenters earlier Aunty Lori, Warren, Lance, and the rest of the team. Yeah. And Jake-- yeah, mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Anyone else from your Department, Deputy Director? Okay. Zeke?

MR. KALUA: Oh, you had more you like to add? Aloha mai kākou. Mahalo, Chair Johnson, Vice-Chair Sinenci for inviting us to be a part of the discussion today. I want to thank Uncle Warren, Aunty Lori, and Uncle Lance for saying everything that I had planned to present on today. So, at this point, I think I'm pretty good. Part of what I would want to not necessarily focus, but maybe bring...bring to light a little bit later on is that we...it's important that we as a community decide to go and work on messaging to the community so that they understand that even if they can't attend a meeting, that even if they don't feel that they had the opportunity to provide input, that the outcome, based on the intent, equals to the values that they have for their community. I absolutely agree with what Lance had said earlier about the inability to eradicate. I mean, without poking holes at any efforts of any other entities that are out there, there's a lot of other entities that started off with eradication in mind and then moved to a management mindset. And it's...it's very important to be realistic about the goals so that way the community doesn't lose faith in the efforts that are put forth by all of the entities. As alumni of the graduating class of '94 Moloka'i High School, I absolutely respect the subsistence gathering side of the island. A lot of my classmates still live there. I'm actually going home for a funeral for one of them very, very soon, unfortunately. And the reality of it is that some of the historical flooding we've had in parts all across Maui County never happened. And then looking at the damage that is being done by ungulates as a whole, not specifically just axis deer, we need to continue with the 22nd proclamation with the intent of it being an emergency situation. And management needs to be looked at from an emergency point of view. We are not...we can't respectfully say that we still need to gather specific data points because we understand the crux of the mission is to protect the inhabitants of the County. I would hate to be in a position one day to have to say that we have to choose between ungulates or the ability to drink water. But I cannot put more of an emphasis on the fact that this is an emergency that needs to be addressed. Some of the challenges that have been happening is that part of what this asks for is that by November 30th there be legislative concepts, if you would, that are presented through a report to the Legislature. Well, with all due respect, Mr. Watanabe has carried for the last two years and then some, some of the immediate legislative priorities that could absolutely help us with axis deer management because it always comes down to liability. Who's going to be the one to be liable just in case something happens? And out of those two efforts, sure there were some changes in the Good Samaritan Law. Apparently, there was a \$45,000 allocation to the University of Hawai'i to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by nonprofit food distribution services. Let me go and recite the first part of that, that I didn't purposely, say, conduct a study. I don't think that in an emergency situation we still need to be conducting studies about a problem that has been long withstanding. If you were to poll the same

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people in 2014 that agreed with the commercial harvesting of axis deer, I would say that after the closure of HC&S in 2016, when we had more recorded animal strikes all along the highways, that number would be significantly higher, but it would not be aimed at commercial harvesting. At that point, it would be in a reactive way to making roadway travel safety for people. So folks, we are...we are in an emergency situation, and what my hope is today is that the mindset in our community finds their space for their voices, so we can be careful about managing the balance, so we can identify what the balance is, so we can look at the things that are going in that are effective, so we can look at things that maybe we aren't thinking about that can be more effective. And while this is not the primary force of subsistence for our community, it is absolutely a necessary piece. So, I want to thank everybody that's had anything to do with the management. I would absolutely like to acknowledge the efforts of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife. I can tell you that even if we're not satisfied with all the legislative results, if you would, that has absolutely nothing to do with the incredible work of our Maui contingent on the State and County level. Had it not been for a lot of the things that they've been doing, our situation would have been significantly worse. So, I just want to make it clear that there's so many good ideas, there's so many good options. Let's get to the meat and potatoes about how it is that we can help fund and...and help support these events that are currently in place, so that way we can protect the community that we all live and love. Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well said, Mr. Kalua. I, too, want to get to the venison and potatoes of this issue. So, I appreciate everybody who came and presented and did opening remarks. Is there anybody who we called on that arrived a little late? If you're here on the call, will you raise your hand? I don't see anybody. Did we miss anybody? There was a lot of presenters. Okay. We're going to jump into public testimony, then. So, at this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise-your-hand function, and you will be called up to testify. Staff, is there anyone wishing to testify on...on this item?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, Staff has not received any requests for testimony at this time. Oh, there's an individual approaching the podium.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(8) . . .

MR. LAW: Hey, Mr. Johnson. Thanks for that. I learned a lot about that. Yeah, put my first comments under the first, the food insecurity, and then this one --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. LAW: -- under the axis deer, just to be technical for the rules.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you for that clarification.

MR. LAW: Jasee Law. So, I appreciate all you guys coming here. And while I got the State,

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Federal, and the County people over here, I'd like to have testimony about my particular situation up in Kula. Okay. It involves three things that I'm always interested in. The church, recycling, and the deer. So, at the last Holy Ghost feast, I noticed in the dumpster, there was boxes of meat, and not the boxes, but the cardboard boxes. And those of you guys have been following my comments, the cardboard is not supposed to go in the dumpster. That's one of the first things that they got upset with me about was I was trying to tell them-- you guys either compost your cardboard or recycle it. And they told me, don't worry about it. That was, like, 10 years ago. So there used to be a lot of livestock people at the church there, the old Portuguese guys, but they done died and buried already. So I just wanted to testify to you guys that you talk about community and all this other stuff. But I feel like the church, whoever's in the administration there, is actually separating the community. And as a side note, the guy at the other church up the street...

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Chair? Chair?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Can he speak on the subject matter?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. I...

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: He's talking about a church in my community down the street from me. Please, please.

MR. LAW: Could you stop the clock --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Jasee Law...

MR. LAW: -- please, while Yuki Lei Sugimura talks, please?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: No.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Jasee Law, I'm going to need you to talk about the deer.

MR. LAW: All right.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Tie it into the deer.

MR. LAW: I understand you guys are hungry and everything. I would have probably been finished in the next 10 seconds if I wouldn't have been interrupted.

CHAIR JOHNSON: I'm all ears. Go ahead.

MR. LAW: Thank you. Okay. The next church up the street, the King Cathedral one.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Again...

MR. LAW: Talking about axis deer here.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. LAW: The guy, Jeremy, the preacher up there, he's a hunter guy. That's probably enough meat for the whole district up there. And...but those two churches won't get together because one's this church and one's that church. And so, thank you for that.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you for that, getting to the point there, Jasee Law. Any clarifying questions for our testifier?

MR. LAW: And I just had to say that because, like Zeke said, it's an emergency.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Thank you. Thank you so much. Staff, do we have any other testifiers for...for this item?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, Staff has not received any further requests for testimony on this item. Would you like us to do a last call?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Before we do that, Kaiea, did you want to speak? Okay. Let's...let's just jump into him real quick, and then we'll do the last call.

MR. MEDEIROS: Yeah, mahalo. Yeah, grateful to be here. Kaiea Medeiros with our Department of 'Ōiwi Resources, our 'Āina Advocate. Yeah, mahalo to everyone who shared and presented. I think there was some incredible information shared and that definitely increased, I think, all of our collective situational awareness. So, yeah, I just want to speak a little bit, of course, on the wai aspect of, you know, this discussion. And, you know, mahalo, Zeke, for bringing that up. You know, really, there's multiple layers, and there's a lot of nuance to this axis deer management situation emergency. But there's probably no greater urgency than the need to manage our axis deer to protect and perpetuate our 'āina, of course, but our wai and the ability for our islands and hydrological cycle to be intact and healthy and well and thriving. And yeah, some of the main sort of thoughts that I just wanted to share real quick, based on what everyone has shared is, you know, I think there's a lot that we can do at the County level. Of course, this resolution is focused on specifically our County Department of Agriculture, and we just had an awesome presentation of our food and nutrition security plan. And, you know, we understand that typically when plans are developed, you're going to have to eventually also create that implementation strategies that I think the Food and Nutrition Security Plan touched on, but I'm sure there's going to have to be additional implementation strategies and...and budgets to actually move forward with a lot of those projects or programs related to axis deer. So, you know, I think that's one aspect that our County can support is project management of axis deer at the County level, as well as, of course, we had an incredible presentation by Carly and Arizona State University of different policy that we can look to amend or change. And then sort of the last sort

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of topic I just wanted to touch on is the need for workforce development and professional training programs. So ideally, we can fill that gap that the...that we currently have with not meeting the...the needs or demands of the USDA or State meat inspectors. So, yeah, mahalo and grateful to be here.

CHAIR JOHNSON: You bring up some valid points, Mr. Medeiros. Thank you for speaking to them. All right. We're going to do a last call. So, Staff, can you do a last call?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: If anyone would like to testify, please raise your hand by clicking on the raise-your-hand button or pressing star five your phone. Last call for testimony, three...two...one. Chair seeing no individuals wishing to testify.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Members, seeing there's no more individuals wish to testify, I'll now close public testimony and introduce written to the record. Any objections, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . END PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(8). . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's proceed with the agenda. That was a lot of information from a lot of experts, so that's wonderful. We had a very robust panel, and I appreciate their time. So I recommend three minutes per Councilmember each round. Please consider the full range of our panelists and be open to all of their perspectives. Since this panel is a full panel, I encourage more open discussion format to allow our panelists to raise their hand and chime in when they recognize they have something to add. So maybe Vice-Chair Sinenci might ask a question, and more than one person wants to answer. If...you know, we'll just give that a little bit of extra time. And I know we're going to break for lunch in 15 minutes, so just to let you guys know. Go ahead, Councilmember.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, everybody, for being here with us this morning and for your presentation. For Ms. Buchanan, you know, you...you went through the bill, and...and did the bill come...you mentioned some funding, but the bill did not come with any funding?

MS. BUCHANAN: I was looking for that, actually. And I didn't see any reference to funding coming with the resolution, so.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: It was just urging the County --

MS. BUCHANAN: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: -- to come up with a plan?

MS. BUCHANAN: Yeah.

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VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. Got it. Okay. And then for Mr. Silva [sic], I know you...you work with the State, and you mentioned that you got to do some...some programs through them, and you might have received through the State some...through the DLNR, some funding. If you can, explain some of the programs that you ran.

MR. DeSILVA: Check. Okay. Thank you. Yes, we did receive funding. We were tasked to respond in a way that we could immediately make an impact on population numbers. So, our role is basically to assist and facilitate population management to lower populations to where we can get to an acceptable level. So, part of the funds that we got, we established several programs. So, one is we...we brought a trapping expert from the mainland to kind of just bounce off ideas, what kind of works for them, what doesn't. So we came up with this...this trap setup that we...that we...that we fabricate, so in-house.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Big round one?

MR. DeSILVA: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah.

MR. DeSILVA: So we brought him down. He showed us how to fabricate it. We got our own in-house staff to fabricate. So our goal is we're trying to fabricate about twenty traps. We're going to send some to Moloka'i, which we have sent a few already. And we're still trying to work out the kinks with these traps, but the idea is to loan it to private residents, to landowners. No...no charge to them. It's...it's remote, automated, with camera action where...

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Through your phone . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

MR. DeSILVA: Yeah, with...with the phone or iPad that we provide. We provide the iPad to the landowner, and we set it up. We show them how to set it up. We help them set it up initially, and, you know, we let them use it for four, five, six months. We...we obviously know it's not an immediate catch because the...the deer got to get ma'a *(phonetic)* to all the, you know, the new surroundings. So that's one of the programs we have is trap program, and we have a wait list. And as the traps are being made, we call the person up if they're still interested. We look at their property, and if it fits, if it works, and we try to make it work with each landowner, then we set it up for them, and we monitor it at that point. There's also part of that funding we did a lot of fencing. . . *(timer sounds)* . . . We...we heard from a bunch of landowners, the issue they have is when they're trying to control the animals, that if they push it from one end, it goes across landscape. It goes to another property owner that may not have the same, you know, goal in mind. So it just goes back and forth. We put, approximately last year, I think it was twelve miles of fencing. And it's not to fence in any one particular landowner. It's more mauka to makai, kind of stopping that lateral movement across the landscape, trying to confine the populations, so that it makes it easier to control the populations. So with the fencing, we have a landowner incentive program that we also

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came up with, where it incentivizes landowners to allow hunting on their property. Because what we've been hearing in the past was, you know, we can't get access. We can't get access to people's properties because a lot of times, to be honest, a lot of the population, the State public hunting units, we don't have the population as the private side does. Our State public hunting units don't have as much deer. So we're tasked with how do you incentivize landowners to...to remove deer from their property or at least reduce the numbers? So it's an incentive program that has been actually pretty successful. We've had a lot of interest in it, both Moloka'i and on Maui. And we currently have, I think, 18 people in it right now in this go-around on the program. So most of you guys know it's, you know, we offer \$25 to \$50 a tail, to bring in a tail as part of this program.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Wow.

MR. DeSILVA: Yeah. And then we also have agency control, I guess, programs where we, in our watershed, to protect our watersheds above the fence lines, we also remove deer, and other ungulates for that matter. Dealing with this SD...the HCR 200, we came up in the last task force meeting about incentivizing meat processing plants to process and donate the meat to...to nonprofits.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DeSILVA: Yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. DeSilva. You know, Members, we do have a pretty robust panel here. So I think it would be nice to end this discussion, go to lunch, and bring up the second item [sic]. So, if we'll...if you guys are okay, we'll go a little bit over. But if we keep our questions concise, maybe we can end right at lunch if...or, you know, around that. I just...I don't want to have these...all these guys wait, and then we go to lunch, and, you know, if we do 10 minutes of questions next round. So that being said, let's move on to Councilmember Nohe U'u-Hodgins, if she's on the call, and then followed by Chair Lee. But I think Councilmember U'u-Hodgins stepped away, so we'll go right to Councilmember Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Chair, are we on the...the deer?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes, we are.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Because I wanted to ask, I'm surprised that this isn't an incredible economic business opportunity for somebody who has the means to...I would think that there's a lower standard for animal food, like dog food. And therefore, this could be something that is, I don't know, could be a heck of a business for someone. Because me, as a dog owner, will spend anything to make my dog happy. So I would imagine that there's a dog food manufacturer out there who is more than willing to...to make great dog food from the...from the deer meat. So are the standards the...standards the same? Is it easier for dog food? Does anybody know?

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Which expert would like to respond? And if you are on the call, and you're one of the presenters, you could turn your camera on. That might...that might help us see who's, you know, on the call. So, anybody want to speak to that? Mr. Muise.

MR. MUISE: Happy to speak to that, if it helps. So for pet food, it does not require USDA oversight. So that is something that's happening, and there are a couple of organizations that are doing that. And to speak to kind of the economic opportunity, we've been very fortunate to...sorry, I apologize. I didn't give context early on, I'm Jake, but I'm the CEO of Maui Nui Venison. And we...we harvest about 15,000 deer a year and have about...we now have 43 full-time staff on Maui. So we've been able to build a pretty big business around turning deer into food for community and customers. So there is an economic opportunity there and happy to explain more if...if anybody's interested.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: So do you...it sounds like you have a thriving business. Wouldn't you add...take your profits and...and invest more into the company? And so, that means the eradication of more deer?

MR. MUISE: Yeah. So we...we've kind of literally invested every dollar we make into it. We've been doing this now for fourteen years. We've harvested a little over 68,000 deer on Maui and have been able to process all of those deer on Maui and turn them into food for customer and community. So we're...yeah, we...we reinvest every dollar we can into helping ultimately be one part of balancing populations.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . I hope you keep expanding. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Chair Lee. Let's move on to Councilmember Tamara Paltin, followed by Councilmember Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, I...I see Carolyn Auwelo. Did you...did you just want her to be a resource at this point?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Her opening remarks.

CHAIR JOHNSON: We did make her a resource, right? Isn't that...we did, Staff? So, welcome, welcome. Let's see. There she is.

MS. AUWELOA: I...I am so sorry, Councilman. I'm so sorry I'm late. We were held up in a press...press...press conference thing that we're doing here in Lahaina. I apologize. The timing's just really hard for me today.

CHAIR JOHNSON: One hundred percent...

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MS. AUWELOA: I'm so glad you're still going because this is such an important issue for me. So whatever way I can help, I'm...I'm here for you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much. Did you want to have some opening remarks if...if that's...do you want to...otherwise, we can ask you guys questions.

MS. AUWELOA: Yeah, I guess I'll just start out by saying...introduce myself. Aloha. I'm Carolyn Auwelo. I was previously the State Rangeland Management Specialist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. I spent about the last two years of my career with USDA up until last June heavily focused on the axis deer situation in Maui County, in particular, the impacts that the population has been having on Lānaʻi, Molokaʻi, and especially leeward Haleakala on Maui. In my work, I work as a technical advisor to people on rangelands in order to make sure that they are practicing management that preserves the integrity of those landscapes, that ensures that those landscapes are functioning well, that they have good cover, that they can receive rainfall when the rain comes, and the...and the water can go into the ground instead of eroding and taking our soil off the land into the ocean. The severity of the impacts of too much grazing pressure on a landscape results in the loss of cover that leads to significant flooding and sedimentation events, and that's what we've been seeing happening repeatedly, particularly as Maui County has been struggling through the perfect storm of a very large population of wild animals together with, I...I think it's not too much of a stretch to say record-setting drought conditions.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. AUWELOA: All of this has combined to create a real...a real...a real bad situation, a real challenging situation. All the ranchers that I've talked to, you know, they...they do everything that's within their power. But the reality is we have a group of animals that are difficult to control and manage, and when their population numbers are too high, they can really, really do a lot of damage. We did a pasture walk, a range health workshop in...right before the fire, in fact, in 2023, that Zeke Kalua and others, I believe Nohe was a part of that. And we got to get out on the rangeland itself and see some of these impacts in-person. And I'm very glad that we are continuing to talk about this and working with partners like Jake, like the ranchers, like the State DLNR to try to help address this problem, and I'm just here to say that we still have a long way to go. This...this problem didn't get there overnight, and solutions are going to need to continue to be pursued for some time until we can get the population to a low enough level that the land can heal and recover. And then, you know, we can...we can make adjustments and go forward from there. Thank you for having me today.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Ms. Auwelo. We were in the middle of a discussion here, and I didn't want to leapfrog over Ms. Wyman. I thought Ms. Wyman had a response to Chair Lee's question, and I'll call on Councilmember Paltin as we move on, but I wanted to make sure that I got that question. Ms. Wyman, did you want to add to that?

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MS. WYMAN: Oh, I actually don't have a response, but I just wanted to turn my camera on, so you know I'm still here.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Gotcha. Thank you so much. Okay. Councilmember Paltin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. You know, the things that happen in and around me shape my questions, and I'm kind of in a dark place, so just bear with me. Why...would it be possible for the taskforce to say what happens if we don't follow your rules, your FISIS [sic] rules or your USDA people rules? Because, you know, from where I'm sitting, people just do whatever they want anyway and are not held accountable, and so who enforces that? Like, say a restaurant is for-profit, commercial, meat is getting really expensive, you make beef stew out of venison. Who enforces that, you know? Like, who's going to come over here and say that your business cannot do that, your people cannot do that? I mean, the County's still hiring Scientific Consultant Surveys. They do whatever they like, you know? That's...that's just what I'm...I'm...we have this problem that State's like, you guys go fix it. I'm going to fix it by saying, who cares about your rules? You're not helping us. People are hungry. We no more house, we no more water for agriculture. That's my solution because I'm not seeing accountability for SCS. I'm not seeing accountability for . . .(inaudible). . . you know? So...so I say we throw it back to the State, and say, you know? Who's following your laws? Who's enforcing? Who's regulating?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. Anybody would like to speak on that of our large panel? Oh, we...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I mean, as long as the...the deer is healthy and nobody's getting sick, why are you making more problems? People always tell, like, oh, more paperwork, more problems. You guys overregulate stuff from the top of your country down to the bottom. Why...why we don't just do...do what needs to be done?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Zeke?

MR. KALUA: Thank you, Chair. So I'm going to clarify I'm not speaking on behalf of the State Department of Health at all. I'm not speaking on behalf of the County of Maui either, just offering a personal opinion, if you would. You know, when people have baby lū'au and they go and they hunt one pig, dig imu and all of that stuff, there's no State Department of Health certification present when that happens. And the only way people know that the mac salad went bad or the lomi salmon never sit on ice long enough is because a bunch of people get sick or say, hey, I just want to let you know I had some of the salad last night, it was bad. It's very reactive that way. So with the State Department of Health, without speaking for them, if you ask them if they have the capacity to go out to the community and enforce that a restaurant like Kalei's at Lahaina Cannery isn't secretly using deer for their beef stew in a non-commercial capacity but serving it in a commercial capacity, I going tell you right now the State Department of Health would say, well, it would be based on a reaction from somebody who may have gotten sick. So the process, by definition, is very reactive. Whether or not the...the...the

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State Department of Health has an idea that they might hire, like, 10 more inspectors and make more, you know, drop-ins in places. I mean, even when they red card one restaurant, yeah, at the point that they do them, the restaurant is, like, really bad. It's not like, oh, well, you know, I had something the other day and my throat was itchy. I mean, it's bad. You know, they're putting pictures of roaches over here, and this never be clean long time, and the process isn't being...so, I mean, I...I can only say that the absence of the enforcement entity is what is making the problem worse. And whether or not any restaurant in the last 25 years has been dinged by the USDA or anybody else for commercially serving meat that didn't go through a food-safe manner processing process, I don't know that they could answer that they ever did.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. So that would be my solution; to tell the State, you're not helping us financially with these inspections. It's a volunteer basis. I'm going to interpret your volunteer thing literally, and we just got to move forward. They're not...they're not assisting us by telling us to come up with one taskforce, you know. Inherently, we know how to solve the problem. We...we existed long before USDA. We ate things long before USDA existed. And...and I don't see accountability. The County's still working with SCS, after how much times? Sorry, I'm in a bad place.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. So, let me see. We have one more. We have a...was...any...was there a question in that, Councilmember Paltin? I understood your statements.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah. I mean, if they're going to throw it to me, who has no knowledge whatsoever about deer, my whole town burned down, that's going to be my answer. Is, like, take away all your paper regulations because you're not helping us. You just want to take our money and...and put up more barriers. All these people out here, Carolyn, Jake, everybody they know the solutions, but they're not listening to them. Why would you put it on politicians? I don't know nothing about deer, you know. I like the back strap, but that's about it. I mean, that's ridiculous to put it on politicians that have nothing with deers, so that would be my solution. You want a taskforce? You want to ask me my answer? You guys cannot regulate nothing, so why even bother trying, you know? It just makes more...more trouble for everybody.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. Okay. You know, I...I'm going to pivot to something. We had Ms. Auwelo come and give opening remarks. And because there was opening remarks, I'm going to have to open up testimony real quick. And I don't expect to have any but let me just do this quick thing real fast. So at this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise-your-hand function and will be called up to testify. So Staff, is there anyone wishing to testify?

. . . RE-OPENING PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(8). . .

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair is seeing no one wishing to testify. If anyone would like to testify, please raise your hand or press star-five via phone. Last call for testimony. Three...two...one. Chair, seeing no individuals wishing to testify.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. Members, seeing there's no more individuals wishing to testify, I'll now close public testimony on this item. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . END RE-OPENING FOR PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(8). . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. Okay. Councilmember Sugimura?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Real fast. So, thank you, everybody, for being here. This is one of my passions. As you know, probably, I don't know, five years ago, I started the taskforce, axis deer taskforce, and I turned it over to Zeke. I'm his (*phonetic*) vice-chair for this task force, and I just want to give a little bit of history. When I did this, I was not the first taskforce. I think I was, like, on record, the third taskforce that was created, and it continues today. And I kind of...just from the meetings we had, just apologize to you, Lori, because I kind of got that Molokai was doing their own thing, very successful. Lānaʻi is super successful. I mean, they have a unique situation where they can regulate a lot of their island more so than we can here. And then I met everybody here on the panel, and I always say that DLNR with Lance, he has done fantastic programs to help us with this axis deer, and his count that he gave us of the 21,500 removal of the deer in a...in a year, I mean...

MR. DeSILVA: For Maui Island.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Huh?

MR. DeSILVA: For Maui Island.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: For Maui Island only, you know. So there's all this work going on. I mean, Jake Muise was one of the first stars I met. I think, wow, how did he do this? I went to visit his operations at Ulupalakua Ranch, and if you can, I...I suggest you do that. It's really amazing what he has done, and advice. Hunters for the Hungry program, if we need to implement that, I look forward to...you know, what is that...what is the legislation? Because I tried to do that when...when I was in the middle of the axis deer taskforce, and I couldn't get it passed. And there's another bill, which is Senate Bill 1230 and House Bill 1334, which was going through the Legislature last year, but it died. So, before we go down another path, we're just going to do what Jake Muise said and just copy the legislation from another state. I don't know why we couldn't do it before, but let's do that for this legislative session. And support from Zeke with the taskforce and the direction. And one program I'm very interested in, if you could share, if...if Jason Hew is still on the line, the...is it USDA program that he talked about? Yeah, Jason, can you share with us what that programs are and how do people qualify and enroll?

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. Hew?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Then I wanted to...oh, go ahead. Oh, he's here.

MR. HEW: Yes. Thank you for the question. So, I mentioned two programs. One is the Maui Nui Range Health Initiative. That is an initiative that's within our...our normal Farm Bill programs, specifically targeted to, you know, help landowners with the infrastructure to mitigate the axis deer and improve the range health. So that is...that's a separate program. It has a little bit more stringent rules. For example, you have to have a wildlife control permit through DLNR to be eligible for that. So there's...there's...there's a subset of rules that are specific to that initiative. But overall, our Farm Bill programs are open every year. Our fiscal year ends September 30th, so October 1 we'll get some more guidance for...for the next fiscal year of, you know, our contracting cycle. But basically, you know, we're here in Kahului. Anybody can call, email, stop by. We would do site visits with producers, assess their land and, you know, determine what their objectives are. And from there, we could implement different conservation practices to address those resource concerns. So that would include providing technical assistance, as well as financial assistance in...in certain situations. So that is USDA money coming through the...the Farm Bill. We're still operating on the 2018 Farm Bill. But basically, if, you know, I could provide my contact information and they could reach out to me directly, and then we can get that process started. But that's the...the very general overview. If you have more specific questions about the program, I'm happy to answer any of them.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Great. So I'll probably contact you just for a little bit more detail on criteria.

MR. HEW: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: And the...

CHAIR JOHNSON: We do have Zeke who wants to add to this.

MR. KALUA: Thank you, Chair. And Councilmember, I just wanted to share, I'm not a huge relier on Google, but just a really quick Google search, who regulates the Hungry...Hunters for the Hungry programs. And so far, every state, it's a state-mandated thing. So...so, we need something like, in a sense of looking to duplicate the wheel and the process. We're...we're going to have to have something that's going to come from the State level because it's State regulation, so.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah. So that's why we were trying to get the legislation passed at the...I mean, that passed at the Legislature. So I agree with you. Let's work on it. And then the last thing I want to say is that one of the things that drives me is the axis deer that's in Keopuolani Park. And I'm sorry, Zeke, I...I talked to him about it before. I mean, it was a problem when I was doing the taskforce. It's still a problem. But now we have the cages that Lance DeSilva talked about, 20 of them. And he's

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willing to loan it to us. . . .(timer sounds). . . And he even has a plan of how we can do it. And I would love for us...separate from this, I'm going to work on something because I really think that there are homeless people in there. There's all the residents that live...there's...there's a lot of issues that we would need to work on. But it's a growing problem. When I saw a whole herd in front of Kaiser --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- on Keopuolani...on Kaahumanu Avenue, I thought, man, we got a big problem growing. So I just want to say that.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Well, I know I see it in the papers. I understand that one. All right.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: One more thing.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, go ahead. One more.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So in response to this House concurrent resolution, I would really like us to say that this meeting, put in this meeting, put all the results of what people are saying that they're doing because there's a lot --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- that is...is...you know, and report back.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So, like the Committee report?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Ask them, whatever, yeah --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- because there's a lot going on on Maui.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: And I know I got a call from Lynn DeCoite asking me about this. And then this resolution was passed.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: So, you know, even Lynn has a lot of interest in this, which I'm sure Lori would know about. But I would suggest that you put all this into the response, which is going to come out sooner than November.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, okay. Well, it couldn't go into the Committee report because there's no Committee report for 7(B)s. But either way, we can work...

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COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, that's true.

CHAIR JOHNSON: There's plenty of ways to work around this --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- and let this --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- message that we...I mean, this is all on the record. This is all public hearing. It'll be on, you know, TV. You can watch it. You know, it'll be...it's on record. So hopefully, if people are interested in this, they can learn more. So, I have a question.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh. Oh, Zeke wants to say something.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, Zeke, go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I interrupted him.

MR. KALUA: Sorry, Chair. I'll be brief. I want to thank Councilmember for bringing up the Keōpūolani issue. But I also want to remind everyone that the focus of the axis deer taskforce is not to mandate how departments triage the situations that they have. What we do is we collectively come up with the solutions and the resources that are available and make that information available to the department. So I was conferring with our colleague at DOFAW who did mention earlier in the presentation there was a waitlist for traps, who just mentioned that they are in the process of finalizing a bigger inventory. So there...so there could be a possibility that the Parks Department could work directly with DOFAW and come up with all the legal documents like the right of entry and all of that stuff so that way they could implement something like that. So I just wanted to...to clarify that. We...we are absolutely available to them to provide whatever information they may seek. But ultimately, when it comes to a contractual, intergovernmental relationship and agreement, it would be something directly from the department that's affected.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you for that.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, from Parks.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. So I have a question probably for Mr. Medeiros, but if anyone wants to jump in, it's regarding the water resources. You know, we know what deer do to our...our watersheds. So what's the status of deer fencing around Nā Wai 'Ehā? Are water sources being protected for central or south and West Maui? If you know that, I'd love to hear it. If you don't, maybe someone else on the panel. We've got a pretty big panel.

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MR. MEDEIROS: Yeah. I don't know the exact number, you know, of or lineal feet protecting Nā Wai 'Ehā. And perhaps that would be a great question for the Hui O Nā Wai 'Ehā who is the primary protectors of --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. MEDEIROS: -- that watershed. Yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Well, thanks for that. We'll look into it. Oh, go ahead, Mr. DeSilva.

MR. DeSILVA: So I don't have an exact number, but that's part of the Mauna Kahālāwai Watershed Partnership. Over the years, they've put strategic fences throughout...throughout Mauna Kahālāwai. As far as the number, I know there's about probably four miles of fence line that's already coming from Kapalua area down...I mean, Lahaina to Olowalu. And there's going to probably be another four-mile fence coming from Olowalu to Ukumehame to keep all that deer from going mauka to makai. But as far as across Mauna Kahālāwai, there's probably, in the next year, probably end up with about 12 or 13 miles plus of fencing.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Wow.

MR. DeSILVA: Because we just recently installed one that goes from Pohakea, at the top of Ukumehame, down to the -- you guys probably seen it -- Pohakea coming down to where the quarry is, the cement, down to the highway. So what we were having an issue with was a lot of deer was going back and forth between Pohakea across Mā'alaia by the windmills --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. DeSILVA: -- and then they'll go back the other way and back and forth. So finally, we installed a fence.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, great.

MR. DeSILVA: It completed several months ago, and it made a big difference as far as controlling it. So that really, really helped. But as far as mileage fence, we can get you that number.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. DeSILVA: We can provide that easily.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well, thanks for that update. That's really important, especially what the results of it are. I saw Ms. Auwelo's hand up. Are...are...did you want to respond?

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MS. AUWELoa: Yes.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. AUWELoa: Yes, please. Thank you. Appreciate this question and this discussion. And...and really appreciate all the work that DLNR does to advocate for fencing to help mitigate and manage this problem. I just want to call out, though, that while fencing is a great step, it is a tool, it actually doesn't solve the problem in and of itself. It does have an effect, and sometimes the effect is good on one side of the fence and really bad on the other side of fence. And in fact, that...that fence that Lance just called out that comes down to the intersection there on the highway between the Kahului-Pu'unēne stretch and the Waikapū part of...going...going to Waikapū, the Mā'alaea side of that fence looks great. But unfortunately, I think the deer have been trapped on the other side of the fence, on the Waikapū side. And you can see the difference in the landscape from when that fence first went in to even until today. There's still too much grazing pressure on that side of the fence. And so, I just want to reinforce that fencing is a great tool. It's a step. But if it does not follow with management of the population on both sides of the fence in order that the land can actually recover, we haven't solved the problem. And sometimes fences can actually make the problem worse if we don't have the resources in place to conduct the management that needs to be put in place after the fence is installed. That can't be...I cannot emphasize that more strongly. And I've really been advocating with the axis deer taskforce for land-based, 'āina-based resource assessment in order to inform and guide management measures, management actions. I'm...I'm one for, yeah, we...we . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . we need to understand the nature of the problem. We need to understand what it's going to take to address the problem so we can take the proper actions. And I'm here for that. I...I want to continue to work with this team. I'm so grateful for the County's support. I'm so grateful for Lance and his team's support. And I think as we continue to work together and bring all of our various experience, expertise, and 'ike to this problem, we can see it get better.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. AUWELoa: I'm a big believer in that. But I do want to say, if we let the problem get too bad, sometimes it reaches...it passes a threshold after which it's very, very difficult to come back from. Gabe, I'd love to go riding around on the Lāna'i with you and show you places where this is...is very easily seen.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, yeah. Let's go.

MS. AUWELoa: Yeah. Anyway.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. AUWELoa: That's my input . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

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CHAIR JOHNSON: I...I see Mr. DeSilva wanting to respond. Go ahead.

MR. DeSILVA: Thanks, Carolyn. And I...I totally agree...hello? Thanks, Carolyn. I totally agree with you. The fences is...are not the sole solution. However, it's a proactive approach because I've been here long enough. I'm getting old, but I've been here long enough to...to hear the conversations when I first started working here twenty-four years, twenty-five years ago about what could have done back twenty-five years ago. You know, we're having the same conversation. So I agree. The fences are not the number one solution and it's not the catch-all. However, it's a proactive approach because without that fence, if you look at the...like you mentioned, if you look at the Mā'alaea side where we've actually reduced the numbers down to...we removed almost 1,300 deer from the Mā'alaea side of that fence in the last year and a half. Now, on the north side of it, the Pohakea side of it, this is where the challenge becomes, right, working with landowners, having the trust in the landowners. So it's...it's a...it's a comprehensive approach. We're continually...continuously working on it. And the landowners have actually been very open to ideas to reduce the population there to kind of, you know, address the issue of what we're seeing now. But I'd like to say to everybody, if you see the fence and you see what's on the left side versus the right side when you look up --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. DeSILVA: -- that is the benefits of what the fence can do.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. DeSILVA: Obviously, it leads to other issues. But we can't sit here 10 years, twenty years from now and go, oh, we wish we did something.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. DeSILVA: We have to proactively do something. At some point, we got to do something, so.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. One more tool. Zeke, you have...you have something to add?

MR. KALUA: Yeah, just real quickly. Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to mahalo Kadi up in our office. She was just texting me that she comes to us from the Mauna Kahālāwai Watershed Partnership, who did fence 25.2 miles --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Wow.

MR. KALUA: -- and is protecting 31,926 acres. She also said that they're currently working on scouting more fence line areas, which is what I think Mr. DeSilva was alluding to. And this information is also available on the Mauna Kahālāwai Watershed Partnership website. Mahalo.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Great. Thank you for that information. We're going to do second round now. And it's 12:20, and I'd like to maybe have the folks do any final comments before we do that, or, I mean, after we do second round. But Councilmember Sinenci.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. I just had one more question. And of all the deer that's currently being processed on the island, are we using mobile slaughterhouses? Are we...is there one to the...the USDA inspector? Or are we sending...sending it off island to get processed and then bringing it back to the island? I mean, at one point, Maui County had upwards of 14 slaughterhouses. I grew up eating tripe stew, na waiu, and, you know, all the...all the...all the trimmings of...of the animal. So what are we doing, and then...and what are we looking forward to as far as slaughter...slaughterhouses?

CHAIR JOHNSON: I know that Pūlama Lāna'i had a slaughter-- a mobile slaughterhouse. Are you guys on the call? Jonathan Sprague, would you like to speak to that? Dr. Pua Dancil? There she is. Any of you folks want to talk about the mobile slaughterhouse?

MR. SPRAGUE: Sure. So, we have a mobile slaughter unit. And it is a mobile unit, though, honestly, it hasn't moved in about 10 years. We sort of stationed it outside in one of our spots and have been using it mostly in a single location. But yeah, it's been really useful for us and for the scale of our operation. I think if we were to scale up to sort of a larger number of animals we wanted to process, we'd probably look at getting a second unit. They are convenient and relatively inexpensive and easy to clean, but they are tight in terms of space. So, depending on the size of the operation really dictates both either the number of unit you can use or whether or not those mobile units are appropriate in the first place.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Anyone else? Ms. Wyman, you...you turned your camera on. Did you want to speak to it?

MS. WYMAN: I think that Jake Muise might have --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. WYMAN: -- more to offer here, but if he's not here...yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Did you hear the question, Mr. Muise? We can repeat it if you need it

MR. MUISE: No, I did. Yeah. So we...specific to the question, we have three mobile slaughter facilities that move sometimes three to five times a week. So we're moving them from location to location to facilitate, like, harvesting in different areas. To answer your question, we processed...so we processed about 16,000 deer on island last year. All of that meat is finished on island by our butcher staff and turned into product on island for...for both customers and community through donation. So a really great tool. It's sometimes easier to...like, rather than build a building and be stuck with whatever the

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size of that building is, it's easier to expand, just like Jonathan was mentioning. We started with one and now we have three. It's a great tool to be able to expand into being able to process more...more deer.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thanks, Chair. Maybe that's something we can propose to the State.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, I kind of want to break for lunch now, but we have so many on the panel. Does any panelist have any closing remarks, something burning that you want to speak? Otherwise, we're going to break for lunch. And I just want to thank everybody because there was a lot. Mr. DeSilva?

MR. DeSILVA: So just one last thing. As far as we're...we're constantly trying to find landowners or working with large landowners to see how we can work in cooperation with the landowners so that we can offer public hunting units. I mean, in some cases it works, in some cases it doesn't, for various reasons. But we're constantly...we even set up something recently with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands up in Waiohuli where I live. There's a big concentration of deer, and we're successful at getting an ROE. And for the whole year...I think we did a program for a whole year where we allowed beneficiaries and the public to go in five days a week. And I think we removed about 960 deer from that one unit, right below my house in...in Waiohuli. So it's something that we continuously try to strive for. So if any landowners out there want to be part of it, we can also...we can set that up. But it was a really successful, and all we got back was good feedback from the beneficiaries, the ones that...who participated in the program. You know, it was a call-in system, and then you'd sign up Wednesday through Sunday. That was...that was a program we had. And we got good feedback. It reduced it about 900-something animals, which was...and like I said, my house is...I live right there. And I get deer that...or I can hear them eating right behind my window. So it's...it's a lot. But I just wanted to say that we continuously are trying to look for public hunting units.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great. Thank you for that. You know, something triggered my mind a little bit, what Carolyn said, when we need a land-based, 'āina-based resource assessment. What does that mean, and what does that look like? Ms. Auwelo, can you...can you kind of expand on what that means? I'm curious.

MS. AUWELOA: Yeah, I'd be happy to. Oh, I love this question so much. The guys on the axis deer taskforce are all rolling their eyes now.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sorry.

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MS. AUWELOA: I talk about this all the time. What it basically means is, it's like in range management, it's...it's the way that we conduct, like, a resource assessment to kind of evaluate the impact that grazing is having on a landscape. It's kind of like when you go to the doctor. The doctor comes; he checks you out. Hey, how are you feeling? Checks your temperature, checks your blood pressure, listens to your heartbeat, all of those things. He's checking all these different symptoms in order to assess your overall health, right? How's your respiratory system functioning? How's your circulatory system functioning? Is there something wrong? He does that by looking at all these different indicators. Land-based resource assessments does exactly the same thing. It looks at a variety of indicators and draws some conclusions based on those to see how are different ecological functionings working? How is the water cycle functioning? How is the mineral cycle functioning? How's the energy cycle functioning? It's all...sorry, I'm not trying to get lost in the weeds here. It does get very technical, but basically, it's a health assessment. And so, it looks at a variety of indicators and draws some conclusions to say, what's the health of this landscape? In looking at those indicators, many of them are directly related to a grazing impact. So if there's no livestock in the area, and we see lots of evidence of deer, we can logically conclude this is a result of deer impact or goat impact, whatever the...the wildlife in the area may be. And in...right before I left USDA, we developed a tool that gave the...the field office staff a means by which to try to capture objectively evidence for the amount of deer pressure, not in numbers of deer, but in, like, a qualitative assessment. Excessive, high, moderate, you know, low, scarce, something like that. And so, there are tools like that that can be used --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. AUWELOA: -- to evaluate an area and use to then inform management. If we go out there and we're like, brah, this landscape is running a fever. It can barely function. You know, the water cycle is clearly not functioning as well as it should be. There's all these signs of runoff and erosion. This area should be a high priority for some type of management action --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. AUWELOA: -- as opposed to, oh, this area is recovering really well. There's lots of cover. There's new plants. You know, there's all of these signs that this...this place is recovering, and its health is actually doing good.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much for that clarification. I see Dr. Dancil's hand up. Dr. Dancil, final thoughts before lunch?

MS. DANCIL: Sorry, we just wanted to...I'm going to call up John to turn on his camera. Wanted to speak on what Ms. Auwelo had spoken about. We...we have started this land-based health check-up, so to speak, as she describes it, already on Lānaʻi. And I just wanted...and we put up a quick slide during the presentation, but maybe Jonathan can share what we're doing on Lānaʻi. Again, this is just what we're doing. You know,

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there's unique challenges on every island, every community, but this is something that works for us and what we've done to create a baseline assessment --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

MS. DANCIL: -- how we're managing the health of our land.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. Sprague?

MR. SPRAGUE: Yeah. Sure, yeah. I guess really briefly, because I know we're all trying to get some calories in us here. But yeah, understanding the response of the resource that you're trying to manage on the landscape is absolutely paramount to affecting how you want to manage the number of deer and sheep on your landscape because it kind of sets the lowest bar. One of the things I'll...I'll sort of highlight there is that really often times it boils down to assessing your vegetation. You know, a 100-pound deer eats three pounds of grass a day, and that doesn't seem like a lot, but if you get 1,000 deer on the landscape, that's 3,000 pounds of grass per day that they're taking off that landscape. You might multiply that by 365, and that's a huge impact. So understanding what your landscape can really afford to endure is...is key to finding the...sort of the metrics and the...the basement of what you want to man your deer at. The other thing I'll mention to that, too, is that it's not when the conditions are good, it's when you're in the middle of the drought that you want to assess what the landscape can handle because it really isn't about when the conditions are good, it's...it's really --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

MR. SPRAGUE: -- about when the conditions are poor, that's when the damage is getting done. So that is a key element of what we're trying to do over on this side.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Great. Thanks for adding to the conversation. Okay. Oh, Ms. Wyman, go ahead.

MS. WYMAN: Thank you. Yeah, I'll keep it very brief. I just want to leave with some action items that I see are easily implementable and could be implemented right away to increase commercial harvesting. The first one is to implement a grant program to help reimburse the costs of voluntary food safety inspection, service inspection. So for those processors who are undergoing that voluntary inspection, just helping to cover the costs of it. Reinstating the Hawai'i meat inspection program, and then allowing commercial harvesting on public lands, and abolish liability for private landowners who allow hunters on their lands.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. WYMAN: So, mahalo for letting me leave those final thoughts.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much. I'm sure we'll be in touch, Ms. Wyman. You've

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been very good. You gave us a good study. Thank you for that. Okay. Members, let's take our lunch break. If any...without any objections, I'll defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TC).

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. Well, I want to thank everybody who came here. This was a lot of information and to a complicated problem. So thank you all. The time is now 12:31. Members, can we come back at 1:30? Everybody good with one?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I cannot.

CHAIR JOHNSON: You cannot?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I have a lunch that --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, that's right.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- I'm late to.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Everybody else, can we come back at 1:30? Will we have quorum? One...two...three...four. Okay. Nodding heads, 1:30.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Online.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Online. Sure, sure. Okay. Members, this meeting is in recess until 1:30 p.m. Thank you all so much. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 12:32 p.m.

RECONVENE: 1:36 p.m.

CHAIR JOHNSON: . . .(gavel). . . Aloha. Will the August 7th, 2025, meeting of the ADEPT Committee return to order. The time is now 1:36. Members, thank you all for coming back from your shorter lunch. Really appreciate you guys working with us. We got a pretty heavy agenda today.

ITEM 1(9): MAUI COUNTY BIOSECURITY (Rule 7(B))

CHAIR JOHNSON: Proceeding with that agenda, ADEPT-1(9), Maui County Biosecurity. Members, similar to the last item, we are in receipt of a House concurrent resolution from our state House of Representatives adopted during the 2025 session. House Concurrent Resolution 42, HD1 encourages each county to establish its own biosecurity plan that prioritizes the needs of the county. This plan should identify legislative

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changes at the State and county level that will prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. It should be created in collaboration with other counties and State entities like the Department of Ag and Biosecurity and the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council. As we all know too well, the ecosystem of our island home, also known as the endangered species capital of the world, is fragile. Our natural resources like our freshwater supply and reefs and our treasured native and endemic plants and animals all depend on our biosecurity. During our budget sessions, we have noted that this can carry a hefty price tag. Well, that's nothing compared to the price of inaction, which runs the risk of extinction, environmental degradation, loss of culture and traditions, and loss of locally grown foods. Biosecurity is an investment, an investment that experts say return \$8,000 in economic impacts for every dollar spent. Under this item, I've assembled a panel of resources so that we can gain a better understanding and sense...and sense of the next steps that we can take as a Council. Members, if there's no objections, I'd like to designate as resource persons under Council Rule 18(A), given their expertise in biosecurity and invasive species mitigation. Dr. Isaac Maeda, Administrator of the State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity Animal Industry Division. Dr. Richard Kim, Administrator of the State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Plant Industry Division. Jonathan Sprague, Director of Conservation, Pūlama Lāna'i. Dr. Keiki-Pua Dancil, Senior VP of Government Affairs and Strategic Planning, Pūlama Lāna'i. Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Hawai'i House of Representatives, District 6, and introducer of this resolution. And Lori Buchanan, Coordinator, Molokai Maui Invasive Species Council, MoMISC. Any objections, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Members. Let's start with the introducer of the bill, HCR42-HD1, Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, for any opening remarks. And I see you on the call and thank you so much for joining us. I appreciate it. The floor is yours.

MS. KAHALOA: Mahalo nui, Chair Johnson and Maui County Council. Thank you so much for having me and for putting this item onto your agenda. We, at the State level, have been really moving to increase our efforts in biosecurity. We know we're late to the game in really standing up this division and effort to really combat biosecurity. Hawai'i Island kind of started to receive most of the biosecurity threats, and as we know, that has moved across the State, and now it is a collective issue after the 20 years of not doing enough. So in the last two legislative sessions, we've been trying to stand up our biosecurity efforts with the passage of HB2619, and then this session, the passage of HB427. And within that, we're talking about HCR42 today. And what we know is it takes collective effort and coordination. So as we move in the State to stand up our biosecurity efforts, we would love to see the counties create their biosecurity plans or the things they would like to see happen to protect their biosecurity efforts, county by county, island by island, so we know if we have available State funding and support, we know how to effectively coordinate within our counties. So I think this is an opportunity to have at the State level, the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Hawai'i Island Invasive Species Council, and the Legislature, if each county were to create their own

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biosecurity strategic priorities, what that allows us to do, and the intent of the resolution is to then help strengthen collaborative efforts in this space. We want to know what's important to you, like axis deer and other efforts. And if we know those priorities, there may be an effort to not just coordinate, but, you know, share funding opportunities as well. So the intention is just to see and kindly request if county by county, there's...whether it's a biosecurity plan or a list of biosecurity priorities, the State can hopefully work collaboratively with the County of Maui and Maui Nui, all the islands, to understand what their priorities and their...what their focus areas are so we're not working within vacuums, we're working collectively in a kākou effort. So that was the legislative intention. As you know, resolutions are recommendations and the kāhea to action. So it is up to the County of Maui to determine what they would like to do in terms of creating a full plan, creating strategic priorities, how formal or informal this looks like. But I would say at the State level, we really want to work collectively and work together to make sure we don't get any new biosecurity threats to Maui Nui and that if there are, we can help combat what is there and we can continue to not just work on protecting borders, but also doing invasive species control where needed. And as we strengthen biosecurity efforts Statewide, it's not just agriculture that we're focused on, it's now the way of...our local way of life. It's protecting parks and community spaces for our keikis and families against things like fire ants. And it's making sure some of our native plants, native species, coconut trees are not getting taken down by coconut rhinoceros beetle. But it does help agriculture as well and make sure that agriculture is an economic, viable option for our farmers and food producers. So in a nutshell, we hope to work collectively on this, and I'm free and open for any questions that Councilmembers may have later today. Mahalo for your time and for agendizing this resolution. Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Of course, Representative Kahaloa. I really appreciate you. So, what...what's going to happen is we'll go down the list and then we'll get into discussions. We'll probably have questions for you after the presenters. Thank you so much once again. Okay. Now if we can, let's hear from the State Department of Agriculture Biosecurity, Dr. Maeda and/or Dr. Kim. Are you folks on the call?

MR. KIM: Yes. I'm on the call. Can you hear me?

CHAIR JOHNSON: We can hear you loud and clear.

MR. KIM: Thank you, Chair Johnson. Yes, thank you so much for the...all of the information and then background information for the HCR, House resolution from Representative Kahalo [sic]. And we are well aware of that there's a huge difference among the among the...among the counties in terms of the biosecurity. For example, the last year, last fiscal year, we tried to distribute to our funding for the green waste, the management funding for Act 231. But it's very difficult to solicit that program because there's a lot of differences among the...the county level. So we decide that each county has a plan, their green waste management. So we have learned that this...this funding is supposed to be distributed to...to the each counties so county can manage their own green waste management at the county level. And biosecurity is really important on...on entire

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Hawai'i Island. But each county has a different circumstance in terms of the how they...what is their status of the...the invasive species in each county. And also, those invasive species supposed to be managed at the county level. So counties...the...the county level planning for the county's biosecurity planning is really helpful to support from Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Kim, for your opening remarks. I appreciate that. Now, we're going to move on to remarks from MoMISC. And that's Ms. Buchanan. Once again, thank you for joining us all day today. Really appreciate you. Lori, the floor is yours.

MS. BUCHANAN: Mahalo, Chair. So I have really brief PowerPoint, I think just two...three slides. And I know you said opening remarks, but since it's so short, I can do it now. And I wanted to thank...thank Rep. Kahaloa for talking about the actual resolution and keeping it short and to the point. And each county is to establish its own biosecurity plan, encouraged, and then suggest legislative changes. And thank you for really talking about working collaboratively. And so, if we can go just to the findings of fact sheet, Ellen. Yeah, that's the actual resolution. The establishment of a biosecurity plan for each county will allow the County and State to prioritize biosecurity needs. The Statewide Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity plan is a ten-year plan, ending in 2027. I don't know if people are aware that we have a biosecurity plan. And the fact that it's ending in 2027 makes it even more pressing that we plan. So I'm going to just say right now that there is a significant legal obstacle that prevents the counties from being able to protect themselves, their people, and their natural and cultural resources from invasive species. And the courts have determined that counties in Hawai'i are completely prohibited from enacting ordinances to ban or regulate the movement of noxious weeds, pests, or other invasive species or material infested with a pest or invasive species. Only the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity has that authority. So I just wanted to put that out right there so we don't have any questions about what we can and cannot do. Currently, County actions are limited to control and eradication measures to address an invasive species once it's detected in the County. So fortunately, we have this awesome resolution from Rep. Kahaloa that recognizes that limitation and is encouraging us to include a plan for proposals for legislative changes at the State and County level to promote the County's biosecurity. Next slide. And I'm sorry it is wordy, but I'll just cut to the chase. One area of consideration for State legislative change is with respect to the regulation of invasive species. And I won't go into the rest, but basically it comes down to this, allowing each county in Hawai'i the authority to regulate the movement of invasive plants into and within the county would allow the counties to protect their people and resources and reinvigorate and modernize invasive plant control in Hawai'i. In short, the State needs to delegate authority to the County for enforcement. I just wanted to bring up really fast one really recent...I was watching Hawai'i News Now last night, I hope everybody was, and I saw a press release by the Department of Ag about Pūlama Lāna'i and the incursion of CRB to Pūlama Lāna'i. And right now, there's a picture of it, CRB, Molokai is the only island that CRB has not been detected on. Molokai has been very fortunate, and I call it lucky, that we don't have the State priority pests, which is little fire ants, coqui frogs, and CRB. And

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so, recently, a member of the public with the Niu Now Project has introduced to Chair Hurd and the Department of Ag a petition for an interim rule to restrict the movement of soils and plants to the island of Molokai because this is such a pressing issue. And just prior today, we were talking about axis deer. Just think if that Pūlama Lānaʻi entry was...was deer, and we detected the movement of one or two or three deer, what would we do? We would do the same thing we did on Moku o Keawe. We would make it an emergency, like I heard earlier about talking about this is an emergency. It is an emergency. The health and welfare of our resources and our people are at stake. And so, that's really at the...at the gist of this is the County needs the authority for enforcement because they know what they need in their County. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Ms. Buchanan, for your words. Appreciate them. Okay. Now we're going to hear from Pūlama Lānaʻi. We have Dr. Dancil and Mr. Sprague. They were there previous, so I see Mr. Sprague on the call. Who would like to go first? Oh, we got a presentation, so Dr. Dancil.

MS. DANCIL: Aloha 'auinalā, Chair Johnson, Vice-Chair Sinenci, Members of the ADEPT Committee, and State Representative Kahaloa. Mahalo for the opportunity to speak with you again, this time on ADEPT-1(9), biosecurity, and what we are doing on Lānaʻi in regards to biosecurity. As I mentioned earlier at Pūlama Lānaʻi, our mission is simple but important: to build a sustainable future for Lānaʻi by preserving our culture, building economic opportunities, stewarding our lands, and investing in people. We envision a vibrant, sustain...self-sustaining island community where people in future generations thrive. Biosecurity plays a big role in making that vision a reality. Keeping invasive species and disease threats off-island helps protect our ecosystems and keep our communities safe and healthy. It also supports our economy, which relies on natural resources and our resorts. HCR 42, HD1 makes a key point, every county needs its own biosecurity plan tailored to local climate, land use, and how materials and people move around, whether by plane, boat, vehicle, or even mail. Here in Maui County, you can say that each island and maybe even individual communities need plans that fit their unique challenges. At Pūlama Lānaʻi, we've seen that local, flexible responses work best, whether it's managing axis deer or addressing a broader challenge. That same approach guides how we think about biosecurity. We partner closely with Federal, State, County agencies to stay ahead of potential threats and respond quickly if something does get through, like was mentioned by Ms. Buchanan. Today, we want to share how we're putting together that approach into action. We know that completely avoiding imports is not realistic, but the more we build up local capacity, the less we rely on materials from off-island and the lower the risk of bringing in invasive species. To support that, we've invested in several on-island efforts: a compost facility, a commercial nursery, and a native seed bank. Of course, there are still times when we need to bring in materials, and on a small island like Lānaʻi, even a single outbreak can have serious consequences. That's why we put in strict inspection protocols in place of our...in place for only our internal teams to catch any potential threats when our shipments arrive. Right now, these protocols apply only to our own operations. We've made our facilities and personnel available for anyone in the community to drop off materials, and we'll handle the inspections. But following these protocols is voluntary

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for everyone else. I'm joined today by Jonathan Sprague, our Co-Director of our Conservation Department. He'll show...he'll share more about the work we're doing in detail and how we're helping move what's stated in HCR42 forward. We have a dedicated team working very hard every day to protect Lāna'i, inspecting shipments, monitoring risks, and responding quickly when needed. Their work often happens behind the scenes, but it's critical to keeping Lāna'i safe and beautiful. We're proud to recognize our efforts here today. I'll pass it to Jon.

MR. SPRAGUE: Thank you, Keiki-Pua. Thank you, Chair. So leave it to the academics to make a simple aphorism look very complicated, but this graph by Ahmed et al. in 2022 can basically be summed into the idea that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And I say that tongue in cheek because honestly, this is a paper that I think should be required reading for anybody who chooses to either import something personally into the State of Hawai'i, whether that be Etsy or Amazon or whatever else it is, or anyone who wants to move a commodity from one place to another within the State. But the fact of the matter is that if we as a society are willing or we think it's important enough to bring things into Hawai'i or move things between islands, then we are automatically incurring a risk that cannot be fully mitigated of moving something that we don't want to between those places. And so, if we're going to do that, biosecurity is...is the next best option. And good biosecurity comes in layers. The fact of the matter is that there is no one entity, there is no one protocol, there is no one program that can fully mitigate the threat represented by moving things within the State that way. And it does...it takes every sort of step of the way, right? So you have off-island prevention, you need legislation, you need regulators, you need border control, you need folks inspecting things when they come to your area of responsibility, ways of inspecting things, quarantining things, detecting things before they go into the landscape in general. You need to surveil, and you need to be able to detect things on the landscape if they make it past your border control because guarantee border control is not going to be 100 percent. You also then need the capacity to respond rapidly in case that surveillance actually turns up that you have an incipient species on your landscape that you don't want there. So the thing I'm really going to highlight here is that, you know, we take a lot of pride in our biosecurity protocol, but we are not perfect. We...at best, we can get at some sort of, like, 99.99 something perfect. But at some point, every single system is prone to failure if you challenge it enough times. And so, having these layers, having these cooperators, having these other partners, and having an open and transparent community of biosecurity practitioners is absolutely paramount to this process. For our part, we are dedicated to being one of those partners. So Lāna'i...Pūlama Lāna'i has a biosecurity implementation plan. This document is about 10 years old and was revised just at the start of this year again. We try to revise it every year, maybe every other year. When we set out to make this plan, you know, honestly, again, you don't need to reinvent the wheel. There are people who have been doing good biosecurity within the State of Hawai'i for a long time. And so, we developed this plan in conversation with a lot of those folks, between Fish and Wildlife, USDA, State, Federal, HISC, MISC, O'ahu Army, honestly, private landowners, NGOs all have input. And we've incorporated parts of their protocols into our specific document. The document does incorporate prevention, quarantine, detection, identification, and rapid

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response. And the document so far has been shared pretty widely. So we've actually provided this document to Maui County Department of Agriculture, HDOA, Fish and Wildlife, HISC. I'm happy to provide it to the Committee Members here. I can figure out the methodology for doing that afterwards. And we've even had a couple of private landowners reach out and ask if they could see the document as well. This is not proprietary. Biosecurity should not be proprietary, honestly. This is a document that we are more than happy to share around to folks who are interested. And I will reiterate what Keiki-Pua mentioned, which is that our protocol, our facilities are open to the public. They get accessed maybe, you know, four or five times out of the year where a member of the public will come. And, you know, the most recent one was a woman who imported a couple of olive trees from the mainland. And it was inspected appropriately. Everything was legal, but she saw that she had some ants in one of her trees. And we were able to come out, put some peanut butter sticks out on it, and determine that the ants were actually a contamination that was received on island. It actually was not ants from the mainland. So that is a thing that we provide whenever it's requested. And I think Chair has some experience with peanut butter sticks and some of that process from a previous life, I think. A little bit about our quarantine and inspection process. So one of the key elements of this is having supplemental quarantine and inspection for all organic material that comes on island. So every plant, every bit of soil, whatever comes into this quarantine facility that is below the airport near the cat sanctuary...for those of you who have been on island, it's an area that is relatively easy to contain. So if we get a noxious pest that gets on site, it's relatively hard for them to move beyond it. And it's relatively easy for us to respond to it. This facility has been in place for, again, about 10 years. And it's been a cornerstone of what we try to do. While things are in quarantine and inspection, the plants will stay there for a period of time, depending on where they come from. So if it's a thing like orchids, which are...tend to be very clean and tend to be grown in very sort of sterile environments, we usually test them for little fire ants, and we hold them for up to three days with a song meter, just to make sure there's no coqui frogs on them. Anything that comes from Hawai'i Island, because of the coqui frog potential, stays at our quarantine facility for at least two weeks, so that we can let the frogs calm down and put some song meters out on them. So we've really tried to tailor the protocols to both the species of plant that are coming in, and from where they're originating, because different pests come from different places. Another thing that I'll mention here is we do a lot of landscape monitoring on top of that. So the fact of the matter is, again, no one of these systems is going to be 100 percent. Quarantine and inspection is not going to be 100 percent. There's always a chance that something will go unnoticed. So, in particular, for the couple of pests that we're talking about today, we do have CRV traps out on the landscape that we check on a monthly basis. We're actually going to be doubling that number as a result of the detections that we've had over the last few months. We also maintain a good number of song meters in strategic areas where landscaping has gone into the ground to detect coqui frogs as soon as we can. This is in addition to routinely working with the Ant Lab and a few other folks to survey for little fire ants on island, again, for sort of rapid detection and response. A couple of recent interceptions. I mean, I hate to say it, but this protocol has proven its worth. You know, I would prefer it if...if my Staff were bored and never had to find any invasive species, but it does happen. So we have dedicated biosecurity

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staff, and in the last eight months, so just in 2025, we've had two CRV interceptions. A bunch of you have probably seen the press release at this point. One of the interceptions was larvae that were inside large potted plants, and the potted plants had enough organic amended soil in them that larvae were able to mature to full third instars. That's a picture of one of the specific ones on the left. Then we had a second interception of an adult beetle that was in a large beach heliotrope just right there on the surface. And fortunately, it was a male. For both of these treatments, for what's worth, they were destroyed. So we don't like to play games with contaminated shipments. We don't retreat them and then put them out in the landscape. In these two instances, we don't even return them back to O'ahu. The first shipment was put into a trench and buried under seven feet of soil, and the second treatment incinerated. So that's how we...that's how we tend to deal with those kinds of things. Speaking of, so another interception we had was little fire ant. So we had little fire ant arrive on some anthuriums that were destined for the Four Seasons. That was intercepted and chemically treated, and then that shipment was incinerated as well. I understand, yeah, folks on Lāna'i, you well understand, we can still smell some of the fires from two years ago. So we take fire even more seriously than we do invasive species management. But as you can see, we had Maui Fire Department on site for that, and that was under a full permit from the Department of Health under some reasonably strict rules about the weather conditions under which that fire could take place. So rest assured it was done safely. We worked with the Department of Ag in both of these circumstances to identify where these species came from. In the case of little fire ant, there was a lapse in some of the protocol at the vendor for preventing contamination of shipments that was remedied before they began shipping again. And then coqui frog. So we intercept some number of coqui frog every year in our...in our...in our quarantine net. This particular one was interesting because it wasn't on a Pūlama shipment. This coqui frog showed up in a community member's yard, well away from any sort of Pūlama landscaping. This person had a really nice garden, an older gentleman, and it was actually his grandson who heard the call and mentioned it to one of our landscaping staff who then let us know. But again, this was a circumstance where we were made aware, we were able to use our connections within the community to speak with the landowner to get access to their property, and we went in and caught the animal, no problem. Actually, it's one of the fastest responses we've ever had. We were able to catch him in about 10 minutes from being on site, which was great. But it does highlight the importance of being open to the community and having good comms to make sure that we can find out as soon as possible and respond. And then lastly, but certainly not least, within this year, we had a new hotspot of fountain grass show up over in the sort of west part of the island in the cooperative game management area. There has been fountain grass hotspots on and off for the last 15, 20 years, and most of the hotspots are completely cold. This was a new population that was identified by a member of the community and former member of the conservation department who called it into us, and we were able to remove about 75 plants over an area that was a couple hundred square meters. So, you know, this is a species that is of high concern. It's been incipient on Lāna'i for a while, and it's one that we put a fair amount of effort into trying to eradicate. And I think it is eradicate-able. I think this is one we can get. So lastly, I do want to end up or sort of this sort of part of the presentation just by leaning back into the importance of this being a kākou effort. I

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would say that about 75 percent of the detections of invasive species that we hear about come from non-professionals. They come from trained observers, either trained observers within Pūlama Lānaʻi, like our landscaping team, who honestly, shout out to those guys. Their openness and willingness to get educated and keep an eye out for things like CRB and coqui frog, and their willingness to go the extra mile to treat things and outright destroy shipments if we say that's what's necessary is unquestioned. So, you know, they are not biosecurity professionals, but they have really taken on that ethic as their own, and they really need to be commended for that. This is not a thing that Pūlama can handle on its own. This is a thing that is going to take tight cooperation and communication at every level of government and NGO to really accomplish. So, you know, with that, I'm going to acknowledge some of our key partners. But again, this doesn't really even scratch the surface of the people who contribute to biosecurity efforts on Lānaʻi. And again, thank you for your time. This is...this is a huge and really important effort, Chair. And with that, I yield. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Dancil, Mr. Sprague. Appreciate all those pictures. They look so familiar. Like you said, past life. I did a lot of work over there with you guys. Jon (*phonetic*) was a good boss. Let's...let's lastly hear from our Administration, Deputy Director Hewahewa, Mr. Mederios, Mr. Kalua, and Mr. Hart. Do you guys have any opening remarks?

MR. HEWAHEWA: Chair, aloha. Yeah, I'll just keep this short and simple, that way...but we weren't actually on the agenda, but just be here to answer any questions.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah. So staffing and funding is not there for us to create a biosecurity plan. However, doesn't mean we don't make it a priority and we're not prioritizing it. Being that you guys seen earlier, working together with ASU to publish the study on axis deer, which helped develop some roadmaps and ways we can go for that particular invasive species. And then on top of the biosecurity, when it comes down to CRB, our Department, you know, worked together closely with the Mayor's...the Office of the Mayor to come up with and develop the CRB taskforce and been meeting regularly for every month with different partners and State agencies. So, although it's, you know, not funded or we don't have Staff dedicated to a biosecurity plan, we are taking whatever we can with what we got to continue to...to contribute and educate through our Department. But I'll be here for questions. And then, of course, I got Kaiea, who's here with us from the Department of Ōiwi Resources. But prior to him moving over to the Department of Ōiwi, he was tasked as our agriculture advocate, the very first in the State. And he's done a lot of work together with myself, Lauren Nelson, our food access coordinator, in...in coordinating the meetings and, you know, just compiling the information we need to share out to our community. So I'll just hand it over to Kaiea. Aloha.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Mr. Medeiros?

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MR. MEDEIROS: Yeah, mahalo for having me again. It's Kaiea Medeiros with our Department of 'Ōiwi Resources. And yeah, just by opening, sort of mana'ō that I want to share is, you know, this is obviously a very, very important subject matter and effort that we all need to take very seriously. And just to provide some historical context, you know, Hawai'i is unique and special for multiple reasons. And...and one of those reasons is the native plant and wildlife species found in Hawai'i typically are found here and nowhere else in the world. You know, we're...we're...we're known for being the endemic species capital of the world. It's understand...it's understood that historically, when our islands were being created, that there was only one new species introduced to our islands that we refer to as Hawai'i today every 300,000 years. And, you know, we have subject matter on the...subject-matter experts on the call right now that could verify that I believe the situation is today we have one new species introduced every day, I believe. I mean, minimum, there's multiple new species newly introduced every month. So, you know, we see the stark sort of comparison of historically, you know, new species being introduced versus, you know, our situation today. And Deputy Director Hewahewa didn't share, but when we were co-leading the Natural and Cultural Resource Branch for our Office of Recovery in October of 2023, we really took a deep dive into the biosecurity challenges that we have here in Hawai'i. So I'll just end on this, is this is very similar to the axis deer situation, as well as our Food and Nutrition Security Plan, that these are big, big, big systemic problems that didn't just happen yesterday or...or overnight. So, you know, fully in support of doing whatever we need to do, and mahalo Aunty Lori for sharing. You know, really, the counties need that authority to be able to regulate our biosecurity. So, yeah, mahalo.

MR. KALUA: Thank you, Chair. You know, we've unfortunately had our fair share of invasive species, coqui frogs that are still being worked on right now. The introduction of the green gull wasp, which did a huge amount of damage to our native nāwiliwili population, LFA, and now CRB. One of the challenges I think that we have, I mean, aside from working collaboratively to create the biosecurity program, is the fact that in absence of the current ability to go and make specific regulations, we...we're only aiding and making ourselves more vulnerable in the communities that are currently not impacted. If you look at something as simple as mulch, you know, for a while, it was very difficult to make mulch on the island of Moloka'i. We still have some challenges here making mulch. The community in Hāna, without speaking for Representative [sic] Sinenci, they would love the ability to be able to make their own mulch over there where they collect all of the green waste now. And currently, we have to haul out the green waste because the State Department of Health has, I guess, the oversight over whether or not they would be able to process their own. But just imagine if we didn't have to haul out that green waste every day, and they were able to go and keep that there. Critics, when we first had the introduction of LFA, were saying that, well, maybe it's been spreading throughout the East Maui community the way it has because it's coming off of the trucks that are hauling out the green waste. Of course, it's speculation. You know, nobody's trying to point the finger at anyone, but it's a prime example of why there needs to be a central base of control. We appreciate anything that the State wants to do to help us get to that destination. And this is something that needs to be discussed more frequently. You know, we...we don't want to know what the next one is going to be, but

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if we have realistic, implementable plans in order to prevent that introduction of anything to our County, it'll just make it a better place. And without trying to simplify what Pūlama Lānaʻi is doing, just look at how much success that they've had with specific types of instances just by an additional layer of training for their employees to ensure that they have a basic awareness, if you would. And I don't mean to...I don't mean to make light of it. I'm sure they're...they're far more accredited than that but just imagine if we had the same opportunities here to make sure that our people that are catching it after it's already left the harbor, left the airport, and is at the point of impact. They could be like, hey, hold on a second, this no look right. So just thinking outside of the box. I don't think...I don't think anyone would argue the need for a biosecurity security plan. And in this particular place, if it's possible that we can expedite the approval or the recommendations that would lead to the creation of at least a starting point, I think our community would be better off for it. Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Kalua. Okay. That's the end of presentation. So we're going to get into public testimony and then discussion. So at this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please...yeah?

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

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, Jordan Hart's on the line. I'm sorry, I didn't...Mr. Hart, are you here on the call? Let's see if Jordan Hart wants to have some opening remarks. I know he was invited. We saw him on the call.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, he's unmuted on our end.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well, we're going to designate him as a resource. And I don't...I want to see if he can come on. If not, then we'll just move on. But I'm not seeing him come on. So as we move forward, if he comes on, we...he's designated as a resource, and we can ask him questions, Members. Okay?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sounds good.

CHAIR JOHNSON: All right. All right. So at this time, if there's anyone wishing to testify on this item, please use the raise-your-hand function and you will be called upon to testify. Staff, is there anyone wishing to testify on this item?

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: Chair, Staff has not received any requests for testimony on this item. Would you like us to do a last call?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Please.

MS. APO TAKAYAMA: If anyone would like to testify, please raise your hand by clicking on the raise-your-hand button or pressing star-five via phone. Last call for testimony. Three...two...one. Chair, seeing no individuals wishing to testify.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, I'll now close public testimony for this item. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ADEPT-1(9). . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Let's proceed with the agenda. Deliberations. Okay. Let's...this is our last item. We have a robust panel of experts. I recommend three minutes per Councilmember each round. Again, please consider the full range of our panelists and be open to their perspectives. Since this is a full panel, I encourage an open discussion format to allow our panelists to raise their hand and chime in when they recognize if they have something to add to the discussion. And I understand that Representative Kahaloa has a bit of a time constraint. So if you guys do have questions for her, please make that your priority. We're going to go down voting Committee Members, starting with Vice-Chair Shane Sinenci, followed by Councilmember U'u-Hodgins.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And just for the record, I'm here at my home office. I'm here by myself. And mahalo for the presentation. Chair, did you invite the State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes. Dr. Kim is on the call from...I think that's his department.

MR. KIM: Yes. That's correct.

CHAIR JOHNSON: And we asked Dr. Maeda, but he hasn't...but Dr. Kim is here.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Oh, okay. Because Ms. Buchanan did bring up the idea that or the fact that the State controls the invasive species and the entry/exit points at all points of entry. And so, if they want to speak to that. We don't have that purview --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: -- under the County, whether it be Harbors Division or the Department of Transportation. I think one of the issues that has come up, Chair, is that the...the U.S. Military doesn't adhere to any biosecurity checkpoints, from what I believe. And when we were in D.C. two years ago, we did bring that up with Representative Case and that the military and, you know, a lot of those planes come from Southeast Asia, where a lot...where we see a lot of these invasive species coming...coming from. And so, I know that we...we are going through military leases in the next couple of years. And I don't know from the State side if we can, you know, put those conditions as far as approving military leases or...or if not. But, you know, they've been horrible stewards of our environment, including not checking for biosecurity as they enter and exit the State. If Mr. Maeda...Mr. Kim wanted to respond.

MR. KIM: Okay. Yes. Thank you so much for your questions. State Department of Agriculture

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and Biosecurity, we are...we have authority to regulate all of the incoming and also the interisland movement of any goods and...and product. We are working with the USDA. In most cases, going out of the State, USDA...USDA is regulating those stuff.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: But that...Mr. Kim, but that is leaving the State. So is that --

MR. KIM: That is correct.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: -- that is to protect California and the state's biosecurity and not ours? I mean, from what I...what I recall, it's just a...we're just signing a form when they're coming into Hawai'i. And are we paying for those agriculture checkpoints at all the Hawai'i airports, outgoing flights to the mainland? Because it doesn't help our cause.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Dr. Kim?

MR. KIM: I think that going out of the State, it's either controlled by USDA, or we have an agreement with the importing state. For example, you mentioned about . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . California. And we have an agreement with the California Department of Food and Agriculture. And we're just collaborating with the importing state. But the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity is regulating anything coming into the State and also the interisland movement.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Okay. I heard the bell, Chair. I'll refer to my other Members. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Councilmember. Let's move on to Councilmember U'u-Hodgins, followed by Councilmember Tom Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Chair. To pick up on what Member Sinenci was talking about too, like when we go to America and we have any check-in bags, we put our luggage on a crate and they say, okay, checked by USDA. But I just came home from California specifically the other day, and we don't have that. We don't have that security, and to his point, we fill out a form and we trust that the person filling out the form is being honest with us. And maybe sometimes they think they're being honest and then something happens and maybe they do have something that's not good, but those are only the things that people can travel with. So is there something we can do to better protect our borders? I think there's other countries who literally spray people, which I'm not advocating for that, but they have a little bit more regulation. And then my second question, because I know it's going to come, is to...I see Rep. Kahaloa. Is...so if we...if all the different counties put together their plan, are you...how do you folks envision implementation for both the individual county and then for the State? Are you going to take everybody's plans and then mesh it into one, or what is that going to look like? Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Representative Kahaloa?

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MS. KAHALOA: Mahalo, Councilmember U‘u-Hodgins, for that question. And I’m going to step in for the Department of Ag and Biosecurity because, you know, Dr. Kim is very new to his role and has...so, you know, the patience that he’s still gearing up with all the information. Everyone is correct that there is a lot more border control at the Federal level than even at the State level versus the county level have control over. So if we think of all of our port of entries and in and out, there are certain things we do have control over. We...we...we have to coordinate but don’t have full control with what the military brings in or out. We do have testing sites for brown tree snakes at lots of the military bases, and there’s coordination there. So there’s some things, but, you know, there is a belief that some of our other pests may have come through via military. And so, what can they do to support us? I think that is something we need to acknowledge. And as we look at master lease renewals and other things, to petition our Federal CODEL to assist us with that process. And again, we do know at the Federal level, there’s a lot of budget cuts happening, including. And again, the USDA, like you have mentioned, is protecting the continent from us. And historically, that’s been done for a long time and local people and visitors think it’s our biosecurity. No, it’s the Federal government protecting fruit flies from getting to the continent. And so, there’s things we need to change there. But one of the things I would say our Lieutenant Governor’s champion right now is conversations with the USDA, bringing agricultural leaders, elected officials to ask the USDA . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . for some support needs. And one of those big items is, can we have the USDA help us share support both at the borders in and out, not just out? And can we do a cost share, as an example.

COUNCILMEMBER U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you so much. Thank you, Chair. I know you folks have been traveling down to Aotearoa and looking at their biosecurity, and they do such a good job. I’m hoping we can take some of their implemented ideas and...and use it here too. So I’m looking forward to seeing what you guys are going to do in the future. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yes. Okay. Good line of questioning, Members. Okay. Let’s move on to Councilmember Tom Cook, followed by Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. I have a question. I don’t know who, though, is the...the recipient. I thought when they redid the airport, when they spent that major renovation, that the State Department of Agriculture did a landing area, kind of a staging area further away so that they could do more thorough inspections. Is that accurate?

CHAIR JOHNSON: You know, we invited Mr. Moniz from the Airport Division to join us, but he couldn’t make it. It would have been a good question for him. But our panel, does anyone have anything to add to that? Because I think that is important.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: I guess my question is, am I the only one that got that memo? And that’s from my brother, Zeke, when I used to work with him. Okay. So anyway, my next question is, I guess it’s a comment. One, I think the Council, from my feeling, is very supportive of being supportive of this issue financially and legislatively. It strikes me as, you know, our island home is so small and so special and unique. And in some

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ways, it should be easier to regulate this aspect of what we're talking about because we don't have multiple, all that stuff. But unfortunately, like many things, it's really difficult to regulate it. So I'm really glad you're bringing this up. It is super important. My...my son Kamalei (*phonetic*) in Kaupakalua, Awalau Road, they just...coqui frogs, and never had before. It was down by, you know, lower Ha'ikū, Kokomo area before, where they came in, Howard's Nursery, I think, way back in the day. So anyway, hope that we can tighten it up. So that was my only real question is about the State and the air...it seems like the airport and the harbor are the two entry points, principally. And I don't know, I mean, people coming in on flights is one thing, but it's mostly the freight coming in, and interisland freight, so.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. That was more of a statement, if anybody wants to comment to the statement. Otherwise, we'll move on to Chair Lee, followed by Councilmember Paltin. I saw her join the call, but if she wants, we'll start with Chair Lee. Go ahead, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. I was just wondering, there's so much information on this subject, and it is kind of not cohesive. So, I'm...I was wondering if you were planning to propose, to make a proposal?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Well, I think we come together after these experts give us, you know, their opinions and listening to Representative Kahaloa's resolution that we should come up with a biosecurity, or at least a list, like the minimum list of what we would prioritize. And that's kind of where...if this body feels, I mean, as we know, you know, coconut rhino, not...coconut rhino beetles is on our shores, little fire ants, the list is long. And every budget season, we're just adding money, but maybe if we had a priority list, or maybe if we came up with a plan...my only concern is, and when it gets to time, to my turn to ask questions, is, how long is it going to take us to make a plan? Because as we know, a new species every day arrives. If it takes five years for a plan, I have concerns, you know? So that's where we're headed, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, because I...I hear all the concerns, but I really don't hear too many solutions. And for instance, we can make a list, but it seems that nothing goes off the list for some. We have trouble, you know, eliminating things from the list. So rather than just add to the list, is there a way to make a commitment from here on out we're going to get rid of coqui frogs, and that's it? We're going to use the latest devices, whether it's drones or helicopters, whatever it is. I mean, we just have to make a commitment and go after it.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Because otherwise, we're just going to end up...right now we have a one-page list, we're just going to end up with a two-page list. You know what I'm saying?

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah. Well, let's whittle down that list. And, you know, I mean, let's look at some best practices, you know? And we...let's...let's remind everybody that we have a new Department of Ag that we have created. I think these guys could really help us

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on navigating what is the...the best use of our time and treasure, right? So maybe they'll whittle down. And I don't mean like a list of invasives. I mean, like, what's our priority? Is it...is it a warehouse at airports and harbors? Who pays for it? Do we need, you know, all those kinds of things. Looking at Pūlama's biosecurity plan, you know, incorporating other...other plans. And Department of Ag, would you guys like to speak on that? I mean, how do we whittle down what the work is in front of us? You guys are in that Department, what do you think?

MR. KIM: Yes. I can speak about the Department . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . of Agriculture and Biosecurity. We have, as...as you mentioned, that we have lots of lists of the invasive species. And then instead of just get rid of those lists, we are just keep adding those lists. It's mainly because in...in my point of view, in many cases, there's a lack of solutions. For example, CRB, we try to manage the green waste, which is the main source of the breeding site for CRB eggs and larva. But there's a lot of the green waste we need to manage, but there's not much...one big solution to...to solve these issues.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right. Dr. Kim...

MR. KIM: Because the...we...we have a limited number of chemicals and limited control measures.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

MR. KIM: So I think that we have to work with the University of Hawai'i and looking at the more...more solutions to kill those...the invasive species --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you.

MR. KIM: -- instead of just tackling those individual species.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Dr. Kim. I know it gets confusing. We have another Department of Agriculture here, a County level Department of Ag. Deputy Director Koa Hewahewa, would you like to add on to what the State Department of Ag was...was speaking to, Dr. Kim? So...

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah, thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Focusing on...focusing on solutions and answers and like that.

MR. HEWAHEWA: Yeah. Maybe I can speak instead of going more into the context of, you know, one of the first priorities for us as the Department was started, there was August...our one year into the Department, we had the fires in August. And soon after that, in November, we got the infestation of CRB. So that became our priority. So that's pretty much what we've been working on so far. As far as coming up with solutions like...like Dr. Kim was saying, it's a big, huge issue. So I think for us in the Department, the first thing that we wanted to do is identify all the agencies that had something to do

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with it. And we're working with O'ahu CRB Response, MoMISC, MISC, HISC, and all the different agencies to identify what the roles and responsibilities of and come up with this...this matrix so that we know where we can step in with the Department. Sounds like mumbo-jumbo, but more recently, up to now, we have developed a pretty comprehensive ag retailer campaign. And this is just specifically for...for CRB. We put out posters and educational material out to our communities and retail stores. Worked together with DEM, EP&S, and the Green Waste Hauling Program. Worked together with CRB Response, CTAHR, and hosted trainings for landscape professionals. I think it was in February of last year and then July 29th, the day of the tsunami warning, Director Arce and Food Access Coordinator Nelson was on Moloka'i conducting trainings on island with Auntie Lori folks, coordinating trap replacements with Auntie Lori folks as well. And then so a lot of interagency coordination has been happening. So it's not like nothing was happening, even though we don't have a department or a division dedicated to biosecurity. It's...it's an effort with all the different divisions that we have. We got grants, we got the ag park, we got Food Access Coordinator, and then we got our Advocacy Department. It's a very tiny department, and we're trying to identify what our roles are in on that and then identify what roles and how we can contribute with all the different departments, how the County can come up with a comprehensive response plan the next time. And that's just for CRB. Now, all the other issues...like, I'm glad Kaiea brought that up, but in the Office of Recovery, Natural and Cultural Resources, we were consistently bringing this up with the State. And we also sat here in Council and brought up our concerns, you know, like prioritizing our borders, especially with material coming in for the biosocks that were coming into the zones from infested areas on West O'ahu. So we were part of contributing to the interim rule change that wouldn't allow things coming in from the infested areas of West O'ahu. So there...there are happenings, things are working, we just don't...there's too big of a problem, not enough of us that can do something about it. But we're active, and, you know, now that we're learning, I'm here, and I'm learning a lot. I always learn a lot when it comes to biosecurity, and that can help inform, as we go into budget next year, you know, how we should be increasing our Department, and how we can continue to support and help. That was a whole lot of --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you...

MR. HEWAHEWA: -- talk, but yeah.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Deputy Director. Oh, Mr. Medeiros? Okay. And sorry, we're just going a little bit over Chair Lee's time, but I...I...we have a big panel, and I hope you guys don't mind if we go a little bit over, but...and then I see Ms. Buchanan as well. So, Mr. Medeiros?

MR. MEDEIROS: Yeah, just...so just to answer the question of, you know, what are, I think, meaning...meaningful actions that we can take to, you know, really impact our biosecurity challenges, and just to bring it full circle, we had our presentation this morning with the Food and Nutrition Security Plan. I think the more expeditiously we can implement that plan, that's one practice or system that could definitely benefit our

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biosecurity challenges because, as we know, and as it was shared earlier, that a lot of our biosecurity challenges comes from the importation of various goods or foods, plants. So really creating those regional and local food systems so that they're...the need for sort of pre-border biosecurity decreases is sort of one potential, you know, implementable action that we could take. Another one is looking at, as it was shared during the Pūlama Lānaʻi presentation, is a lot of the challenges are with the transportation of plants and plant material, and a lot of times, they're not necessarily native plant materials, too. So, you know, whether it's landscaping or nurseries, however we can sort of incentivize the use of native plants, and then also creating more local operations so that we don't have to be importing; whether it be from the continent or interisland. And then sort of the last, just, you know, relative to the question related to immediate manaʻo is, you know, one of the biggest challenges, and, you know, I want to bring into this biosecurity conversation the conservation work that's being done because, of course, the biosecurity is sort of mitigating the harm that's happening to our 'āina, our kai, our wai. But conservation work is also frontline to preventing the spread of certain, you know, biosecurity agents that we want to stop from spreading, or healing, as well as our kai, 'āina, and wai. And, I mean, there's...that's a whole other conversation to have. But, you know, kind of tying it back into, again, our Food and Nutrition Security Plan, the axis deer conversation we had earlier, is there is a need for...for housing and workforce development. So, you know, that's something that hasn't been brought up, but a lot of these...a lot of the work that's done from a biosecurity standpoint or conservation standpoint, they're very laborious jobs that don't necessarily pay the best. So you couple that with the cost of living and housing, it makes it really difficult. I just had our quarterly meeting with our Maui Conservation Alliance, which is various 'āina-based organizations and agencies from DLNL to...DLNR to Maui Nui Marine Resource Council and sort of everyone in between, and that's one of the biggest challenges is filling positions to do that work. So the need for workforce development and housing is an important part of this conversation, too.

CHAIR JOHNSON: These are all big issues. Ms. Buchanan?

MS. BUCHANAN: It's on? Okay. Honorable Council Chair Lee, the...the short answer to all your questions is yes. Those of us who have been working in the invasive species committees for the last twenty years of our professional life has created a laundry list for anyone to see. Three pages of that was submitted today as testimony, I believe, that covers an array of mitigation efforts in order to address the biosecurity, what we're talking about today. The invasive species committees were created as gap fillers because our current biosecurity in the State of Hawai'i was not being effective. And there's a number of reasons for that, you know, from plant lists to a whole number of legislative fixes that we need to do. And I believe that we already know all of them, and we've addressed them in writing several times. And again, like I said, it's been submitted to this Council today, this Committee hearing. And then I forget all of the...you know, we're talking about lists. We have lists upon lists of priority pest species. We have biosecurity plans on biosecurity plans. There's a greater...we talked about the military earlier. The military has to follow a Micronesian biosecurity plan that goes into all of the Pacific and Pacific Islands, and we think that they don't do inspections, but they

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actually do. They're mandated to do them under the Federal government. They have all of their internal self, and they have their own staff. They have their Army Corps Staff that does all of their own inspections within their Federal boundary lands. So again, the...the ISCs we're here to...to...as a gap filler. But again, we don't have any enforcement, and that's the...the real hard part of our work because sometimes I see my staff gets so downtrodden sometimes because we work so hard on banana bunchy top and LFA, and then, you know, you turn around. I know that there's a nursery on Maui that is a constant faucet for reintroduction of pests. And so, you...you...you asked about, hey, we're going to make up our mind. We're going to do coqui frog, and we're going to get rid of them. We get rid of them until the next introduction come, so we're constantly battling reintroduction of pests, and we haven't been able to...to plug that hole up. And so, the laundry list that...that we've come up with is over years of great study of what needs to be fixed, and it is very...it's complex, but then it's very simple. So we've submitted that. I'd love to work with this Council. The Maui Invasive Species Committee would love to work with this Council, and we would love to work...work with Rep. Kahaloa and the Department of Ag and Biosecurity now because they have a new name, and they have a new...like was mentioned, they've been in Aotearoa, but Aotearoa is a whole different culture. So we would like to work collaboratively just to protect 'āina because in the end, that's really what it's all about. And I think the sooner we can do that, the better, and we're really looking for more authority to make those decisions in our backyard. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Buchanan. I see Zeke wants to add...

MS. BUCHANAN: Thank you, Chair Lee.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Zeke, you have something to add? And then we can move on to Yuki Lei...Councilmember Sugimura.

MR. KALUA: Thank you, Chair. You know, I just wanted to say real quickly, you know, sometimes we're...we're a victim of our need, which is why there's been discussion early on about being able to produce some of the things that we need, being a little bit more sustainable, and I'll just give you a really small example of that. So early on, after the tragic events of 2023, there was a real concern that we, you know, would have to do our best to ensure that should there be heavy rainfall or wind, that we prevent majority of those materials from finding their way into the ocean or to nearby water sources. At the time, there was a real need for a BMP plan, which was carefully thought out and executed, but imagine that we only could get BMP socks to line all of the areas in Lahaina to protect the water that may come from, let's say, a questionable source, and I'm completely speculating. I'm not alluding to anything. I'm not suggesting anything. I just...I want to be very clear. Based on the resources that we are available to procure, sometimes it could be part of the problem that we're faced with. And it's not...and it's not that people do anything intentionally, and I'm sure the people that sent, you know, maybe just that one potted plant that...that had LFA with anthuriums to Lāna'i weren't trying to purposely cause any harm. You know, maybe they were the best price at the time. Maybe they were the one vendor that had the resource available. So...so...so,

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that's why it's so important for us to be able to go and identify because if a vendor knew ahead of time that they were part of the problem and didn't want to potentially risk their reputation, the hope would be that they would do better. But by a good biosecurity plan in place to make them aware that they are part of the problem, it would help put them on notice for things that maybe they're not seeing happening, you know. So...so...so to not be judgmental but give the benefit of the doubt. It's like we...we are vulnerable based on the things we need to procure that we don't generate sustainably here, which is why everything goes back to workforce development and homes. Some people are seeing an increase in traffic going into Lahaina. Well, it's because a lot of people that lived in Lahaina don't live in Lahaina right now, and so now they have to make that commute until workforce development homes or their properties can be recovered. So just every little layer that you add on top of the problem just makes the problem worse --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. KALUA: -- and the hope is that by creating that biosecurity plan, at some point we can be more proactive than reactive.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MR. KALUA: Mahalo.

CHAIR JOHNSON: That's...that's what I'm noticing, is we are very reactive to this. So Councilmember Sugimura hasn't had a chance, and I'll move on to Paltin...Councilmember Paltin if she jumps on the call, but Councilmember Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: You know, I don't really have any questions or clarifications because I wasn't here for your presentation, but what I'm looking for is your list. I looked online, and...

CHAIR JOHNSON: Ms. Buchanan, did you submit it to the Committee, or how...

MS. BUCHANAN: Might be Ellen. Did you get something from MISC?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Because there's your --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. We'll...we'll look into it, and we'll find that. If...if we can get it, we'll...what do you want to do, email it to the Members, or...

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: And you can post it on Granicus.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah, put it on Granicus, Staff. So, they'll...they'll look for it. Thank you, Ms. Buchanan. I'm sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah, no. And I just want to say that this discussion is so connected to the previous item, where I think a lot of things that needed to be said have

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been said. And the bigger role, I guess, that the County has to have based upon this resolution is for all the counties to discuss what we're doing and coming up with, you know, some...maybe some joint solutions or plans, and maybe we become stronger. And I guess my question for you, if you're going to report back to the State, is what are they doing, right? Because a lot of this really is...the upper layer of this is the State and, of course, the Farm Bill, which is Federal, and it's Jill Tokuda. She's on the Farm...that Agriculture Committee, if that's what it's called, or the Farm Committee. But, you know, those are the layers that we need to lean on to help us become stronger, and that's all I want to say. I want to listen to this. I...I want to learn more.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Councilmember. I don't see Councilmember Paltin on. I'm double-checking on my side, so I'll go next. Okay. This question is going to be for Pūlama Lānaʻi. If you guys are on the call, if you turn on your camera. Okay. Thank you. You know the...you mentioned the quarantine. I think that's a huge facet of biosecurity, and I really want to...want to kind of ask your guys' kind of opinion on how...how...the two-week quarantine you mentioned for some of your palms, some of the big trees. You can do it with your trees, but how...I mean, how do we do it with other people's trees? I want my trees as soon as they come off the barge, and now I got to quarantine them for two weeks, right? So I'm curious, how...how would that work? Like, you know, the commerce wants to go, and they don't want to wait, but yet, if we add stricter biosecurity, some folks might not get their trees as quickly as...as they want to, and how is it when you guys interact with the public? Because you said you do a few people in public. Do they ever push back and say, oh, I don't want to wait X amount of time for...for this, you know, extra testing?

MR. SPRAGUE: Sure. Yeah, sure. Thanks for that question. First, I kind of have to acknowledge a little bit about our circumstance, which is that we are...we are fortunate and we are privileged to be in the spot that we are, which is to say we have the ability and the funds to really manage 90 percent of what comes onto this island in a way that is, frankly, very inconvenient and very costly. And that is something that we as a company have taken on as...as our responsibility because that's honestly what it takes to keep some of these pests from getting here. Someone else alluded to it, I can't remember who it was, but they said the tenets of biosecurity are very simple, and they are you need to get hands-on with every single thing that is coming onto your property, and you need to be willing to inconvenience commerce. Let me put it this way, you need to be willing to not sacrifice to the whims of commerce if you want to have an effective biosecurity protocol. So yes, we take on a huge amount of inconvenience, and you know, there's a bit of back and forth, sometimes even within the company. If something comes in and we say, hey. We had...we had a shipment of azaleas come in, which was perceived as a CRB risk, we kept those plants in quarantine for six months. And I can tell you that the landscape architects who we were working with were not excited that we were going to keep those plants in that space for six months to make sure that they didn't have CRB in them. So I think, you know, Chair, you hit on what is the primary friction point on having effective biosecurity, is that you have to be willing to accept those additional measures and that additional cost and that additional time if you are going to be effective. And fortunately, on Lānaʻi, we are able to do that to a large degree, both

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because we have a company that supports that effort and also because we are such a primary importer of goods on the island. To your question about members of the public and sort of...their sort of attitudes about it, you know, we have not run into too many circumstances where people have pushed back. We did have one instance where a person didn't fully understand that we were going to quarantine their plants for a week and that we were going to take good care of them. They couldn't quite put them on the landscape immediately, and it took a little bit of conversation. But after we explained to them what was at stake, I think the fact...well, let me put it this way, the fact that Pūlama goes to so much effort to do good biosecurity on their side, it was a relatively easy conversation to say, hey, we do this for every single thing that we bring on here and if we don't do it for yours too, then hey, you might be bringing in LFA or you might be bringing in coqui frog, and when that happens, that's going to be on you for the fact that those pests are now on the landscape. And we didn't strong-arm them, it was a...but it was a relatively easy way of bringing them along into sort of the shared sense of kuleana and responsibility that we were all in it together. So I don't know if that addresses your question, Chair --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

MR. SPRAGUE: -- in full, but I do think Keiki-Pua wants to amend that too, so --

CHAIR JOHNSON: I...I get...

MR. SPRAGUE: -- I'll yield there.

CHAIR JOHNSON: I get that information is key and educating the public is key. I understand that 100 percent, but Dr. Dancil, you want to add to that?

MS. DANCIL: Just quickly, so we didn't force these people, they came to us first. So just make that crystal clear. So it wasn't like...so they came to us and said, hey, I'm bringing this in, we...we never impose this on non-Pūlama Lāna'i operations. So they came to us, so they were taking that initiative. I think where they kind of have a little bit of confusion of like, I want it sooner is when our expert said, hey, we do this with all of ours, it's actually the protocol is whatever it is, two weeks versus one week, you know, we want to make sure it's safe. So that's the difference is this was someone that came to us.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Sure.

MS. DANCIL: So they took the initiative.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Voluntarily.

MS. DANCIL: The other thing, point of entry, where I think, you know, with Amazon, you can order plants via Amazon, via USP...postal service mail. So that's another entry point. I don't know how that gets monitored or --

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

MS. DANCIL: -- protocols get put in place there.

CHAIR JOHNSON: So did you guys get reimbursed when you buried those trees with CRB?

MR. SPRAGUE: No. In that instance, we did not. Nor did we get reimbursed for the LFA treatment.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. You know, we...we have...like I...I'm just trying to think outside, like how do we do this? You know, Ms. Buchanan mentioned that there are some bad actors or folks who are consistently bringing...you know, they...they don't have any biosecurity, they keep...keep getting flagged for all these invasives. Can we have...I'm curious, this is to anybody on the panel, but, you know, the idea, like, let's have a gold star for this, you know, folks who are doing really good biosecurity, and then maybe one star for this company that isn't doing it because we can't...we're kind of tied with our hands on just legislation. You know, we can't do this legislation on a County level. So trying to find out ways that, like, you know, we support those folks that are doing great and...and emphasize them and say, this nursery has not had any problems with invasives and they're doing good practices. Let's give them an award or a gold star or something that like pushes the positive action. And the folks that don't do it, you don't get a star. It's almost like, you know, the restaurants that got the red card because cockroaches, you know, that's...that's kind of like that idea of where you don't want to have...you want to reward good behavior, you know, and how do you do that? Because again, we could do it legally, we can't do it legally because the State says we can't do it, we can't make legislation that affects this. So I'm trying to find ways...and I see Ms. Buchanan's hand, and maybe she's probably thought about this in her twenty years of...on this...on this topic.

MS. BUCHANAN: So, the Invasive Species Committee rewards good players every single year, every year during Hawai'i Invasive Species Week. There are local people from...from Maui who are...are good players and have contributed in some way or been very, you know, proactive in biosecurity. There is also for quite some time, the Maui Invasive Species Committee and MoMISC instituted a coqui-free certification --

CHAIR JOHNSON: There you go.

MS. BUCHANAN: -- for nursery programs. And...and if you, you know, if...that would tell somebody that you are participating and being a good voluntary player if you had a certification from MoMISC saying, you know, we come to your nursery, you have a great clean nursery, and here, you're...you're able to be on the coqui-free certification. So there's multiple things that we've done like that within the community.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. BUCHANAN: So it does exist, and we do continue to do that.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Maybe the Department of Ag could highlight some of those nurseries that haven't had a CRB or hasn't had an LFA or has coqui frog monitors around. I mean, you know, let's use our bully pulpit here, folks. Let's tell...you know, praise...praise the folks who are doing it well and don't...and ignore the...or, you know, well, that's all we can really do because we don't have the laws. I see Representative Kahaloea on the call. You want to add more?

MS. KAHALOE: Thank you, Chair. Just...just a few little highlights, and Councilmember U'u-Hodgins brought up a good point that at the State level, we have been looking to who is the champion of biosecurity in the world, and that is Aotearoa. And so, we've taken, several years on mission trips to learn how they are collectively responding to biosecurity. And they are the best in the world at what they do. And one of the things they said is it takes collective effort. And so, one of the models is how, as a State under a Federal government with multiple islands, how do we manage biosecurity when we don't have total control, like New Zealand does? So there are different things they can put into place that we can't do, period. And so, it is more challenging for us. If we decide to take a position of we...we want to ban plant materials from entering Hawai'i, and then they need to be under more regulatory scrutiny, we could be subject to commerce clause at the Federal level. So...but how do we protect our borders? And it's a...it's a conversation that does take collective effort. But one example at...in Aotearoa that was really moving to me was a community platform of public information called, I think it was Ko Tātou [sic]. And if you speak Hawaiian, you know that, like, this is us. And so, what they did is made biosecurity a community effort. And they did. They have public awareness campaigns for tourists, for residents, everybody saying this is how you protect biosecurity in your communities. And it even goes as far as, and this is extreme, but I'll give this example, cat culling for biosecurity and 'āina stewardship. So if we think of aloha 'āina, we think of conservation, we also think of agriculture and economic development, it's this collective effort. And they're...to...to frame biosecurity as this is all of us and we all need to do this and make that collective campaign and commitment, that's a big deal. And that takes the movement of every individual to want to do this, not just funding at the State level, not just policy, it's that collective. So if you're really interested, they have videos, they have all this type of media on what they've done to just get every individual human to care about biosecurity, so they know how to detect it in their yards. They care as a business owner to protect their business and their quality of business by making sure they're not part of the...the problem, that they're part of the solution. And so, one question was also asked, since plant material is the number one movement of invasive pests in Hawai'i, what do we do? And one of my colleagues said, do we ban interisland movement of plant material and green waste as part of a solution? And the government of New Zealand said, if you're doing good biosecurity, you don't need to do that, which is very shocking because there are times, I'm like, we need to do that.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. KAHALOE: We need to stop bad actors, we need to protect our individual islands and

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counties, but that's just an example. And if there is enough time, I wanted to give some examples of if...if county levels make priorities or plans, here's how the State can better interact and relate. So some of the things that the County of Hawai'i is doing with the introduction of coconut rhinoceros beetle is, for example, to apply treatment to protect trees at our...at our airports, at sacred spaces where there's coconut trees everywhere, hundreds upon hundreds, that we don't want to die. The Department of Ag and Biosecurity doesn't have access to bucket trucks to get up and do those treatments. So one way the County of Hawai'i and the Mayor's Office and Mayor Alameda has supported efforts is just getting their Department of Public Works to allow usage of those types of vehicles. So then the State can come in and treat those plants in advance of CRB taking down those trees permanently. So if you think of places on Maui...on Maui Nui that have significant trees and we want to be proactive, that's one of the areas where the County can engage. Another area is looking at green waste management before CRB becomes dedicated in our community is working with your Department of Environmental Management, or that's what we call it on Hawai'i County, is what are you going to do with green waste if you have CRB and plan ahead? Are you going to enact controlled burn opportunities? Then you also need to get Fire Department involved. You need to get the Department of Health. What are some of these things at the County level? And if we know what those priorities are, that can elevate match funding from the State, which is why if we know what your areas of interest are, we might be able to fund those biosecurity efforts as part of a grant or an RFP opportunity. We have LFA for every county and funding for that, but at the Department of Ag...Agriculture and Biosecurity, do they know where each county needs it and for what? And are they just making a blanket request for proposal or can they narrow that down because they know what each county's needs are? Or if the number one need is axis deer, how do we work at the State to lean in on your number one need? For Kauai, it's rose-ringed parakeet remediation. Now it's probably CRB as well. But, you know, we lean into what the counties want if we have some communication or a priority list. So, you know, I know MISC does a good job to really overarchingly support those community needs. If some of those positions or those lists were, you know, rallied up to the County level and maybe supported by Council, supported by the Mayor, then it helps us maybe --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

MS. KAHALOA: -- look at where we can relay funds to the County, and we can be of support in that realm.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you for that, Representative Kahaloa. Members, I think that there's a lot more discussion needed. This is not a simple, you know, issue that we're facing here. So I think I had...I think we had a good round, and we had some really good discussions. Does anybody need a second round of questions? Otherwise, I'm...I'm ready to...oh, we do have one from...oh, we do have several. Okay. Councilmember U'u-Hodgins, followed by Councilmember Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Actually, Chair, I wanted to ask a question about the last

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item because I had to leave and go to my other meeting, and I was wondering if you would grant me the permission to ask a question about deer, but I can wait for my colleagues to ask a question about the invasive species.

CHAIR JOHNSON: You can certainly ask about a deer with this...this panel. Some of our deer experts left, but there are some folks here on the panel might be able to respond to you. Go ahead, Councilmember.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Yeah, thank you. Sorry again, I did have to go to my other meeting. But...so, in our last item, we had a full panel of people who are very well educated and very well aware of what's the requirement to bring down our deer population, which includes kind of targeting doe when hunting. And those are the people that we already know are targeting doe, but we have such a huge population of weekend warrior hunters that...and I mean this with great respect because everybody...I eat all the deer they catch, they like to take pictures and post it on the Gram or use it for their dating app photos and all the things. Is there, like, a marketing campaign or some sort of marketing we can do, that we can have those people as well know that like doe...does are the ones you want? Like, not...they taste better too, in my opinion, and, you know, they'll help reduce the population. So my husband used to participate in, like, roi roundups back in the day. If we could have something similar. If we can have, like, a catchphrase, I don't know, like I catch chicks or a bag of doe or something, for real. I mean like hehe, haha, no, but, you know, and then it'll just start catching on and then we'll kind of normalize catching some doe instead of, like, those big racks. And like I love to see it, you know, that's cute. I have a...I have a bunch. They also fall off. Like, we find them in our pasture and find them in our yard. But I'm just saying, like, is there some sort of marketing campaign when we talk about it does take all of us, it also includes the weekend warrior hunters, and if we could kind of push them to hunt some doe as well and come up with some sort of marketing phrase. But that was my question --

CHAIR JOHNSON: It...okay.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- which, that's it. Thanks, Chair.

CHAIR JOHNSON: I think we may have Jonathan Sprague want to speak to that. Mr. Sprague?

MR. SPRAGUE: Sure, I can chime in just right quick. I know that at least on Lānaʻi, the way that we do it is we do it through tag issuance. So when the herd was really, really tall, this was about three years ago, what we did is we would issue...I mean, functionally, I think the State actually issued infinite doe tags for one of the State hunts. And through sort of the strategic application of tag issuance, we were able to get doe-to-buck harvest to be about three does for every one buck. So you definitely can do it in certain circumstances. I think one of the bigger challenges is what you're pointing to, which is that because deer are, you know, the property of the landowner, you know, it's not always the State that is awarding or Pūlama that is awarding the tags. It's just like, oh,

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yeah, you like go for bones, go for bones. So I think there's opportunity there to kind of do outreach and education in the more informal settings where maybe those kind of tag issuances aren't guiding the choices or some of the choices that the hunters make. So that's all I wanted to say.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. I'll just...go ahead. Did you want to add anything more, Councilmember U'u-Hodgins?

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: No, thank you. I appreciate that. But I do know, like, so many weekend warriors just go, it's not a tag. They just do it like they're...it's for food, you know, and it's like I see so many people posting about it, whether it's deer or feral pigs, right? And we trap them too in my yard, and a middle-aged sow is so much better than the big boar to eat. But it's not as...it doesn't make for a good photo, right, that people are posting. So that's all. I was just wondering how we can market --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: -- to kind of . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR JOHNSON: I...I love the education and outreach of that in a way that like it ties into biosecurity because those are the folks, those weekend warriors are on the landscape. And they're almost like our biosecurity officers, right? They notice something like what Jonathan was just mentioning how he had somebody noticed there was that fountain grass in the field, someone --

COUNCILMEMBER U'U-HODGINS: Right.

CHAIR JOHNSON: -- who knew that. Those folks who are out there on the land hunting; they can help with making the islands more biosecure. So I see a couple of hands on this. So go ahead, Ms. Buchanan.

MS. BUCHANAN: I wanted to respond to Councilwoman U'u [*sic*]. If you've taken a hunter certification class...you're not legally allowed to hunt in the State of Hawai'i unless you have a hunting license. All those things are covered in the hunter education classes. But I will tell you that all of the local hunters I know, know that they supposed to be shooting does. But why I thought about the hunter education is because they teach you in that class that there are different phases in a hunter's life. And of course, the young hunters all want a buck, and they want a boar with tusks. And then, as you get older, you know, you know that you got to just hunt for meat. And then when you get kūpuna, like me, you just watch and...and admire how beautiful the animal is. So, you know, to...to that, and with respect to Pūlama Lāna'i, there is local hunters and non-local hunters. And I...and I definitely would support an outreach to non-local hunters about trying to shoot does. But the issuance part of it is a great way to force someone that comes for the purpose of hunting to actually take out the does versus the...the bucks. Thank you.

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CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you. Okay. Members, I think this was a good discussion, and I'm ready to defer the item without any other hands up. Seeing no other...no other hands. Any objections to defer this item? No objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: TP).

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Okay. Members, this takes us to the end of the agenda. And I just want to thank all the panel members who stayed with us for a long time. Was...did I miss a hand? I'm sorry, was someone's hand up?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sinenci.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Oh, Councilmember Sinenci, I beg your pardon.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: Yeah, I just wanted to add to the list. I think if we're working with the State, maybe for Representative Kahaloa, that the State owns a lot of property along the harbors and the airports. If working with them and getting a MOU with some of those properties near the ports of entry that maybe like Pūlama Lāna'i, we can use for quarantine areas.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: And then, you know, when...when tourists come, to...to her point about being responsible, when tourists come, they see...and go get their luggage, you see a two-story banner of the helicopter at the waterfall. And I keep saying, well, where's the two-story banner of the coqui frog? Or something like that, just for us to be more responsible. And then five years ago, Chair Lee had a great idea. She wanted to get the Army Corps or the Army Reserve to...to do the coqui frogs and call it Operation Coqui. So, I mean, maybe that's also...maybe we got to bring back some of her great ideas from five --

CHAIR JOHNSON: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR SINENCI: -- years ago, Chair. That's all. Thank you.

CHAIR JOHNSON: Thank you, Vice-Chair Sinenci. Okay. All right. Members, we...we don't have...we don't have any...anything else before the Committee. So at this...the item has been deferred. And at this time, at 3:12, this ADEPT Committee is adjourned.

ADJOURN: 3:12 p.m.

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CERTIFICATION

I, Daniel Schoenbeck, hereby certify that pages 1 through 91 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 August 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Daniel Schoenbeck