

ADEPT Committee

From: Rogerene Arce <Rogerene.Arce@co.maui.hi.us>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 2:42 PM
To: ADEPT Committee
Cc: Gabe Johnson
Subject: FY26 Congressional Funding Requests by the Dept. of Ag.
Attachments: 20-Feb-2025 ADEPT Chair Johnson Overview of Congressional Requests FY26.pdf; One Pager Strat 360 Kula Park AG Project FY26.pdf; One Pager Strat 360 Hana Food Hub FY26_.pdf; One Pager Strat 360 Kula Ungulate Fencing FY26.pdf

Dear ADEPT Committee,
Please see attached letter and accompanying documents for the Committee members. These may be shared with our members of congress as well.

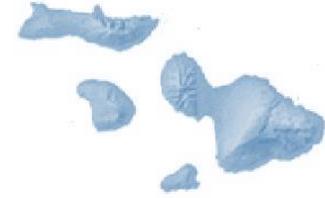
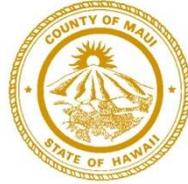
Mahalo,



RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

ROGERENE K.M. ARCE
Director

KOA HEWAHEWA
Deputy Director



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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Gabe Johnson, Chair
Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, and
Public Transportation Committee Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Mr. Johnson:

SUBJECT: FY26 CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING REQUESTS

Farmers play a pivotal role in making local grown food available to the community. The County of Maui has made great effort in boosting the agriculture economy beginning with the establishment of the Kula Agriculture Park in 1985, which started the County's Agriculture Park Program. As the founding Director of the new County of Maui Department of Agriculture, I aim to put more farmers on the land who will produce diversified agricultural crops through regenerative and sustainable practices.

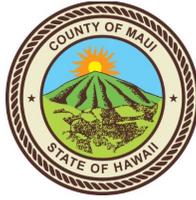
Over the last six years, funding acquired by the County from the State of Hawaii which the County matched with a governmental bond and through its general fund. 262 acres were purchased in Kula to develop a new agriculture park. Planning and design costs were covered for the following infrastructure improvements that include a 12" force main irrigation line that will connect the reservoir to the new agriculture park, and for a 2.4 million gallon a day concrete reservoir that will provide drought amelioration, additional storage for water, and for fighting fires. The funds also covered the construction of a booster pump that is under way and will improve the transmittal of water to the parks.

Strategies 360, contracted by the County of Maui, is assisting with Department of Agriculture's request for three congressional funding requests. One I shared with you is for \$14.5 million for building the Upper Maui Agriculture Park in Kula. The second request is for \$2.5 million for construction of a Hana Food Hub. The appropriation source for each is the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration, and Related Agencies (AG) under the USDA Rural Development, Community Facilities Grant. A third request of \$2,112,000 for ungulate fencing for County land above the Kula Community Center which is being considered for agricultural projects. The appropriation source is the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Salaries and Expenses. Project summaries are enclosed

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rogerene K.M. Arce".

Rogerene "Kali" Arce
Director



County of Maui Congressionally Directed Spending Request for an Upcountry Maui Agricultural Park in Kula– Federal Appropriations Fiscal Year 2026

Project Description

The County of Maui, Department of Agriculture (MDOA), is developing an Upcountry Maui Agricultural Park (UMAP) on a 262-acre parcel in Kula, as part of its commitment to promoting diversified agriculture and addressing the needs of local farmers. This project aims to expand the existing Kula Agricultural Park (KAP), established in the 1980s, which currently supports 20 tenants cultivating various crops across 445 acres. The UMAP will feature 28 additional improved farm lots ranging in size from four to 20 acres, leased to local farmers to encourage sustainable agricultural practices and bolster Maui’s agricultural economy.

Background

The original Kula Agricultural Park (KAP) was established in the 1980s by the County of Maui as a strategic initiative to promote diversified agriculture and support local farming communities. At a time when Maui's economy was heavily dependent on sugarcane and pineapple plantations, KAP provided an opportunity to expand the island’s agricultural base by encouraging smaller-scale farming. By offering affordable lease rates and long-term tenure, the park enabled local farmers to establish and grow their operations, fostering a more resilient and diverse agricultural sector.

Over the years, KAP has supported the cultivation of a wide range of crops, including Kula onions, tropical fruits, vegetables, herbs, dryland taro, turf grass, landscape nursery products, and flowers. The region’s favorable climate and rich volcanic soil make it an ideal location for high-value specialty crops, reinforcing its role as a key agricultural hub.

The expansion of KAP aligns with the Hawai‘i State Plan, Chapter § 226-7, which identifies agriculture as a critical economic driver. Similarly, the Maui Island Plan emphasizes the importance of agriculture in diversifying the local economy beyond tourism. By strengthening agricultural infrastructure and increasing opportunities for local farmers, KAP helps ensure long-term economic sustainability and food security for the island.

Managed by MDOA, KAP has played a pivotal role in diversifying Maui’s agricultural economy, preserving agricultural lands, and supporting local food production. Its success underscores the value of government-supported agricultural initiatives in addressing land use challenges and fostering long-term sustainability. Over the decades, KAP has become a cornerstone of Maui’s agricultural identity and continues to serve as a model for community-based farming initiatives.

Total Project Cost

The total cost of the project is \$42.39 million. **The County of Maui requests \$14,481,432 for the construction of the UMAP.** The county will cover the first \$27.91 million. The breakdown of the federally funded portion is as follows:

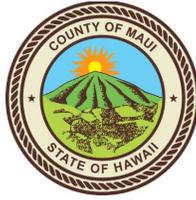
- General Site Management \$230,000.00
- Earthwork \$1,990,000.00

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• Roadway Improvements	\$2,615,550.00
• Onsite Water Improvements	\$3,177,000.00
• Offsite Water Improvements	\$1,790,000.00
• Electrical System Improvements	\$1,000,000.00
• Sum of all items	\$12,592,550.00
• 15% Contingency	\$1,888,882.50
Total	\$14,481,432.50

Project Timeline

The AG Park is being constructed in a four-phase process:

- Phase 1 – Construction of the Booster Pump in KAP (started Jan. 2025, end Dec. 2026)
 - Cost (County covers): \$4.059 million
- Phase 2 – Construction of the 2.4 MGD concrete reservoir (start early 2026, end mid 2027)
 - Cost (County covers): \$22.7 million
- Phase 3 – Construction of the 12” Main Line (start 2026, end mid to end 2026)
 - Cost (County covers): \$1.15 million
- Phase 4 – Construction of the UMAP (start early 2026, end mid 2027)
 - Cost (Federal funds cover): \$14.481 million

Appropriations Source

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration, and Related Agencies (AG) under the USDA Rural Development, Community Facilities Grant.

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County of Maui Congressionally Directed Spending Request for a Food Hub in Hāna – Federal Appropriations Fiscal Year 2026

Project Description

The construction of the Hāna Food Hub, located in rural East Maui, would expand local food access, extending the life of local produce with chill storage and through value added processing in its commercial kitchen. The Hub would also increase producers' access to markets outside of East Maui, through coordinating the aggregation, washing, packing, and transportation of goods to additional markets in Maui and Hawai'i. Additionally, the Hub will be used as an educational space to connect the students of Hāna School with where their food comes from, furthering the educational programming for Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike's culinary students. Given the flat location of the identified parcel for the Food Hub and its two entrances, which can be used to direct traffic, the Food Hub can serve as a Resiliency Center, utilizing the hub's cold and dry storage to get supplies to the community.

Background

According to studies conducted by the County, a significant amount of fresh food grown in East Maui rots in the field, as there is no way for producers to get their products to market. As the East Maui Community Food Assessment describes, "This isolated, rural area on the east coast of Maui Island in Hawai'i is much like an 'island on an island.' Hāna's nearest urban facilities are a two-hour drive each way on a hazardous single-lane roadway," including the nearest grocery store.

The Hāna Food Hub will serve as:

- A shared-use certified commercial kitchen that can be rented by farmers, ranchers and processors to produce value-added products, increasing the shelf life, marketability and profitability of food grown/raised in the region;
- An agricultural aggregation and processing facility where growers can bring their crops to be cleaned, graded and packed to be transported to markets;
- A space to support educational programming around food processing and culinary arts, especially to support new and aspiring farmers, ranchers and processors in DOH requirements, safe food handling, labeling, marketing and business management.

Total Project Cost

The County of Maui requests \$2,500,000 for the Phase 1 planning and development costs for a community kitchen, food hub and resilience center in Hāna.

Project Timeline

FY 2026

Appropriations Source

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration, and Related Agencies (AG) under the USDA Rural Development, Community Facilities Grant.

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County of Maui Congressionally Directed Spending Request for Ungulate Fencing in Kula – Federal Appropriations Fiscal Year 2026

Project Description

Maui County is requesting funds to construct an ungulate fence in Kula that is approximately 4 miles in length and approximately 7 to 10 feet high. This fence will secure the parcel boundaries, protect the test well, and prevent invasive species (deer) from degrading conservation, agricultural, and developed areas.

Background

Maui County has acquired a 272.96-acre parcel in Kula, formerly known as the Von Tempsky land. This site is home to a County test well, conservation land, pre-settlement archeological remains, and is a potential home for agriculture, education, parks, recreation, and other community-centered activities. The land is being ravished by invasive ungulates that are causing environmental damage, and are prohibiting conservation, agricultural, and recreational use of the property.

The test well on the property is a critical water resource for Upcountry Maui, particularly during drought conditions. Unlike most of Kula's water sources, which rely primarily on surface water, the test well provides a more reliable and sustainable supply, helping to meet demand when rainfall is scarce. The need to protect this well is underscored by the Hawai'i Drought Plan (2005 Update), which identifies Upcountry, Kēōkea, and Kahikinui as areas vulnerable to water shortages. Additionally, the Maui Drought Committee highlights Upcountry communities—including Kula, Makawao, Pukalani, and Kaupō—as being particularly at risk. To address these challenges, Upcountry Maui must invest in diversified water sources, creative storage solutions, and targeted conservation efforts. The Kula test well is central to these strategies, and its protection from environmental threats—particularly axis deer—is essential.

Beyond water security, the overpopulation of axis deer has caused significant environmental damage through overgrazing and associated erosion. Without proper safeguards, they pose a direct risk to any future conservation, agricultural, and community use of the property. While the long-term vision for the property is still being determined, ongoing discussions with stakeholders—including a farmer group and the Waldorf School, which has expressed interest in agricultural education—highlight its potential. Fencing is essential in the short term to support responsible grazing, mitigate erosion, and reduce fire risk. This investment will ensure the land remains viable for conservation, agriculture, ranching, education, and other productive purposes as plans evolve.

The urgency of this effort is further emphasized by the Governor's Emergency Proclamation, which recognizes the severe threat that axis deer pose to agriculture, infrastructure, and natural resources. Implementing effective deer management strategies, including fencing, is a crucial step toward safeguarding Maui's water supply and ensuring the long-term sustainability of this land.

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Total Project Cost

The County of Maui requests \$2,112,000 in federal funding to procure, clear and install this critical fence in Kula.

Project Timeline

The County is ready to construct the fence as soon as the money is appropriated.

Appropriations Source

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Salaries and Expenses:

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