

**BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

April 14, 2025

Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

CONVENE: 6:03 p.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair
Councilmember Tasha Kama, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Nohelani U'u-Hodgins, Member

EXCUSED: Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member

STAFF: Keone Hurdle, Legislative Analyst
Maria Leon, Committee Secretary
Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
David Raatz, Director of Council Services

Bill Snipes, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

OTHERS: Kari Stockwell, Real Property Tax Administrator, Department of Finance

Testifiers

Tom Rietz
Linda Puppolo, Executive Director, Maui AIDS Foundation
Patricia Haskin
Audrey Lester, Secretary, Kihei Community Association
Ciana Cooper
Toby Naumov
Wayne Higa, Pastor, Ka'ahumanu Church
Nalani Kaninau
George Burnette
Pawa Kalanikau
Gylia Solay
Lilith Martin
Johnathan Martin
Cailin Leaper
Marc Drehsen
Sophia Spaulding
Patti Domingo
Jessie O'Neill-Prest
Carolyn Manuel, Administrative Assistant, Maui AIDS Foundation

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

Bryan Chin, Director of Clinical Services, Maui AIDS Foundation
Mana Shaw-Rodriguez, Co-Director of Prevention and Reduction, Maui
AIDS Foundation
Patricia Bradley
Gordon Bradley
Sean Yannell
Alan Lloyd, Organizer, Maui Tenants and Workers Association
Sheena Bellavance
Mishelle Oh
Diann Colton
Susel James, Kihei Little League
John Laney, President, Kihei Community Association
Dezireen Austin
Sophie Sellers, Special Projects and Operations Coordinator, Grow Some
Good
Krishna Taroc, Harm Reduction Specialist, Maui AIDS Foundation
Gertrudes Holder, Health Insurance Navigator, Maui AIDS Foundation
Tiare Sua, Co-Director of Prevention and Reduction, Maui AIDS
Foundation
Cody Nemet Tuivati, Project Director, Hui O 'Āinakūko'a O Waiohuli Kai
Terani Richmond, Kia'i, Hui O 'Āinakūko'a O Waiohuli Kai
Kaleo Demello, Hui O 'Āinakūko'a O Waiohuli Kai
Kay Anderson
Cristina DeLeon, Sustainability and Events Coordinator, Teran James
Young Foundation
Krystal Barnett, Teran James Young Foundation
Brian Pfeiffer
Frank Barbosa
Anna Merritt, Maui Economic Opportunity Head Start
Max Tornai
John Starmer
Zandra Amaral-Crouse
Dylan Schwarzmeier
Christian Galapon

Others (15+)

PRESS: *Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.*

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

ITEM 1: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BILL 41 (2025), BILL 42 (2025), BILL 43 (2025), BILL 44 (2025), BILL 45 (2025), BILL 46 (2025), and RESOLUTION 25-83)

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(*gavel*). . . Welcome, everybody, to the South Maui Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. We are anxious and willing to hear from you, the community, which is the purpose of the meeting. Today is April the 14th, and it is now 6:03 p.m. My name is Yuki Lei Sugimura, I'm the Chair of this Committee, and I'm going to ask Member Cook, your Councilmember, to introduce our...our Councilmembers.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Yuki Lei. Aloha, everybody. Thank you for coming. It's great to see such a large turnout, and it's going to be an interesting evening. On my far right, I have Gabe Johnson, the representative from the Island of Lānaʻi. And next to him, we have Tamara Paltin, the representative from West Maui.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha 'auinalā.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And to my right, I have Keani Rawlins-Fernandez from Molokai.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha 'auinalā.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And to the left of Yuki Lei, we have Tasha Kama, who is the representative from Kahului.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And to her left, Shane Sinenci, the representative from Hāna. And to his left, Nohe U'u-Hodgins, the representative from Kihei...I mean, from Pā'ia-Ha'ikū-Makawao.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Member Cook. I...I want to really welcome all of you, and I always am grateful to our Staff. So, I'd like to take the time to introduce our Office of Council Services Staff. Maria Leon, say hello; and Lei Dinneen is...was registering you out there; Keone Hurdle, Legislative Analyst; and I think we even have our...David Raatz here, which is our Office of Council Services Director. Department of Finance, we have someone, at our request, from the Real...Real Property Tax Administrator, Kari Stockwell. And the reason is that--I'm going to give her some time to talk to you--is that when the real property tax assessments were mailed out, we got a lot of questions, of which...we referred them to her office. So, therefore, we asked if she would come and say a few words, and explain the assessments to you. If you had

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

questions, she'll stick around for a while, and you can have a one-on-one with her. Kari? I don't see her. There you are.

MS. STOCKWELL: Hi. Hello, and thank you for coming today on your Monday evening. So, my name is Kari Stockwell. I'm with the County of Maui Real Property Tax Office. I'm the Administrator. And I know, you know, a lot of people got their assessments mailed out to you. You've seen it now for probably a month now. So, if you do have any questions, I'll be right there. You can come talk to me. I'll be able to answer as answer as many questions as I can. So, property taxes, the assessments are...when you get them in the mail, we're using sales from July 1st, 2023 through June 30th, 2024. So, when you do receive your assessment in the mail, we are about 9 months to 24 months behind the market. So, as properties rise, we are behind the market; as property values fall, we're behind the market. But again, I will be here to answer any questions or concerns. And thanks for being here. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much, Kari. So, she'll be back there if you want to have one-on-one. Kari, what is the phone number for your office, in case people have questions? I think you were giving out your phone number too?

MS. STOCKWELL: So, the office phone number is (808) 270-7291, and our email address is RPA@co.maui.hi.us. And either way, you will get a response back within about 24 hours.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Thank you. So, tonight, we are here to listen to you. When you come up to the microphone, please tell us your name, a name of your organization if you are representing an organization. You will have three minutes to testify on anything in our...our budget, and then if you're not done, then 30 seconds after that to complete. Hang around because some of the Members might have questions, and if not, we'll give you a big applause and thank you very much, so...

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you want to hear the sample of the bell? Oftentimes, people don't...are not familiar with it. And I'll have Tom...can you introduce your Staff, also, after this? . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . Okay. So, that's the bell. That's...that'll be three minutes, and then if you're still talking, 30 seconds later, you'll hear the bell again. So, thank you very much for that sample. And Tom, why don't you introduce to us your awesome Staff?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. I couldn't do what I do without Stacy Takahashi, who is over there at the entry. And Jared, who does our social media and, in general, everything. And Derek, who is our intern for the summer, and one of our young rock stars in the community. And Bill--is Bill here? Yep, there he is, Mr. Bill Snipes. Thank you all.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Member Cook. Okay, so first testifier please?

MR. HURDLE: Thank you, Chair. Our first testifier is Tom Rietz, followed by Linda Puppolo.

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. REITZ: Good evening, Members. I'm Tom Rietz. I've been here for about 15 years. Kupuna, and not representing the Kihei Community Association, but a member of the Kihei Community Association. So, I'm here today to talk about what I consider the biggest issue we have in Maui, and that's affordable workforce housing. I recommend that the budget line items related to affordable workforce housing be augmented and based on a housing gap analysis, showing the needed number and types of units over the next ten years. This would augment the current 71,801 housing units in Maui, documented by the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, UHERO. I don't know what that number would be in the future in terms of need, but the Maui Housing Initiative estimates that an additional 13,949 units are needed in Maui at this point. UHERO also estimates that the Maui population will increase from 165,000 to 189,000, or a 12.7 percent increase, by 2030. More specifically, I recommend the following, pretty much in order: Number one, conduct the above-mentioned housing gap analysis; number two, determine the infrastructure needed to support this increase, which includes, but is not limited to, water, sewage, roads, and all utilities, et cetera; number three, develop the above-mentioned ten-year strategy to fund at least 75 percent of all future housing and related infrastructure needs; number four, focus on ways to make these homes...homes affordable, unlike UHERO's estimated \$1,050,000 cost for a median-family, single home in Maui. Land trusts are one way to make homes more affordable to perpetuity. Number five, convert most of the 10,084 active short-term vacation rentals, but exclude from that count condos that have high HOA fees. It has not been representative of what our needs would be for the community. Number six, and last, focus County Housing and Planning staff on meeting West Maui housing needs, and delay indefinitely any future plans for luxury homes until there are sufficient affordable workforce housing available to keep our Maui residents from having to move to the mainland to actually live. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. One moment. Can you give us a copy of your testimony that you were reading?

MR. REITZ: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, you did? Okay. Thank you very much. Members have a question? Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha, Mr. Reitz, mahalo for your testimony. Just...he can go back to the mic, yeah. Mahalo for your testimony.

MR. REITZ: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I was wondering if you were aware of the 2021 Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan that the County had published?

MR. REITZ: I did a literature search. I did not review that entirely, just because of the...the time frame. If it had a number, I would really enjoy seeing what that number was, versus the number that I gave in terms of what the need is. So, I'd really appreciate that, but I...I know UHERO did not come up with the actual needs assessment...they just came up with what is now, but not what it should be based upon the needs.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Because the Housing Plan also included recommendations on like infill housing, as well as policy recommendations. So, some of the things that you asked for in your testimony.

MR. REITZ: Are in there? Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. No further testimony...I mean, no further questions? Next testifier?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Linda Puppolo, followed by Patricia Haskin.

MS. PUPPOLO: Hi, I'm Linda Puppolo, I represent the Maui AIDS Foundation as its Executive Director. I came to tell you a personal story tonight. STIs, sexually-transmitted infections, they do more than just cause havoc, or make people feel like something's wrong. They create...untreated STIs cause cancer, and it's a fact. Seventy percent of all head and neck cancer is caused by untreated STIs. Back in the day, when I was young and the people that are coming up that are over 60...and 60 and 70, between 60 and 70, the rates are very high for head and neck cancer. Liver cancer is mostly from hepatitis, but untreated STIs cause cancer. There's no doubt about it. So, what we do at Maui AIDS Foundation, is get everybody and anybody in to test. That's what's important. And our young people are subject to getting HPV. A lot of people are resistant to getting their children vaccination for HPV. HPV, you can vaccinate up to age 32 now. It's very, very important to get vaccinated. It causes head and neck cancer. Now, personal story. I have two very, very close family members that have cancer right now. Both are related to HPV, things that they didn't know they had that have been laying dormant in them for years and years. You don't know what is going to happen 40 or 20 years from now in your body. So, getting vaccinated is very, very important. I came here to support that, and to tell you

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

that that's where our hearts are right now, it is to make sure that everybody comes to us and feels it's a safe space. And STIs, as you know, create a lot of stigma in the community, so we try to make it so it's as safe as it can be. Okay. That's what my testimony is, that I'm suffering very hard from watching people that are very ill from cancer right now. The other thing I wanted to say, number two, is thank you so much for the funding. You have no idea. We make...we make good use of it. And then number three, I want to also thank this Council for working together. I've been here for almost 40 years now. I have never seen a Council so consistently work together for the good of the people of Maui as this Council, and I want to thank you so much for that. It's very important. I've seen people fight, I've seen nothing get done, but you guys...you guys are getting stuff done. Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Linda. Anybody have questions? Seeing none. Next testifier?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Patricia Haskin, followed by Audrey Lester.

MS. HASKIN: Hello, my name is Patricia Haskin. I've lived here almost 20 years. I'm sure you've seen me talking about the 6,000-home development. But I'm only going to say a few things, it's going to be very short. My main concern, I've just got two big concerns that were...I thought about. And that is, I'd like you to spend money to finish the connector road so we all feel safe, that we all can get away if there's a fire. I don't think everybody wants to just dive in the ocean...maybe they do, I don't know. And my other concern, I'd like to have you put money aside to convert those 600 cesspools in Maui Meadows to a real good sewer treatment system. Because I go snorkeling--some of you see me, I go down to Kam II almost every day--so I really would like to know the water quality there is as best as possible. So, thank you so much for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Member Paltin has a question for you. Could you return? Could you come back, Patricia? Ms. Haskin?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Haskin. I just wanted to clarify because I'm not...I'm from West Maui. You meant the North-South connector --

MS. HASKIN: Collector road. And I...I think it goes from Lipoa all the way up. I'd like it to go...so I can get on...I live at Kam II. So, I live right at Kam II, and I'd like to be able...personally, I'd like to be able to go on that part that goes from Alanui Drive. It only goes one block to...and one block, that's all it does. I'd really like to be able to get on at least at Safeway, and go all the way...you know, all the way up to where we can meet the Veterans Highway. I'd like to be able to get out of Kihei safely, however you want to design it. And I also was reading that the State and the County were both sort of debating about a emergency road from the high school over to the Veterans Highway, and they were arguing who's going

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

to do what. You know, if you set up money ahead so you're setting the pace, then maybe the State will match it, and we can get this stuff done faster.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. HASKIN: That's all.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And so, Kama'ole II to Lipoa is in this area --

MS. HASKIN: Well, that is --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- to where you'd like it to be?

MS. HASKIN: -- that's part of what I want to see.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. HASKIN: Yeah, definitely, all the way...because when you...all that I have where I live is just from Alanui Drive over to Keonekai, it's one block. That's my connector road. So, we obviously need more than that. Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: One more question.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Rawlins-Fernandez has a question for you. You're in demand, Ms. Haskin.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony. When you said you supported water quality testing, are you saying specifically Hui O Ka Wai Ola, or...

MS. HASKIN: I don't know. Years ago, I helped with the Humpback Whale Sanctuary--this was many, many years ago--and I did water quality testing. I never joined the group that was formed after that, but I think that...I'm just saying, from a person that is snorkeling a lot, that we've had times since January where there has been areas in the water between The Cove, if you know where that is, and the Kam II and III, where it definitely...it did...reeked...it sort of reeked of sewage. I mean, that's what I'd have to say. It was not good quality. So, I have to just say that from my own perceptions, it wasn't any scientific thing. But when I did do it for the Humpback Whale Sanctuary, we actually grew the bacteria, and I kept finding a lot of E. coli, and that was, you know, over 12 years ago. So, it's out there.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, funding for water quality testing?

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MS. HASKIN: Yes. But mostly, I would like to have the cesspools converted into a proper sewer treatment facility.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I got that noted.

MS. HASKIN: That's my number one.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo.

MS. HASKIN: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Audrey Lester, followed by Ciana Cooper.

MS. LESTER: All right. So, I've tried testifying live, and I --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS. LESTER: -- not very...is this okay?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MS. LESTER: I'll turn this in a minute. Anyway, I'm going to read. So, I wanted to say aloha and mahalo for your service and dedication to our community. I know it takes a lot. My name is Audrey Lester, and I'm representing the KCA tonight. I want to testify on several topics, so I'll try to be brief. So, our previous testifier was a great segue into what I want to testify about. This is the North-South Collector Road. This is a map of Kihei, where we start with North...North Kihei. We've got Pi'ilani Highway coming along down here, South Kihei Road here, and this is North...North Kihei Road comes in this way, and I'm only...I did not go down as far as Kam II because I wanted to talk about the current segments in the Collector Road. So, what this is showing...what this is showing is our current problem. We have signal lights back-to-back on both sides of Pi'ikea and Lipoa. We have a start of little pieces of the connector road, where our previous testifier was talking, with a few little pieces down here. This is the section that's completed right now. It's lovely. It's got pedestrians, and bikers, and stuff...place for everybody to get through. It stops. This is the next section, Phase I, that should start in 2027. And then, the section here, Phase II, would go from Kūlanihāko'i to Ka'ono'ulu. And then we hook up to Kenolio. So, once this section is done, we'll be connected all the way from Uwapo, all the way down here to beyond the elementary school. And it will give us some relief from these signal lights because people can come over here and come all the way up. And what's even better is section three that will go from Hale Kuai down to East Welakahao. This is where the park is supposed to expand, so this will give us access for our keiki to all the parks, and good walkable roads to get here. And with the

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

roundabouts planned here, it'll be much easier for the cars to get through here and not get plugged up, and get away from these areas where the schools back up the roads. I wanted to also highlight that this is where the Kūlanihāko'i bridge is, and when the bridge is out, this street at Ka'ono'ulu is really in trouble. They don't have a way to get out. There was bad backups here during the last storm. And when this road goes through, they'll have a way to get through. So, this is...a lot of this is in the plan, so that's good. But what I'm testifying for is how we can expedite some of this. This phase is . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . on the track. This phase...I think the EIS is done for both phases, so how can we get going faster on this? Because getting here, we still don't have that thoroughness. So, we want to get this part going. We could put in the roundabout at Ka'ono'ulu and Kenolio right now. That's a very wide intersection, and if that's done, and we get work going on the bridge, at least we don't have two construction things going on at the same time. The bridge is not in the budget right now. As I look through it, the thousand pages of budget, it's not in there. It's needs to be replaced. So, that's a big concern. And I'm not going to get to my other topics. But thank you. And if you want the map, I can leave it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. We'll appreciate the map also. Anybody have questions? Okay. Thank you very much. Next testifier, please?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Ciana Cooper, followed by Toby Naumov.

MS. COOPER: Thank you, Derek. Good afternoon. My name is Ciana Cooper, and I am testifying in strong support of the Maui Economic Development Board, MEDB, and STEMworks programs funded by the County of Maui. Throughout my active involvement in several MEDB-backed initiatives, I have come to deeply appreciate the catalytic impact these programs have on students. As a Maui High School senior with a passion in healthcare and STEM, my personal and academic trajectory have been profoundly shaped by the transformative opportunities made possible through County funding. One of the most pivotal experiences was my role in mentoring middle school students at Maui Waena Intermediate School's afterschool program, made possible by STEMworks. In my capacity within the host of future health professionals branch, I guided these students as they navigated the often-unfamiliar terrain of healthcare career exploration. This was a crucial juncture not only in the development of my own leadership skills, but also in solidifying my commitment to community-based mentorship, and fostering youth engagement in STEM fields. The infrastructure, expertise, and strategic direction provided by STEMworks were indispensable in ensuring that we would empower students in meaningful and sustainable ways. My internship with the STEMworks ecosystem has further expanded my professional acumen. Through hands-on experience in alumni engagement and strategic communications, I have contributed to projects that foster a deeper understanding of the healthcare career pathways between students and seasoned professionals across the State. These undertakings have provided me with the unique opportunity to bridge the divide between theoretical education and

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

practical industry application, a process that has reinforced my career ambitions and refined my professional toolkit. Currently, I am honored to be a part of the Stop the Bleed Task Trainer Force, an initiative championed by STEMworks that empowers individuals with critical lifesaving emergency response techniques. This initiative has been a cornerstone in my journey, providing hands-on, real-world applications that intertwine seamlessly with my academic aspirations. It has significantly amplified my drive to pursue a healthcare career, providing an immersive learning experience. Without the County's support, these experiences would not have been possible. The programs I have had the privilege of participating in are far from mere educational opportunities. They have molded my personal and professional growth, laying the groundwork for my aspirations within the healthcare field. STEMworks provided my first exposure to healthcare and STEM sectors, and without its infrastructure and funding, I would not be poised to pursue a higher education and eventually enter the medical profession. These programs empower students like myself, equipping us with not only the knowledge and skills to thrive, but also the networks and confidence to succeed in the ever-evolving STEM landscape. I strongly urge the continued funding of these essential programs so that future generations of keiki across Maui County may benefit from the same opportunities that have so profoundly shaped my path. Thank you for your time and support.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier, please?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Toby Naumov, to be followed by Wayne Higa.

MR. NAUMOV: Good evening, Members of the Maui County Council. My name is Toby Naumov, and I'm grateful to have this opportunity --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear.

MR. NAUMOV: -- sorry. Good evening, Members of the Maui County Council. My name is Toby Naumov. I'm grateful to have this opportunity to represent MEDB. I'm currently a sophomore at Maui High School, and I'm proud to serve as the captain of our VEX robotics team and as a programmer for our first robotics competition, or FRC team. Being a part of robotics has truly changed my life. As captain of the VEX team, I have had the opportunity to not only build and code our competition robots, but also lead my peers through months of design challenges, testing cycles, and high-stakes competitions. VEX has pushed me to think critically and manage time under pressure, and constantly improve, through iteration, all skills that go far beyond the classroom. Thanks to MEDB's support, we've all been able to travel to neighboring islands, and even to the mainland, to compete at a higher level. These competitions are not just about winning, they're about connecting with other students who are passionate about engineering and learning from the best minds in STEM. Without MEDB's funding, many of these experiences simply would not be possible for students like us on Maui. MEDB

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

has also supported me personally through the internship program over the summer. I was able to work with professionals in the tech field, build connections in my intended career path, and gain hands-on experience that you just can't get in school. That internship opened doors for me. It showed me what a future in STEM might actually look like, and made it feel within reach. MEDB doesn't just fund projects, they believe in students. They give us tools, experiences, and confidence to grow into future engineers, programmers, and innovators. They've helped build a strong STEM community here on Maui, and I'm incredibly grateful to be part of it. Thank you so much for your time, and for continuing to support MEDB. Their work directly shapes students' futures, mine's included.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Can you say your last name again?

MR. NAUMOV: Naumov.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. You have a question from Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Naumov. I just was wondering if you were aware, the County's giving like an engineer bonus for guys that want to come work for the County as an engineer?

MR. NAUMOV: Thank you. That's . . . *(inaudible)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Right on.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Wayne Higa, to be followed by Nalani Kaninau.

MR. HIGA: Aloha, Members of the Council. Aloha, Kihei. My name is Wayne Higa. I'm a longtime resident of Kihei, and all these issues apply, but I'm here tonight to testify on behalf of Ka'ahumanu Church...because it's Holy Week, and I no can come Thursday night up to the Council Chambers. So, let me try do my three minutes. Ka'ahumanu Church stands as a noble and virtuous testament of resiliency, and congregation, and community in our small town of Wailuku. Since before the arrival of missionaries here on the Island of Maui, the history and mana of this wahi pana, this storied place, located at the foot of Mauna Kahālāwai leading to Ūao Valley, was once the royal compound of King Kahekili. It is not only a place of worship, but also a significant cultural and historical landmark here on Maui. The present building was built in 1876. The church stands as a testament of the rich history of Hawai'i and its people. It is a symbol of the enduring legacy of Queen Ka'ahumanu, and the early Hawaiian missionaries, John Honoli'i and Thomas Hopu. Through the years, the church has faced deterioration due to weather and age, necessitating restoration work to preserve the structural integrity and historical significance. Ensuring that it

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

continues to serve future generations is of crucial historical importance. The proposed restoration project includes critical repairs to the steeple, roof, interior of the sanctuary, and related infrastructure. These efforts will ensure the church continues to serve as a safe place for worship, cultural celebrations, and community gatherings. We are part of your community, and you are all a part of our community. Many of you know us. We are 'ohana, friends, and neighbors. And after many years of restoration and preservation, it's becoming a reality. Architectural, structural work, and building permit is complete. A project manager has been hired, bid requests have gone out and have been received. We humbly ask Maui County, Office of the Mayor, and Maui County Council for your support by including funding in the budget for this historic building. We ask our community too, for your continued support in this project with your donations, time, resources to grants and other funding sources, support in sharing the needs with others. Many people have lived here their whole life, and they drive by and no...and haven't walked into the church. Okay. I invite you all to give me a call. You like come see the church, come. Once you come inside a church, it's not as intimidating as it looks from the road. When you come inside, it's just a small Hawaiian church with that feeling of home. You can just feel that coming through the walls. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: One moment, Kahu. So just...Members have questions for you.

MR. HIGA: Sure.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: But how much are you requesting from the Mayor?

MR. HIGA: Okay. We never throw that money figure out, but the bids came back, and they're running between \$2 million and \$3 million. So, we're shooting for the 2.7, \$3 million. We sent out our grant requests to Senator Mazie Hirono a couple of weeks ago. We're working on other grant funding. We have already put out a letter to the...okay, before everybody ask, historic building, they get plenty of money, yeah? No more. So, we applied for National Funding for Sacred Places. That's another one of those national ones. With the way things going in Washington, D.C., who knows? But we're going to come and ask everybody and anybody we can. So, if you have any leads, anybody get Jeff Bezos' email or Oprah's email, just send them over, and I'll send out a request. All we can do is ask.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. Member Kama has a question.

MR. HIGA: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Aloha, Kahu.

MR. HIGA: Aloha.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: So, does the renovations include the preschool building that was behind the church?

MR. HIGA: No. Not yet.

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Okay.

MR. HIGA: But we were advised by an aunty that helped us with that Mazie Hirono grant, and she asked that same question. I say, well, we focusing over here. And she said, no, you go ahead and you start...and...and, you know, when kūpuna tell you go ahead and do --

VICE-CHAIR KAMA: Yeah. You go do.

MR. HIGA: -- you going do. So, yeah. So, along with seeking funding for the present sanctuary, we also...so we going to have to start with a feasibility study for that preschool building to see...you know, some people look at it and go, oh, more easy just tear 'em down and put something new up, yeah? But when you have those buildings--and...and it's hard for me. Because presently, the building empty, we using it for storage. But for me, from my Hawaiian-cultural side, when buildings sit empty, no more life, you know? So, somehow we got to get life back into those things. Yeah, so...

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. HIGA: Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Okay. No further questions. Thank you.

MR. HIGA: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Mahalo. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Nalani Kaninau, to be followed by George Burnette.

MS. KANINAU: Aloha ahiahi, kākou. My name is Nalani Kaninau. A couple things tonight. I watched a part of the April 10th Human Concerns meeting with Lori Tsuhako and Jessica Crouse, and you know, I can't begin to understand the complexities of all the human services needs. But one area...because I know that there's a lot of attention that's being focused on housing and, you know, people that were displaced by the tragic fires...so one area that I think is falling through the cracks is the pre-fire homeless. You know, I watched...I volunteered at that tent thing across Safeway. They needed somebody to take their recyclables, and then they were going to save their money and use it for like a movie night. I mean, how normal is that, for a movie night? And while I was waiting for the

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

lady, this one young man came, and he was a little disheveled and a little wrinkled, and...but he was so excited, he was going for a job interview. And I wished with all my soul that this kid makes it, you know? He doesn't have to worry about where to lay his head, where to get food, where to have clean clothes. And he's going for a job interview. You know, and then in the same vein, I watched a Council meeting--I watch *Akakū* all the time--there was a woman that was pleading, I mean, to please finish what you started with the overnight parking. She had a full-time job, she's living in her car, and she has no safe place. So, these things that are falling through the cracks, I think, need attention. And then I wonder...and especially for the homeless, you know, addiction, alcoholism is...is so difficult, and these people don't even know that they can have a different life. So, mental health services, reaching out to AA community to, you know, honi these people might help. So, how do we pay for all of this stuff? Well, you know, the State of Hawai'i has the lowest property taxes of all the 50 states. You know, and when we've got people--and I don't want to be rude, but the majority five that are hell-bent on building almost 2,000 luxury units, I mean, we...they can contribute. Jeff Bezos' home in Wailea is valued at over \$78 million. Oprah's little, you know, cottage Upcountry is \$60 million. And I also served on the Board of Water Supply, and we argued back and forth about the...the water rate tiers that...you know, for the hotels and stuff, it stopped at Tier III. Why these people aren't paying their share? And this is at the expense of our community...our most precious resource, our community, our land, and water. And those people want the privilege of having their second, third, or . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . fourth home need to pay dearly for that because our community is suffering because of it. So, mahalo for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is George Burnette, followed by Pawa Kalanikau.

MR. BURNETTE: Good evening, Chair and Councilmembers. Thank you so much for being here this evening. This is really a wonderful evening. My name is George Burnette, I'm testifying in favor of your continued support for the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council, and also for Ka'ahumanu Church. This Council...I was hoping sometime to come here and not have to read, but it's not tonight. I'll just read it. This Council has supported the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council for many years, and we are so very grateful for that support. Our goals are healthy coral reefs, clean ocean water, and abundant native fish. We've continued to grow through the years, and our programs now include community-based coral restoration now ongoing in South Maui, water-quality monitoring, reef-friendly landscape...reef-friendly landscape training, and scientific studies as well. In 2025, we established a coral-restoration area in South Maui, giving damaged corals a second chance at survival. The group Hui O Ka Wai Ola, which is sponsored by the MNMRC, is monitoring water quality at 41 beaches in West and South Maui. We developed

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

Hawai'i's first reef-friendly landscaping program, reaching out to hotels and businesses, offering a five-day course to manage their landscaping in a more reef-friendly way. And we've conducted reef-health surveys throughout the year, telling us how our reefs are changing where help is needed. And I participated a bit in that this morning by collecting limu on the North Shore for analysis by the University of Hawai'i. This Council's continued support for the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council, and separately for Hui O Ka Wai Ola, is critical to the continuation of these programs. In reference now to Ka'ahumanu Church, our current structure was built in 1876, and throughout these many years, our church building has experienced quite a bit of deterioration, and is in badly need of restoration. We have pursued restoration for a number of years without a lot of progress. This Council has been generous in providing grant monies for us for several years, which has mostly been unused. The hold-up has been due to failure to find a project manager, and also contractors interested in doing this work. But I can report to you tonight that we have a project manager, and we have contractors who have submitted bids, and we have the necessary permits. So, our current need is now the money to do the work. As you know, our church is steeped in the history of Maui. We ask for your support, not as a religious organization, but as caretakers of a structure that is on the National Register of Historic Places, and is a treasured landmark, and is often used as a gathering place in Wailuku. Thank you so very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Mr. Burnette. Any questions? One moment. Member Paltin has a question.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Burnette. I was trying to look, but I didn't find it. Is MNMRC a line item in there?

MR. BURNETTE: I don't know.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And how much were you requesting?

MR. BURNETTE: I asked Amy Hodges this morning what they were asking for, and she told me 500,000, and 100,000 for Hui O Ka Wai Ola, which I think is part of that. But I'm not in on the ins-and-outs of that. But that's what Amy told me this morning.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, it's not currently in the Mayor's budget?

MR. BURNETTE: I haven't looked at the Mayor's budget, so I don't know.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. 500 MNMRC, and 100 Hui O Ka Wai Ola?

MR. BURNETTE: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Got it.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. BURNETTE: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. All right. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Pawa Kalanikau, followed by Gylian Solay.

MS. KALANIKAU: Aloha. My name is Pawa Kalanikau. I'm, I might say, a kupuna of Kula Kai. I've been living here in Kula Kai for the last almost 80 years now. My main concern, I'm here...I mean, there's a lot of concern in my mind right now, but what I'm really trying to get through to all of you now is the urgency of getting out of Kihei when we have an emergency. That is my great concern. And I'm thinking that perhaps with the budget that you have allotted, that there is a possibility of you having an alternate route ASAP. I mean, if we...we have 30,000 people in Kihei, including Wailea, and you probably heard this from me before, but that's how urgent it is. If we have an emergency coming from tsunami or a fire, we will not make it out of Kihei safely because we will be bottlenecked in the main two outlets. And those outlets currently is a problem even now. So, I beg of you, all of you, consider this as one of the priorities. And another...and I think that perhaps making an alternate route mauka, not waiting for the North-South Collector Road. That's going to take to take forever more, and I don't think the North-South Collector Road is going to alleviate all of that because you still go into a community that is already crowded. So, you guys got to listen, and listen carefully. We're...we're in dire need. Really dire need. I beg of you. And another thing is on South Kihei Road, our lighting is poor. It's very poor. Our crosswalk is not taken care of properly. I drive down there for years, and lately I've been seeing where the crosswalk doesn't have lights for people to press the button so it can ring...you know, ring...blink for the kūpunas, as well as the youngsters. We've lost some lives on that road already because of insufficient lighting, and...come on, give us...give us something more decent in the North South Kihei Road. It's bad. The crosswalk needs to be checked and marked off also, and the lighting is really bad. And hopefully last, but not least--there's a lot more, but I'm limited--I'm worried about this...you know, the folks are talking about the South...North-South Collector Road. It will affect Kihei, can only erode. And years ago, we asked for speed bump because that road, there's cars speeding . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . on that road like it's nobody's business. And the police is not there, of course, so we probably short of police. Maybe we need...need some more police to get on the road and get with it. But we're...we're in need there. It's dangerous. Kids are riding on those little carts that is speeding down, cars are speeding, there's no sidewalk. There's no safety.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. KALANIKAU: All right.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MS. KALANIKAU: Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Question from Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Kalanikau. I just wanted to clarify on that last part you were talking about. You...you would like a speed bump on Kenolio Road?

MS. KALANIKAU: Yeah. Years ago, we did a petition because we were told that we need to petition for it. And they...and this was years ago. We had to go into the neighborhood and do it. And they told us that...that they couldn't because it's an emergency route. I beg of you, that...I have a question about that because a lot of those emergency routes are used by the...by...with speed bumps.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

MS. KALANIKAU: Waikapū has speed bumps right on the State highway. So --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I go there --

MS. KALANIKAU: -- we're just asking for that street because it's safety of our kids and us.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I was wondering if...there's a form online to request a speed bump. Have...have you been able to...maybe Member Cook's office can --

MS. KALANIKAU: Well, Member Cook, I'm going to check you out on that, okay?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- on your behalf.

MS. KALANIKAU: I thank you. I appreciate that very much. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MS. KALANIKAU: Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, Members, this is our 11th testifier. We have 44 to go. And I just want to say that probably at about maybe 7:45, I'm going to take a break. I think it's going to be a long evening. Thank you.

MR. HURDLE: Okay. Chair, the next testifier is Gylan Solay, followed by Lilith Martin.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MS. SOLAY: Aloha, everyone, Committee, Council. I think we're at a wonderful crossroads here talking about affordable housing. It's the future. It's not going to happen tomorrow. I agree with this lady. The traffic, the infrastructure, has to come first. I live in Kihei off of Kūlanihāko'i, and it's a disaster all the time. But if we're going to go down the road of affordable housing, I'd like to share a vision I have that's not just putting up buildings, it's thinking outside of the boxes. I would like to create a community, a healthy, living-environment for people. Life-affirming, connecting residents to the 'āina, and a sense of community. The housing would be small groups, maybe two, three-stories, rather than what we have now, but with food gardens and plant gardens that people can be part of a community and connect to the 'āina again. But most important, is that we can build these homes right here on Maui with hempcrete. And hempcrete is the most effective low cost product you can have. George Rixey built a house right on Sugar Beach. We can grow hemp here. It's fast-growing, as everybody knows. We can create manufacturing, we can create jobs and another industry here by using hempcrete. Number one, it's healthy; it's fire-retardant, which we know is very important; and it's mildew- and mold-resistant; and it's a breathable house. So, people with toxic environmental ill...you know, allergies, will have safe environments. But most important is connecting people in a community, where they can walk down a path, and see trees, and be part of a food garden. They can grow their own food. And we have so many organizations that are willing...that will be willing to help us. So, we have affordable...not only housing, but we have affordable construction. And we're adding to the industry to keep our residents and our youth on-island. And I feel, to me, that this is...this vision I have is so important because it's growth, it's low-cost, and it connects the culture, the 'āina, which has been sustainable to the Hawaiian culture for hundreds of years...we need to go back to the land and...and give people an environment. There's too much loneliness and separation. And these little pods, these little groups, will create a nice community that everybody wants to walk through, and will allow animals. People need their pets. So, I...I know it's a future thing, but it's a now thing at the same time, and . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . I'd appreciate your consideration.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Anybody have questions for the testifier? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Next testifier, please?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Lilith Martin, followed by Johnathan Martin.

MS. MARTIN: Hi, I'm Lilith Martin. I'm an eighth grader at Lokelani, and I am here to talk about the funding for the STEM programs. When I first came to Lokelani, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do, but a very great teacher, Mr. Sean, had really inspired me to join the STEM program. And ever since I've joined, it's just been like an absolutely life-changing experience, and I'm so grateful for all the funding we have. And one of my favorite things that really inspired me was the O'ahu STEM Conference. It was just a bunch of people from all over the island, you know, came and like people who are into engineering and all this fun stuff.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

And, you know, there were these great representatives who talked about STEM, and it was just so empowering to be around these people who are interested in what I'm now interested in. Yeah.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Member Paltin has a...wait, one moment. Member Paltin has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Martin, for your testimony. I just had a clarifying question. Did you know that the County had plenty openings for engineers?

MS. MARTIN: No, I didn't.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Now you know.

MS. MARTIN: Yeah. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Johnathan Martin, followed by Cailin Leaper.

MR. MARTIN: I first came to Lokelani for a STEMworks program, and I'm not sure what I wanted to do until this amazing teacher named Mr. Sean stretched my capabilities of design and creativity. Then after I made creativities, I also got to go on the O'ahu STEM trip, which really amazed me by seeing other people who are interested in other topics I like. That's it. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Mister...could you come back, please? Member Sinenci has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Johnathan. I just was curious. What did you design in your class?

MR. MARTIN: Games --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh.

MR. MARTIN: -- 3D prints, and all sorts of other stuff.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, great. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very impressive. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Cailin Leaper, to be followed by Marc Drehsen.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MS. LEAPER: Aloha, everyone. My name is Cailin Leaper, and I've been a student at Hawai'i Technology Academy for nearly four years now. From...over those four years, I have been part of the STEMworks program countless times. I have been able to, like some of the students in this audience, participate in programs such as the conference in O'ahu, a space day here on Maui, and a girls engineering day. Over those different experiences, I've been able to see all kinds of different careers, and learn from people who had the same ideas and aspirations at my age. Those same experiences have been able to teach me and guide me to the goals and aspirations I have for my own future. I've been able to explore so many career options, and learn what I wanted to do. The STEMworks program has been able to inspire us and give us a mindset that we can do and achieve whatever we set our minds on, whether it be something we accidentally stumbled into loving, or something we have wanted to do for as long as we can remember. This program has given us...so many young minds, including my own...the capability and resources to explore our passions. I've made so many core memories with my peers and even made some new friends along the way. All I know is that I have had the experience of getting to try out many career paths, and meet real people who are in the same position at my age. I hope that this program will continue to inspire and cultivate many young minds to come. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Well done. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Marc Drehsen, to be followed by Sophia Spaulding.

MR. DREHSEN: Hi. My name is Marc Drehsen, I have lived in Kihei for 35 years. I'm a member of the Kihei Community Association, although I'm speaking as a private citizen. I'd also like to emphasize how badly we need the North-South Collector Road. We found out how badly we need it when we had the Lahaina wildfire. We find out when we have our 100-year storm, which is virtually every year now. And when...if...if or when we have a hurricane, it can wash out huge sections of Kihei Road. We'll have gridlock on the highway, like we found out when we have the storms. We really need that North-South Collector Road to alleviate the traffic and to create...or to prevent an emergency and the deaths of 100 people like we had in Lahaina. So, please put that as a top priority. I can't emphasize enough how badly we need that. Also, there was mention of the speed bumps on Kenolio Highway. I live in North Kihei on Kenolio Highway, and instead of speed bumps, even speed tables would help. Because we have cars that drive 50 miles an hour in a 20 zone every day. You know, once in a while, but I mean, it's like every day, there's always somebody that's really speeding. And like the lady said, there's kids on their scooters, on their electric bikes. There's pedestrians on that road a lot, and it's very unsafe. We really need to figure out a way to slow people down. And I know you said there's emergency vehicles that use it, but still, you know, with speed tables, they

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

can still go over at a relatively fast pace, so, I...I think it's a lot more dangerous not to have the speed tables. So, thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Member Paltin has a question for you. One moment.

MR. DREHSEN: Question?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Drehsen. I know you said you're talking as a private citizen, not KCA, but I just was wondering like does KCA do the presentations from the Emergency Management Agency about the...the evacuation software? Because for Lahaina, they said that they would go by zones and things like that. And...or is KCA focusing on kūpuna and disabled evacuation in particular?

MR. DREHSEN: I'm unfamiliar with that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MR. DREHSEN: Yeah. I couldn't answer that question. Yeah. All right. Thanks a lot.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Sophia Spaulding, to be followed by Patti Domingo.

MS. SPAULDING: Aloha. My name is Sophia Spaulding. I'm a 7th grader. I've been with Hawai'i Technology Academy for two years, and I am testifying for the STEMworks program. A few months ago, I was invited to join the Girls Do Engineering thing we had here on Maui, and before that, I was like...I was not really sure what I was going to do for a career. And then shortly after that, my science teacher, Ms. Oh, invited me to go to the STEMworks conference in O'ahu. And now I'm really strongly considering a career in engineering or entrepreneurship. So...so, I would highly appreciate it if funding for the STEMworks continues so it can inspire more young innovators. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, I guess you've been...you've been hearing us, but when you're ready, we have a job for you at the County. Anybody has questions for her? Seeing none. Thank you.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Patti Domingo, to be followed by Jessie O'Neill-Prest.

MS. DOMINGO: Well, this is really last-minute for me. I just got a text. I'm so busy that I don't look at my text all the time, so I had to write down a lot of things really fast here. But Auntie Pawa already brought up some of the issues that I

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

was having a problem with because I would go down the street and I would count every pole that did not have a light. And I'm talking from Longs Drugs all the way up to North Kihei. It seems like...I don't understand why...if they put those blinking lights when you crossing the crosswalk, why don't they do it for us in the north end? We have none. And I've seen a lot of people whiz by, and I'm stopping, and going, hey, wait a minute, there's a person that's ready to cross, you know, and they don't seem to see it. Or...I mean, people are still having a hard time using the using the roundabout, but anyway...but the speed tables...tables, not bumps. If we don't...and we want the kind we have in Wailea, not the one you go, you know, and ruin our cars. The lights is important because we have...on Kūlanihāko'i, we have the light here, and the sidewalk is on the other side of the block. I think they need to repaint it and bring it on this side. Don't change the lighting, but just repaint it and bring it that side. But we do need more lights. It's really dark. And with the sand drifts, it sort of covered that area where you can walk or bike on. And people walking at night all wear dark clothes, and it's really hard to see them. Either change our speed limit from 30 to 25--I already told my granddaughter...because I lived here since 1971 and this place has gotten worse and worse, and I live here, I live on the drug street, Namau'u Street. We fought and took that street back, and it's gotten a lot better. And we need to bring the South Kihei Road to be just as good too. A lot of the kiawe trees are ready to fall--and they really have shallow rooting--so with all the storms that happened this time, really shouldn't have happened. We need all the gulches to be cleared out as well because we had a landscaping business, and we couldn't go to work because all the 'ōpala came on the...the road, and the cops wouldn't let us pass through. And with this last one here, with the big floods that happened, we try to put signs where...the way they can go up the road, but they send them all up Namau'u Street...but where are all these cars coming from? So, we try to ask the police officer to just reroute them back onto the other side, you know. But he says, no, that wasn't...wasn't important to him. When was the connector road going to be done? Because we're having more traffic problems flooding the South Kihei Road, as well as Pi'ilani. If we had the connector road, that would make an ease of the traffic. And I think the connector road has been there for...a problem has been there for a while, talked about it for a while, but nothing has been done. And I don't know how they propose something, but yet can't follow through to do it so the community can support you. And I like that other lady's idea about a community working together because that's what we need in our Kihei area. We need community support. We all have safety issues. We do see all those kids riding on those electric bikes without . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . helmets, you know? So, I'm...I'm more worried about safety. And that's what we need to do, is upgrade our safety. Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you. So, I have a question from Member Sinenci, then Member Paltin.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Ms. Domingo. I was just wondering if you knew about the Public Works COM Connect website, where you can go on, and you can post pictures, and you can report any traffic safety issues?

MS. DOMINGO: I can...I can do it myself? Yeah, I'll go down and write all the roads where it needs --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, you can just --

MS. DOMINGO: And...and --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- put it online.

MS. DOMINGO: -- another way, too --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And...and they'll get...they'll get all of your concerns.

MS. DOMINGO: Okay. Like on our street, coming out of Namau'u, there's two telephone poles, so it's really hard to look at traffic. You've got to ease out more, and the left side has two telephone poles. I don't understand why they have two.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: They like pictures, if you can post pictures.

MS. DOMINGO: Okay. Okay, I...I will. Because it has to do with safety.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin.

MS. DOMINGO: Okay, that's it.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Domingo. I just wanted to clarify. The poles did not have lights? Is it like a street light that's burnt out?

MS. DOMINGO: Yeah. No, no, there's no lighting.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh.

MS. DOMINGO: I can go...it's one light, and you count one, two, three, four, the fifth pole will have light. But if you're going down by...by the area down the more...South Kihei, they have light...lights almost on every pole. They have lots of lights.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So...so, it's not like a burnt-out light, that you just want them to add more lights?

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MS. DOMINGO: Add more lights, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. And...and what was the --

MS. DOMINGO: Because we have a lot of tourists also walking at night too.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: What was the area that didn't have enough lights? What streets?

MS. DOMINGO: From...from South Kihei Road. So, when you coming out from Longs Drugs, you start counting the lights and going north, you're going to count less and less lights. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Longs north.

MS. DOMINGO: If you just go on the road, where the road is, the connecting road, then you might have a light. So, something time...you can count four poles, and then you got a light.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, from Longs, north?

MS. DOMINGO: Going north.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, thank you.

MS. DOMINGO: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Jessie O'Neill-Prest, to be followed by Carolyn Manuel.

MS. O'NEILL-PREST: Thank you. Aloha. My name is Jessie O'Neill-Prest, and I'm the curriculum coordinator at Kihei Elementary School, and I'm also the 2025 Baldwin-Kekaulike-Kūlanihāko'i-Maui complex area Teacher of the Year. Thank you. I'm a long-time resident of Kihei, and also a parent, and I'm here to support the Department of Agriculture line-item grant for Grow Some Good, which is school gardens. I'm here to talk to you about something very amazing, our school gardens. They're not just patches of dirt, they're our outdoor classrooms, science labs, and places where we can learn some of life's most important lessons. Grow Some Good has been instrumental in the development and continued success of our school garden program. Our garden at Kihei Elementary was the first garden that Grow Some Good developed over 13 years ago, and today serves more than 740 students in grades pre-K through 5 at Kihei Elementary, and other schools in Maui County. Our partnership with

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

Grow Some Good allows us to have a full-time school garden. And this garden teacher works with us and every student at our school on a regular basis. In addition, Grow Some Good provides resources and supplies for vital student services, and helps us with achieving academic, rigorous standards and goals for our students. Why are school gardens so important? Well, I asked our students at Kihei Elementary. 2nd grader: "School gardens help us learn in hands-on ways. Instead of just reading about plants in a book, we get to plant seeds, watch them grow, and even taste the yummy vegetables we've grown ourselves. We learn about life cycles of plants, different types of soil, and the importance of taking care of our environment. It's like science, math, and nature all together." A 5th grader: "Our garden teaches us about patience and responsibility. We learn that things take time, and that we need to take care of our plants every day by watering them and making sure they have enough sunlight. These are life, important skills that can also help us focus and be responsible in the classroom." 4th grader: "School gardens also help us learn about healthy eating. When we grow our own food, we are more likely to try new things, especially the vegetables that we might not have tried before. We learn where our food comes from, and how much better fresh fruits and vegetables taste than the ones we buy in the store." So, here's the really exciting part, folks. Research shows that students who participate in school gardens do...often do better in school. They have higher grades in science and math, and they're more likely to graduate from high school. School gardens help develop important skills like problem-solving, critical-thinking, and communication, which is essential for lifelong learning. Our school's . . . (timer sounds). . . growth and achievement scores have risen steadily over the years, in part...in...due to Grow Some Good. I'd like to personally invite all of you to come and tour our school garden and see the impact that Grow Some Good has had on our school and our school community. Let's get our hands dirty, plant some seeds, and Grow Some Good. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none. I love your enthusiasm.

MS. O'NEILL-PREST: Thank you, thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Carolyn Manuel, to be followed by Bryan Chin.

MS. MANUEL: Aloha, Councilmembers, my name is Carolyn Manuel. For over a year, I've been a receptionist and the admin assistant at the Maui AIDS Foundation. And within that one year, I've witnessed peer compassion, and kindness, and joy from the employees towards clients. And I'm able to say this because I was once a client through the Second Judicial Circuit Program Service Unit, and started doing my community service at Maui AIDS Foundation. I came to Maui AIDS Foundation during my time at Maui Drug Court Program because I have a past history with drugs and alcohol, and constantly in and out of jail. I

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

had to do 50 hours of community service for Maui Drug Court, and during that time, I was able to meet the Executive Director, Linda Puppolo, who saw something in me aside from a criminal. Being...being a part of Maui AIDS Foundation team, I was able to learn more about who I am as a person, and the many strengths I have as a recovering addict, and how powerful my voice is for the addicts who walks into our office, and also for the ones who are still in Drug Court program. I'm able to show Drug Court clients who comes to our office to do their community service hours that the program they're in works. I organize and file papers for my Executive Director, Linda, I help our wonderful accountant when she needs me to make a bank run, and I also make sure all our staff has supplies that they need, and just make sure I'm available when they need an extra hand to make their jobs easier. I also work with client service...services by making sure their clients are checked in when they access our pantry, and just being there for our clients when they just need someone to talk to, and making sure, by the time they walk out our doors, they leave with a smile on their face. And if they came in with a problem, I make sure that they leave with a few answers to ease their minds. I work very closely with our preventions department because I'm...I'm the one our clients call to schedule an appointment for testing. And if we have anyone who has to do community service with us, or just wants to volunteer during their free time, I schedule HIPAA training sessions that they do with Tiare, who's one of the directors of preventions. And every month, we have pharmaceutical reps come to our office and we have lunch with them at our office, so I organize our lunch orders for the staff. I always open our doors with a big smile and positive energy of safety. I answer our phones with a welcoming voice to ensure that our clients feel safe and comfortable. And while I get the client's information, I make sure they know that everything is confidential. And while I'm scheduling their appointments, I don't repeat their information at all...I have them repeat their answers to me. I tell my story for the ones who come into our office and feels lost and confused about life. When they tell me how they're sick of the drug life they're in, I give them hope when they leave. Maui AIDS Foundation helps...helps . . . (timer sounds). . . me and so many others' lives change for the better. I still see a few clients who come to visit me that tells me how much I inspired them. While being at Maui AIDS Foundation, I was able to see firsthand on how quick the Foundation took to help our community when tragic [sic] happens on our island. Thank you for the continued funding and support for Maui AIDS Foundation.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. I don't see any hands for questions. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Bryan Chin, to be followed by Mana Shaw-Rodriguez.

MR. CHIN: Thank you. Hello. Hi, everybody. My name is Bryan Chin. I am the nurse practitioner on staff at Maui AIDS Foundation. I'm here today to express my gratitude for, and speak in strong support of, continued County funding for

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

HIV...HIV, and sexual health services, and also to just...to discuss a little bit about what I do. So, I started out as a case manager at Maui AIDS Foundation ten years ago, and I worked there throughout my schooling to get my doctorate in nursing practice. Thanks to your support, I'm able to run the free clinic on island. So, we provide HIV prevention and care, STI treatment for syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea, and connections to other health and social services. We serve individuals from all walks of life, but especially those who are noninsured, underinsured, and underserved. *(Bumps microphone)* Oh, excuse me. Many of our clients have few other options out there. For them, our clinic is not only accessible, it's a safe space, it's welcoming, and it's stigma-free. We prefer if a client makes an appointment beforehand, but we will also do our best whenever, and make time if there's a walk-in with immediate needs. We meet people where they are, both physically and emotionally, and we do everything we can to ensure they leave healthier and more empowered. My role is both medical and relational. I provide testing, treatment, and education, but I also try to build trust, especially with clients who have been dismissed or judged in other healthcare settings. The people we serve often face multiple barriers to care, and your continued support helps break down those barriers, including being able to add more clinical staff. For instance, we're...we're looking for, right now, a current RN, or another APRN to join the team, with thanks to your assistance too. So, anybody out there who wants to apply, go to our website, mauiaids.org. Your funding also allows us to remain responsive and relevant. We can offer free PrEP, that's pre-exposure prophylaxis, and free PEP, that's post-exposure prophylaxis, to keep our county's incidence...incidences of HIV at zero for the last year. We...we can keep life-saving...life-saving, no-cost HIV medication samples in supply, which help cover when patients experience gaps in care or insurance coverage...or in the case that they lose everything, which many of our clients experienced after the fires. Our free clinic is a public health solution that works, and we're proud to offer it. So, I just want to close by stating my strong support for continued County funding. And on behalf of our team...so many of us are here...mahalo for your partnership and trust. We are very, very grateful, and thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Next testifier, please?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Mana Shaw-Rodriguez, to be followed by Patricia Bradley.

MS. SHAW-RODRIGUEZ: Aloha, Councilmembers. My name is Mana Shaw-Rodriguez, and I'm the director...co-director of prevention and education at Maui AIDS Foundation. I've been with the agency for the past eight years. Maui AIDS Foundation, as you all know, is a nonprofit in Wailuku serving all of Maui County through case management of our HIV-positive clients, as well as prevention services. These free services include HIV, Hep-C, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and Chlamydia testing, harm-reduction through Narcan, hygiene kits, and our

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

syringe-exchange program, as well as providing food for those in need through partnerships with Maui Food Bank. I want to personally thank all of you for your continued support all over these...for the continued support over the last few years and years. Last fiscal year, MAF provided 469 individuals with...within Maui County HIV and STI testing. MAF provides a safe space for our clients to share their stories, situations, concerns, and risks. We thank all of our clients for coming in because they're in control of their own sexual health. Everything that the client says with us is confidential, and nothing gets shared with anyone. We empower our clients to learn ways to stay protected, whether it's within the correctional facility with concerns of Hepatitis-C transmission, or in our main office, or off-site locations, learning ways to lower the risk for HIV and other STIs. We meet...we meet every client where they're at. For some, they share everything, while others are more shy and...but after we provide our testing, our education, and our counseling, we give our clients an ease of mind because they feel safe with us. So many of our clients thank us for being so welcoming, helpful, and make them feel safe. Our free services are vital in keeping our Maui County community safe from new infections and viruses. We also partner with Maui Police Department, providing free testing through their CORE bus outreach, reaching our houseless communities through various locations around Maui. Again, we believe in accessibility and free services. We don't want to see barriers to care, and we will meet our clients where they are at to make them feel safe and heard. We want our clients to walk away feeling empowered, and to share their experiences with loved ones, family, and friends. Our clients also, because of you, thank us for this space that we can provide to them. Thank you for your time and your continued support. We couldn't have helped our Maui community without your continued support, and . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . we're so grateful. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Patricia Bradley, to be followed by Gordon Bradley.

MS. BRADLEY: Wow, I'm really short. *(Adjusting mic)* I'm a resident here to Kihei, and have been only since August 9th, 2000...2023. Up until that time, I lived in Lahaina. And the reason I want to talk to you is about the importance of being able to get away when there's a fire. We're very lucky to be here because we were in our condo, and didn't even know there...that the fire was close by because looking out our window, it was blue sky. We lived right by the Catholic Church, by the cemetery there. Blue sky. The winds were crazy, they had been crazy all day. No communications, of course. Our resident manager banged on our door, and when we opened it, I could see brown flying behind him, and he said, we have to get out right now. We would have been sitting there if he hadn't knocked on every door to make sure everybody got out. We put our puppy in her carrier, Gordon took another bag out, and I grabbed a canvas bag to throw some things in. When I got out to the parking lot, the...the black smoke was already at the

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

pool, 50 feet away, and there were red embers flying. And the puppy's carrier and a bag was there on the...on the ground, and Gordon and the puppy weren't anywhere to be seen. So, I screamed for him, yelled...grabbed things and put them in the car, and then he came up to me and said...she's fine, I want to tell you that right now. He came up to me and said she ran, and I couldn't catch her. So, I said, get in the car. He got in the car. We moved through the driveway, And then I said, which way did she go? We were told to go north, and because she went south, we went south. When we got to Dickinson, there she was, that little black and white dog, running as fast as she could. And she ran all the way down to Front Street, and I got out of the car to find...to get her, and I got her. We ran into another girl with a dog and two bags, and she...and I said to her, where are you going, honey? And she said, I have to go to Spanky's to meet my boyfriend. It's...the fire is coming by on 'Āina Nalu. So, we...I said, get in the car. So, we drove down to Spanky's. We were going to go north because my daughter lives in Kahana. We didn't go north because our dog saved our lives, and this other girl saved our lives as well. Access to escape when there's a fire is imperative. We're standing here because of...of amazing accidents of...of luck, and the fact that, in that direction, we could get out. My neighbors ended up in the . . . (timer sounds). . . ocean. So, we need those connections. We need to be able to escape in a disaster.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for sharing your story. Emergency exits. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier, please.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Gordon Bradley, to be followed by Sean Yannell.

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you. My name is Gordon Bradley. I want to talk about the proposed ban on short-term rentals. To start off with, I want to say my wife and I have never owned any rentals, any short-term, or any other kind of rentals on Maui. We owned a condo here in Kihei now, and we have a burnt out one in...in Lahaina, which is going to be a while. So, the issue before the Council very soon is going to be a proposal from the Mayor that he put out in May of last year that the Minatoya list of 600 and...6,170 short-term rentals on...in West, and also down here in Kihei would be...would be eliminated. You had a question?

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, you know, the short-term vacation rental bill is not in the budget, but if you would tie it to our budget, you could keep on testifying.

MR. BRADLEY: I...I can tie it to the budget. So, the question is...I'll get to the second part of the question is, and this is why it impacts the budget. The University of Hawai'i did a study connected to...or directed by the Council on March 25th or March 31st that came out. And part of that said was that if the Mayor's proposal were adopted, the drop in taxes to Maui would be 700...\$75 million a year. So, \$60 million a year would be in a decrease in property taxes, and \$15 million a year would be in the...in the decrease in the GAT [sic] and the TAT things. That...I

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

understand that's...bill is going to be discussed after this. So, the question would come up, when you have an emergency situation where you have to take \$75 million out of the budget, if that were adopted. Now, the way it was...the study put out by the University of Hawai'i, and in the handout--I have the links to this, and I have copies for anyone that wants it--their...their estimation is that the value of condos on Maui will decrease by 20 to 40 percent if this is adopted. Their average figure is 25 percent. Now, that's already happened. Some of the Minatoya properties, their condo prices have already gone down that far. However, there was some confusion about does that mean just the Minatoya projects? And I called the director of the study, and he told me that is not the case. The analysis is that every single condo in Maui will go down by an average of 25 percent if this is adopted. And the reason that is happening, as I described in short, but the...the full document describes in detail, is that there may be as many as 6,000 condos, that these ones that are no longer allowed to be short-term rentals will be thrown on the market all at one time. And this is going to take us back to 2008, when we had many, many sellers, and very few buyers. Generally, on Maui, there's only 173 new listings a . . . (timer sounds). . . month. This would put 3,000 out. One of the questions was (applause interrupts) --

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: 30 seconds.

MR. BRADLEY: One...one of the questions is about what is the impact on rentals because that's...the Mayor is very, very interested in this, and the analysis here is that the benefit of...of the short-term rental will be to decrease the value of rents because value of all the properties will go down 20 percent. But the benefit will go to mainly high-end...people with high income because the average condo in Maui is 925,000. So, if that...the rent on that, if that goes down, it's only going to be available to really rich people . . . (timer sounds). . . to take advantage of that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. All right. Next testifier, please.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Sean Yannell, to be followed by Alan Lloyd.

MR. YANNELL: Good evening. My name is Sean Yannell, I'm a teacher for Computer Science and Media at Lokelani Intermediate. I'm also the site coordinator for the STEMworks program, but from MEDB. Yeah. So, I've always had a passion for teaching students and showing them how to be inspired, and, you know, responsibly use technology. What really drew me to STEMworks is how it really...it levels the playing field for our students. It gives every student, regardless of their skill level or economic background, access to the exact same tools, real challenges, and real futures. One moment I'll never forget is when I took the took the students to the STEM Conference on O'ahu a couple years ago,

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

it was one of my students' first time leaving Maui. And we walked into the Hawai'i Convention Center, and he just looked around and he said, this has to be the biggest room in the entire world. And it's like those types of opportunities that are really priceless, right? With STEMworks, we're constantly introducing students to careers and technologies they might...may not have realized were available. I remember watching the Deadpool and Wolverine movie over the summer, and at the end, there was a little thing that said, thanks to the County of Maui, right? So, I researched it, and I saw that one of the...the visual effects department was from...Capital T was the company, and they were based here on Maui. So, I contacted them, and I reached out to them, and they were able to allow my students to interview them, and ask them questions about what it is to...to work for Marvel. And it's that type of opportunity that shows our students these incredible things are happening right here in our backyard. Even if they have to, you know, go to college to learn these skills, they can still come back here, and bring that expertise and skills back to our island. I grew up on Maui Upcountry, and I know firsthand how isolating it can sometimes feel, but programs like STEMworks change that for these kids. They connect our students to the wider world, and more importantly, they help us...help our students see that they can be leaders in that world. Yeah, but we need to nurture our children and inspire them to lead. STEMworks does that. And it opens the doors, builds confidence, and shows our keiki that they can be innovators, creative, and leaders here on Maui County. Thank you guys.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow. Thank you for sharing that.

MR. YANNELL: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Sinenci has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Mr. Yannell, for your testimony this evening. As a teacher, I was just wondering. You...you mentioned that they go and...and come back. Are...do you know which colleges that...that we may be funneling some of these younger...the students --

MR. YANNELL: You --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: -- away?

MR. YANNELL: -- you know, we...I'm...I'm actually newer to the program. I've started maybe three years ago, so my intention is to get this to happen. And I want to keep continuing to work with it. And I see this pipeline that something that can happen. But at this point, it's still starting, it's kind of a vision I have.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, or...or if they're staying on-island, and...and continuing --

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. YANNELL: Yeah, since I'm doing intermediate school, my...my first students are still in high school.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MR. YANNELL: But they're trying to continue it, and I believe we're going to be continuing it in Kūlanihāko'i, so we can just continue this STEM and STEAM going all the way through.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you.

MR. YANNELL: Yeah, of course.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Excellent.

MR. YANNELL: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. O'Neill [sic]. So, my clarifying question is like do you guys ever sit around and say like how would you traffic engineer a solution to Kūlanihāko'i Bridge when it floods, or anything like that?

MR. YANNELL: You know, we have...we're...at this point, we're thinking in smaller systems...like we're looking at our campus, and we just got...we were talking with the VP earlier today about ways to make it not as muddy. Because when you walk on the campus, it...you know, it gets...when it rains, it gets really muddy. And we have been looking at these designs to actually make molds for...3D print molds for the cement, and you can actually make like crisscrossing things, and put those in the...in the ground, and it actually reduces the mud. So that's a new project. But I actually I do like... (*bumps mic*) I'm sorry. We're so focused on our own campus, but I...I think that's a really interesting idea to actually branch out and...and...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Let them know we're waiting --

MR. YANNELL: Yeah, I --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- at the County to solve --

MR. YANNELL: Yeah, right?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- all these problems we talk about.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. YANNELL: I need to...I got to put the put that in our Google classroom. I'll put a little...a link. All right.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

MR. YANNELL: Thank you so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MR. YANNELL: Okay. All right. Thank you guys so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Sheena Bellavance, to be followed by Mishelle Oh. Oh, excuse me, sorry. Alan Lloyd, to be followed by Sheena Bellavance.

MR. LLOYD: Scared me there a bit. So, I can get my nerves out here. Okay. Aloha. My name is Alan Lloyd. I live in Wailuku, and I'm a tenant [sic] with the...the Maui Tenant and Workers Association. I'd like to testify on some issues, and ask the Council to not cut our budget, but to increase the property taxes on nonowner-occupied property assessed at \$2 million and above. Yes, thank you. So, I have six issues we're concerned about. One, the need for financial assistance for rent, utilities, and basic needs. So, we're asking the Council to increase the rent assistance and food assistance, and delete the barriers to rental assistance. If your income is less than 80 percent of the median AMI, you get rental assistance. If it's above, you don't. So, rents are too high, and we need rental and financial assistance. You all are familiar with the ALICE households, they're struggling to make ends meet. So how about if we take the half a million proposed by the Mayor for three adult sports events, and put it towards our local people? Okay. Number two, rents are still gouging tenants...1,900 for a one-bedroom. And I remember Chair Lee was interviewed, and...and she was concerned about the County vacancies. I think there were 600 vacancies. And if I remember correctly, the person on staff told her that it's...it's too expensive to live on Maui. So, if you want to fill those vacancies, try rent stabilization. Third, property taxes are low on Maui. We've had a speaker talk about that, and many with expensive homes don't pay income taxes. And why is that? So, many property owners with property valued over \$2 million don't live full-time on Maui, and their principal residence is in another state, so they don't pay Hawai'i income taxes. Where most of you pay property and income taxes, they don't pay income taxes. So, that's unfair to locals that live here who pay income and property taxes. So, we're asking you to please...please increase property taxes for nonowner-occupied property valued over \$2 million. Yes. Number four, create a way for nonowner-occupied properties--I'm probably going to say that too many times--valued at \$10 million or above to be taxed at a higher rate. I know Councilmember Paulson...Paltin asked me about that last time. And so, there is a...there can be a way to tax at a higher rate. I don't know that way, but there

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

can be. The Mayor's proposing an increase in tax rates, fees on property owners, in case you all didn't know that. Property owners, there's a 9 percent proposal . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . by the Mayor to increase wastewater. Those nonowner...those properties valued at \$10 million can make that up. Last, is there money in the budget for tenant relocation assistance? Many of you probably never heard about that. That's if a tenant is evicted, it's...in other places, they get what's called relocation assistance. Well, by the way, according to HRS Chapter 111, which is called Assistance to Displaced Persons, if a County Code . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . Enforcement declares a property uninhabitable, and the tenant has to leave, the County is required to pay the tenant financial relocation assistance. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions for the testifier? Thank you. Seeing none. Next testifier, please.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Sheena Bellavance, to be followed by Mishelle Oh.

MS. BELLAVANCE: Good evening. My name is Sheena Bellavance, and I'm here to testify for continued support and budgeting of MEDB's STEMworks program. I first got involved in the program as a parent, but soon found myself with my own class to lead. So, I currently coach afterschool robotics, but also engage in other STEM-related activities with the students. And for those who don't know, STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and math. And while it might not be a strong suit for everyone, let us please continue to provide those resources for those that it is. The STEMworks program is a welcoming and multifaceted program that has a variety of classes and activities to meet students' needs and abilities. At Lokelani, we offer robotics, 3D printing, video game design, entrepreneurship, and competitive gaming. And before you wonder what we need competitive gaming for, just know that there are world championships for competitive Excel spreadsheets, where the prize money for this year totals over \$60,000. We don't play Excel yet, but just know that there are all kinds of STEM opportunities in the future with skills they build today. Students are given several opportunities for career exploration, including Introduce A Girl To Engineering Day--which I think some of the girls talked about--Excite Camp, a partnership with Maui Medical, and many more. They're also able to attend a conference on O'ahu, which they get really excited about, in which...in which they can connect with industry professionals and attend professional development classes relevant to their interests. Many of the kids look forward to that trip, especially as a reward for their hard work and dedication to learning. Investing in keiki-related STEM activities is an investment in our future. These are the kids that will lead us into the next century. They will begin...they will be the engineers safely developing our towns, tech wizards keeping our computing systems up-to-date, scientists protecting the 'āina and making medical discoveries, and mathematicians holding them all together. It is important to continue investing in our own children, in hopes that they will utilize

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

their talents here on Maui. I strongly believe this is a program worth continued funding. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Paltin has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Bellavance. So much times I wanted to clap, but...I know...I just wanted to clarify. I mentioned plenty of times we have openings in engineering, but did you know we have even more openings in our IT department?

MS. BELLAVANCE: I have seen them, yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Just clarifying, in case any of your kids wanted to come. We'd pick them up like that.

MS. BELLAVANCE: Yeah. So, as long as we keep investing in them now, then hopefully they want to stay here, and we retain that talent here on Maui. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I'm just saying it's not quid pro quo, but I'll do that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Mishelle Oh, to be followed by Diane Colton.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: After Diane, I think we'll take a break. It's almost 7:45. Thanks.

MS. OH: I promise we didn't offer extra credit for those keikis to testify for this program, but I think it does speak a volume about this program, for a pre-teen to show up after school hours to testify how impactful these programs were. And yeah, for a moment, before even I introduced myself--actually...okay. My name is Mishelle Oh, I work for Hawai'i Technology Academy, and I teach 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students for science. And yeah, before I even start, I want to ask you guys a question, to close your eyes for a bit, and just picture a scientist in your mind. Yeah, all...all of you guys can. And many of us, when we think of scientists, we think of this male with the crazy hair and a white coat holding some chemical, right? This was actually research that was done, "Draw your own scientist." And unfortunately, out of 5,000 students, only 1 percent of students actually imagined a female scientist. And I actually asked that students today in my classroom to picture a scientist, and maybe five students pictured a female scientist, and they were some of the students who spoke today, and they're females. And at STEMwork, offers something like Girls Do Engineering, where these female workers in science, and engineering, and math, and all different fields, coming to speak as a mentor, and to say to the students, you can, and there is a pathway, but it doesn't speak to only females. There's lot of programs that STEMwork offers that all the students talked about, and all the teachers talked about. And I have never met so many passionate like just educators that

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

I could just text at 5:00 a.m. saying, hey, what flight are we taking? And they will answer in the next five minutes...or us coming back from O'ahu Conference, tired at 8:00 p.m. and asking, hey, what's the plan tomorrow? You know, and as a teacher who like taught only one subject grade to now teaching physical science, to life science, to earth and space science, it was very overwhelming. But when STEMwork came saying, hey, we are with you, and we'll run with you. And they have enriched just the curriculum that I offer to the students, bringing all those ideas that they were talking about, from entrepreneurship to engineering, design, building process and different various lab. They have a lending program...I mean, lending library that just offers us a free resource, simple as like earth magnets to all the way 3D printing. So, all the hearings I heard is like a lot of civil engineering things as well. So, you guys are not just investing in, you know, one program, but it is really investing for a future and bettering our community. And yeah, thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any more questions? Seeing none. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Diann Colton.

MS. COLTON: Thank you. Hello. Thank you for this opportunity. I'm going to go off what I was going to say just briefly. I think we're all intertwined here, and I see one common thread is that people are asking and needing both...whether it's scientific, educational, health...any kind of service here requires money and funding; is that correct? Am I...am I not off-topic? So...and if we were thinking of our future and the...these wonderful students who...and teachers who have spoken--and I have two, a 10-and-a-half-year-old and a 12-year-old that attend here, grandchildren--it's really, really important. But the one thing that I think links us all together, and that I don't see another group of, are multi-millionaires that are buying up our properties at a much...I don't know, let's say 5, 10, 15, \$20 million. We're looking at Makena-Wailea right now, okay? This comes down to funding. The people here who have spoken up for property taxes being low. It's great. It keeps people in their homes, and it keeps security. But what everybody needs here is a home in order to proceed with their dreams, and their plans, and for you to...for you to pay for. And I've been to these year, after year, after year, and it's the little people begging for services. And our...I see by the tears here of where the tax...property taxes are stopped, and that's--I believe at \$3 million, I don't have my glasses on--that's the top tier. And that's for owner-occupied, nonowner-occupied...I think it's a little higher for nonowner-occupied--and it just stops. And whether you live in the state or not, I believe the UHERO report was about 60, 40, 60 percent are not living on-island--you can look up the report, it'll show you how many--and not only not paying sales tax...or I mean...yeah, sales tax to go everyday goods we're all paying for, poor or not poor, we go to the store, we're paying GET tax on that. Okay. So, the people who live here who need the services are not...are having to endure begging for money, when our multi-millionaires--pick a number, anything over

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

this amount that's proposed by you--that there's only two...two areas that have not increased on this little list here, and they've remained all zeros. You're not increasing the taxes on anything over \$4 million, and there's 5, 10 . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . 15, \$20 million...it's on here, so I don't know. And there's 25 million. I pulled an MLS list. There's 35, 40, \$45 million properties. They need to pay their share, and if they don't live here, they need to pay more. Period. For the rest of us. That's it.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Cook has a...oh...

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for your testimony. Just for my clarifying question, the tiers, like when it stops, if you have a \$15 million property, you pay the first tier, the second tier...anything over \$3 million, then you're paying the higher tax rate for all of that.

MS. COLTON: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, a \$15 million home is going to pay the third tier...the \$15 million home, anything over 3 --

MS. COLTON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- so the \$12 million is going to be charged at the really higher tier.

MS. COLTON: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, they don't start...they don't stop at \$3 million.

MS. COLTON: Right. I think it's like --

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: It's just that they...at \$3 million and up, you have to pay the higher tax rate, which can become --

MS. COLTON: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- high.

MS. COLTON: It shows here at 15...\$15. I guess I'm proposing there will be a couple more tax tiers that are even higher.

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

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: It would be --

MS. COLTON: Who says --

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: -- \$15 per thousand for \$12 million.

MS. COLTON: Um-hum. And what about for 25, 35, 40 million?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Then, it would be...if it was 25 million, it would be \$15 for the 22 million. The first three is at a lower tier.

MS. COLTON: Right.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: So, if there's \$100 million home, \$97 million would be at the \$15 per thousand.

MS. COLTON: Right. Which is the same as the 3 million.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yeah.

MS. COLTON: I'm...I'm just proposing, change...change it. L.A. County has a wealth...wealth property tax.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: So, Member Rawlins-Fernandez wants to ask you a question.

MS. COLTON: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha.

MS. COLTON: Hi.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony. I am...I'll finish the graphics --

MS. COLTON: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- that I'm designing, but I'm...and I'll be posting it on my...my Facebook page, so that others can understand --

MS. COLTON: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- how our real property tax works. It's progressive, as Member Cook said. So, an owner-occupied property valued at 5 million would pay the first million, which is \$1.80 for FY '25 rate, which would be 1,800. The next tier at...for the next \$2 million at \$2 for RPT rate would be 4,260, and then the final 1.7 million at 3.25 real property tax rate would be 5,500 for a total of 11,585, which is 2 percent...and the industry standard is 1 percent across. And this is .2 percent. So, to clarify, are...are you...are you asking us to increase to the industry standard?

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MS. COLTON: Yes. And I think Alan and someone else spoke about it, that the...the very wealthy, I don't...again, pick a number. There should be another tier, both owner-occupied and nonowner-occupied. Yes, above the industry standard.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And to clarify, so you're saying there are like \$20 million properties. So, \$20 million would pay, at an owner-occupied rate after the 300,000 owner...homeowner exemption, would pay \$60,335 if someone owned a \$20 million property. So, you're saying that's not enough?

MS. COLTON: No, it's not. Not --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for that clarification.

MS. COLTON: No.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin.

MS. COLTON: And then...and then, take unowner-occupied [sic] as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Ms. Paltin [sic]. No relation. I just wanted to clarify. So, the bottom line, what you want to...you're asking us to do, is tax the rich?

MS. COLTON: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Because I think we're only allowed three tiers by the software or something, and if we make the third tier like say, to 20 million, or 50 million, we bring in less than when it's at 3 million. So, you want us to bring in the more, right?

MS. COLTON: Well, let's put it all up to a vote. I mean, let...let the common people vote on it because I would say most people...change the software...and yes, that would be the answer. Yeah. And...and --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. COLTON: -- just to let you know, L.A. County --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MS. COLTON: -- the County did vote on a wealth tax for wealthy properties, and it held up three times in court. If it had not been for that wealth tax on luxury

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

properties--it's called the luxury property tax--those people wouldn't have recovered from their fire. And they are faster than us, by the way.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. I mean, we can't change the software in -- it'll take time.

MS. COLTON: Maybe some of these IT kids can help.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I wish.

MS. COLTON: If they have a home.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I hope. Thank you.

MS. COLTON: Sure.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, I want to take a break...thank you. Oh, how many more testifiers do we have for the Members and our testifiers' information?

MR. HURDLE: We have 20 more.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Twenty-one [sic]? Okay. So, with your permission, I'm going to take a 10-minute break. So, we'll come back at 8:05. Thank you. . . .(gavel). . .

RECESS: 7:55 p.m.

RECONVENE: 8:05 p.m.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . .(gavel). . . Welcome back to the Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee. Thanks for allowing us to take a short break. We have a policy that we...or practice, I should say, that we allow children and kūpuna to testify first, and we try to make a note of it when you register. And we...we would like to ask a mom and her child to come and testify now to go back...I mean, to be able to go home and go to bed early for school. So, next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: The next testifier is Susel James, to be followed by John Laney.

MS. JAMES: Hi. My name is Susel James, and I'm the Kihei Little League president. And I came here in...in asking for more support for funding for Parks and Rec, and also the Police. So, with Parks and Rec, I know there's...thank you, Gabe, for showing me all that information over there in the books. And it looks like, you know, there is a lot of money going to the fields, but I would specifically encourage for more money to be going to the Kalama Park fields at the baseball fields. So, I...we do have a lot of needs at the park currently. Our bathroom

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

situation, on one side of the field, we're only provided porta potties. We're not allowed to use the pavilion bathrooms, you know, for certain...for whatever reasons they have. However, the porta potties are always vandalized. And when it rains, it floods, right? Well, not floods, but the water sits right in front, and so the kids can't even access the bathrooms. We haven't had a hand-washing station in who knows how many years, so everyone's using the bathroom at the park and not washing their hands. You can, you know, be okay with that or not. I am not. You know, there's trees...there's a really big tree that hangs over our batting cage. And we're all volunteers in my organization, no one's getting paid for it, but it causes a lot of mess and debris. And, you know, I'm short-handed with volunteers already, so it would be nice to just have more support on landscaping and, you know, clearing out things that affect our organization, so that way I can focus on the kids and the program and, you know, I should...not focus on bathroom needs. That's something that, you know, I hope the...the County can take care of, so I can just take care of the kids in the program. Another thing--oh, I wrote down because I came so last minute, I'm sorry--but another thing that I would like...oh, are...you know, the bleachers, they're wobbly. I've...you know, I sent photos and videos, like you literally can just lift the...the...the bleacher seat up, you know? So, it's not getting fixed. Our scoreboards, none of them work. It would be nice to have working scoreboards. There's three of them, but they're not working right now. Another issue is permits. And I think everyone has problems with this, but I think to fix a lot of the permit problem, it would be nice to have some sort of like system, an online system, where everyone can see who's using it... . . .(timer sounds). . . ooh, that was really...sorry. Who's using it? And, you know, if they want to name an anonymous, you know, you can just say anonymous. But that way, it just kind of gives every organization like oh, they're using it, or they...so we're not like stepping on each other's toes. That way we can...like, more communication would be very helpful. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. And sorry to keep you waiting.

MS. JAMES: Oh, no, that's . . .(inaudible). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Here's Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you for your testimony. My clarifying answer [sic]...when you say permit...or clarifying question. It's getting late.

MS. JAMES: I would love to have an answer, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: My clarifying question is, when you say permits, you mean like park use permits, scheduling it?

MS. JAMES: Yeah.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Not building permits?

MS. JAMES: No, yeah. Park use permits. Yes. Because actually, our permits just got yanked from us for...I don't know why. So, it would be nice to know who...who got it instead of me, so we can...I don't know, chit chat.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. We'll bring that...I'll bring that to the department's attention. That's an interesting idea.

MS. JAMES: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: And that...I can see the logic in it. Thank you for your testimony.

MS. JAMES: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. So, next testifier...and as they're coming up, I just want to say, we're going to...we have a hard stop at 10:00, and so we need to do our testimony and be...clean up. So, 9:30, we're going to stop this meeting. So, let's talk fast.

MR. HURDLE: Chair. The next testifier is John Laney, to be followed by Dezireen Austin.

MR. LANEY: Hello. She's passing out a handout that I'll need you to look at as I testify. *(pause)* I'm starting with the handout. So, my name is John Laney, and I'm the president of the Kihei Community Association, and I am speaking on behalf of KCA. If you would turn to page 2, you will see one of the issues facing South Maui, which is that it is one big cul-de-sac. There are only two roads for the 40,000-plus people that live and work in South Maui, and that is the Pi'ilani Highway and the South Kihei Road. If you turn to page 3, you'll see one of the big issues coming our way is that there are 7,000-plus new homes in the South Maui pipeline over the next ten-plus years to be built. It's...if you look on the left...on the right in gray, they're all listed out. We've added them up. It's over 7,000 homes. We cannot add 7,000-plus cars to the Pi'ilani. It will turn it into a parking lot. So, we have a couple solutions that we'd like to propose. And today, I want to talk about the...on page 8, if you'd flip to that, it is the Kihei Mauka Collector Road. And if you...if you look at this, it is the line in purple that goes from Kanani Road in the south all the way up to Veterans Highway in the north. It goes mauka of the high school, and the area in red is where some of the developers are building some of those homes, and they have agreed to build that part of the road. What we need is for the County and the State to build the connecting part in the north to the Veterans Highway, and in the south to Kanani Road. So, if there could be money in the budget for the planning stages of these phases so that we can get this moving over the next several years as we're experiencing this growth. And what I'd like you to know is not only will it

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

give us another egress point for South Maui and improve traffic flow, but we have talked to some people at the County, and they have said, well, the State will build it, and they'll pay for it. We've talked to some people at the State. They have said . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . the County should build it, and the County should pay for it. So, you need to get that kind of worked out. But if we can get a working group to get this thing going, it will help all of South Maui. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Anybody have questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Dezireen Austin, to be followed by Sophia [sic] Sellers.

MS. AUSTIN: Thank you. Aloha, kākou. My name is Dezireen Austin. I have notes for one of...one of my two points. So, my first point, I'll go quickly. I'm a STEMworks educator and program coordinator for Samuel E. Kalama Intermediate School Upcountry. I believe that continuing to fund STEMworks programs in our schools is important because these...these programs provide opportunities that our keiki may not otherwise have. STEMworks fills in the gap we currently have in our school system with the lack of STEM electives. Keeping STEMworks alive helps our children to identify and develop skillsets which are sorely needed on island with health careers, technology development, programing professionals, and more. It is common knowledge that it is hard to keep our children here in the islands after graduating college. One moment please. I got to go to my photos, sorry. If we can engage them early on with the myriad opportunities that STEM-related careers can provide, we can build the foundation for our island's economies to grow and diversify, and that will just strengthen us overall. My second point is, I am very concerned when I hear of luxury development projects, or other types of projects, and I don't believe we have good infrastructure in place, which, thanks to my...person that preceded me, he's already given you all of the information that you should already have, and already know about. I'm concerned because before the Lahaina fires, we had the Kihei...North Kihei fire, where our neighborhood was blacked out with smoke and trucks. It was very scary. And for us to exit our home--and fortunately, I knew of a little back route to go down back to the highway--but by the time we got there, after maybe 30 minutes of the signal to go, it was like we couldn't go anywhere. The freeways were closed on both ends. So, we had a cat, a dog, my two children, my husband, and a truck, and baskets of our belongings, and pictures we ripped off the walls. And we were there until midnight, not knowing where we could go because the shelters were also full. And I can't even imagine the horror that West Maui went through. But reflecting on those two events, the fact that I...I don't see proper infrastructure being planned is very concerning, and I really wish you would take that to heart before you accept any luxury program proposal. I want to take care of the kama'aina and the kānaka first, our residents first, and then from there we can move and make a safe place for more...for others. But we need to take care of ourselves first, please. Thank you.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Sophia [*sic*] Sellers, to be followed by Krishna Taroc.

MS. SELLERS: Aloha, everyone. My name is Sophie Sellers, and I'm the special projects and operations coordinator for Grow Some Good. I'm so grateful to be here with you today, inviting you to see how your continued support can nurture a more resilient, connected future for our islands. As many of you know already, we're a nonprofit dedicated to strengthening local agriculture, and ensuring access to nutritious, affordable food for our community. We do that through school gardens and a community farm system and agroforest. We currently have ten garden coordinators that are directly in the schools, working with our children. And those are supported by two program support members that go between multiple schools, as well as are in our Community Food Systems Garden, which is open to the public at the YMCA. If any of you have not been there, you should go. At Grow Some Good, we weave together food production and community engagement, growing healthy crops while cultivating tight-knit neighborhoods from childhood all the way through adulthood. These schools and community gardens are living lessons in stewardship, showing us how to care for the environment, and honor the balance between people and nature. But it's not just about growing food. It's about rediscovering the joy of what...of using what grows well here on Maui. This year, we've been able to bring that joy to life through kid and adult cooking classes. Participants of all ages learn to cook with Maui-grown produce coming directly from their school gardens and our community farm system. Through them, we're planting the seeds for a more resilient local food system from seed to table. We're proud to be included as part of the Maui County Food and Nutrition Security Plan. Our ongoing programs directly align with that plan's goals, improving access to nourishing, culturally-relevant foods, and supporting local producers here on-island. By nurturing hands on agricultural education, and distributing over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce, and 3,000 student-grown plant starts this year, we're helping to cultivate the next generation of food stewards while strengthening community ties. Together with the County and other organizations' efforts, we're working towards a Maui where everyone has access to healthy, affordable food that's grown in our own backyard. Your support has been the heartbeat of this work. County funding helps our garden coordinators and our program supports attend these spaces. Without them, we cannot guide the hands-on learning that brings together our students and our community. It's what allows us to expand our reach further, by adding new school garden coordinators and staffing our workshop hours at our farm. With your continued investment, we can continue to nurture these efforts and reach even more of our community. In the end, our gardens are so much more than places that grow food. They're spaces of healing, learning, and belonging for our community. Through our mission to strengthen local agriculture and ensure access to nutritious, affordable food, we're growing not just crops, but

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

stronger, more connected communities across Maui. They stand as proof of what we can do together...building a future where every child has access to nutritious food, where families can rediscover their ties to the land, and where we can all come together to help our island thrive. Thank you so much for your ongoing support of Grow Some Good as we cultivate this vision of a resilient, flourishing Maui. Thank you for helping us continue to grow some good in our neighborhood.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier, please.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Krishna Taroc, to be followed by Gertrudes Holder.

MS. TAROC: Aloha, Councilmembers. My name is Krishna Taroc, and I work with Maui AIDS Foundation. Before anything else, I just want to take this time to say thank you for supporting our programs, and for funding us. I started with MAF in 2021 as an intern. I loved what I was doing during my internship, and the work our organization does to keep our community safe. So, when my bosses asked me if I wanted to join the Prevention and Education team, I immediately said yes. Tonight I will be talking to you about one of our programs that is providing HIV, Hepatitis-C, STI, and harm-reduction education, and HIV and Hep-C testing at the Maui Correctional Community Center, or MCCC. This program is dear to my heart, as I used to have a family member who was incarcerated. Every week, we provide education to the inmates so they can empower themselves and keep themselves while incarcerated. With every visit, we leave them with the necessary knowledge and tools so they don't get infected with HIV, Hep-C, and other sexually-transmitted infections. We highly encourage them to not share any personal items, or get any unsterile tattoos. Once they go through the education class, they have the option to get tested for both HIV and Hep-C. The tests that we provide are both 20 minutes, and they can get the result that same day. Many get scared during this process, but they usually feel more grateful once they find out their status. If any of them test positive for either HIV or Hep-C, or even both, we refer them to the nurses at MCCC for confirmatory blood draw. If treatment is not provided while they are at the facility due to the release of the inmate, we will then take care of them, refer them to the providers who can get...who can help them with their treatment. Once they get released, and if they visit our office, we provide a \$20 incentive testing for them. They can get a \$20 gift card from us. We also give them safe-sex kits, supplemental food items, hygiene kits, and Naloxone. If they want further testing, we can also do Syphilis, Gonorrhea and Chlamydia. If their health insurance gets suspended while they are incarcerated, we also have a health insurance navigator that can help...that can help them. Ever since I have been part of this program, we've had couple success stories from testing for the first time for HIV and Hep-C, to getting a positive result and getting treatment while still incarcerated, to getting treated again because of reinfection. I can tell you more success stories and how great this program is, but I will save that for

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

another time. For now, I just want to say mahalo again, and it is because of your support that we can continue helping our underserved population and keep our programs running. Agyamanak.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Fantastic. Any questions? Seeing none. Good job, Maui AIDS Foundation. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Gertrudes Holder, to be followed by Tiare Sua.

MS. HOLDER: Good evening. I'm just here to thank all of you. My name is Gertrudes Castillo Holder, I'm a health insurance navigator for Maui AIDS Foundation. And maybe a lot of you may not know, but we offer health insurance services to the entire community, and not just our HIV and STI clients. So, I am...I...you can actually find me with the Maui Police Department CORE bus at Ho'aloa Park or Kalama Park, depending on where the Maui Police Department decides to offer services. So, every Monday we are in...you know, right now, we're in Kalama Park for a couple of months so that we can service the houseless community here in Kihei. I also wanted to share that I...on Wednesdays, I am at Kāko'o Maui, and Thursdays at the Lahaina Resilience Center. So, I'm...you know, I've really come to love the people in Lahaina, and there's a group of nonprofit, you know, workers that occupy a corner of the Resilience Center. And we...we hand over clients to our SNAP person, housing person, and I offer the health insurance piece. So, if you have family members or community members that need help, please touch base with us, and we'll be happy to offer those services. I also want to share one success story. We had an uninsured client that ended up in the ER at Maui Memorial Hospital. And this person was referred to Dr. Bryan Chin, our clinician. This person, unfortunately, had a stage of neurosyphilis where he...he was seeing sparkles and stars in his eyes, and would have gotten blind if Dr. Bryan had not helped him through. This person was uninsured, so Bryan helped him with the gap in care, and then...we do warm handoffs, and this client was introduced to me by Bryan, and we helped him enroll in Med-QUEST. So just for all of you, you know, community members, I want you to know that I'm here for you. I offer help with Med-QUEST, Obamacare or Healthcare.gov plans, and Medicare. So, you're welcome to come...come and call me or visit me when I'm around. And I just want to share that all the support that the Council has provided has been greatly appreciated by our Foundation, and...as well as community members that we've helped out. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks for sharing. Any questions? Seeing none. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Tiare Sua, to be followed by Cody Nemet Tuivaiti.

MS. SUA: Okay. Right on. Aloha ahiahi, kākou. I'm Tiare Sua, I'm with the...I'm with the Maui AIDS Foundation. I'm the director for prevention and education, and

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

I've been with Maui AIDS Foundation for 17 years. Yeah, a long time. And I've been doing this field of work for like over about 23 years. So, my first...when I first started as a outreach worker, I was at DASH, the Drug Addicted Services of Hawai'i, and I moved my way to Maui, and made it my pledge to make sure that I help my community, and to make sure that they get all the services that they need. I am too a resident here in Moku O Kula Kai, and let me tell you, I hear everybody's stories about the roads. Very true. At nighttime, it is scary. It is kind of crazy. There's no lights, so need lights...but I'm not here for that. But I just kind of want to say, I help you guys out a little bit. I just kind of want to tell you guys thank you for everything that you've instilled with us. With Maui AIDS Foundation, we took the pledge for the whole pae 'āina to say that we want to make sure that Hawai'i stays zero infection-free. So that is Hawai'i to Zero. And to me, what you folks did for our organization is such a huge thing because you jumped on that pledge with us saying, yes, we are on board, we're going to do this, and we're going to follow through, and that is our future. So, I'm not here to say anything because they said everything that...that you guys needed to know. But I know, Tasha Kama, last year when I came, we talked about Native Hawaiian things to instill. I did create a group, it's called Mahu Ola, and it's for Native Hawaiian aloha 'āina, and we talk about what our kuleana is, what our space is, and what we got to provide. And Keani, we just came back from Molokai, and I wish Maui was like that still yet, okay...that kind of aloha. I was like, oh, this was in the '90s. Hi, Uncle...like very nice. So, I wish we were still there, but...you know, work in progress. Work in progress. And my heart goes out to Lahaina always, always. So, thank you so much. Aloha. I don't know, I don't have that much to say. And mahalo. And I love you guys so much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Love your enthusiasm. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Cody Nemet Tuivaiti, to be followed by Terani Richmond.

MR. TUIVAITI: Aloha mai kākou. 'O Cody Nemet Tuivaiti ko'u inoa. Ua hānai 'ia au ma Maui. Noho wau i Kula Kai, ka ahupua'a o Kēōkea. So, I'm actually the project director of Hui O 'Āinakūko'a, and a little bit about 'Āinakūko'a, is a restoration hui. We mālama an area called Waiohuli Kai, which is right across Paradise Gardens, just south of Kalepolepo, about 46 acres of 'āina over there. I want to mahalo you guys for supporting us for the past couple of years, and request that we continue to have the support moving on into the future, 2026. Some of you may not know that this area is one of the highest flood zones and sediment-prone zones in Kula Kai, and sadly, it was where our beloved firefighter came down as well in that muliwai, right there in that area. And so, my...my biggest thing for our community, as we continue to expand the Kūlanihāko'i corridor, and...is really teaching about connectivity, yeah. Connectivity and value. You know, a lot of our water is...goes into culverts and pipes, and we don't see it until it comes out into the ocean, yeah. So, it's very easy to be out of sight, out of mind when it comes to our resources in Kula Kai. Also, like a lot of our

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

muliwai, a lot of our waterways where our spring come up, for a long time, ever since I was young, you know, those people would throw their trash in there. And it was always kind of looked at as like this dirty water kind of zone, right? And the work that we've been doing, we've been revitalizing our waterways, our muliwais. We've been bringing life back to them, and we've been just changing the whole mindset of 'āina. It's so important to me that our...the...the students that come to learn with us, that it becomes normal to understand the environment that they're in. Because at the end of the day, no matter what, no matter where we come from, we all islanders here in Hawai'i, yeah, and you no got to be kānaka for be one islander. We live in the most isolated group of islands in the world. So, my whole thing is...is...is always emphasizing that islander mentality into...into the . . . (timer sounds). . . students. And with the work that we doing, like I was saying, it's all about connectivity. And so, whether it's education, whether it's learning about environmental impacts, whether it's a community, you know, it's always about bringing all of that together, and then understanding our values of where we are. So mahalo. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Cody. One moment, Members Rawlins-Fernandez and Paltin have questions.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha, Mr. Nemet. Mahalo for your testimony today. So, would you...to clarify, would you describe the work that you do as science?

MR. TUIVAITI: Science? So, for us, we do kilo, yeah. And when you talk about kilo, it's really about analyzing the way the 'āina moves. So, one...one example of kilo is, we noticed recently with the water that's been coming down the...the water has a lot of nutrients inside of it, right? And a lot of times it'll kill...it'll make the muliwais hypoxic, and it kill a lot of the...the life that is there. We have two types of 'ākulikuli that grow down there. One is 'ākulikuli kū and 'ākulikuli papa. We were allowing both types of 'ākulikuli to grow there, but after watching the way that the water has taken out the 'ākulikuli kū, we've noticed...we've basically...have just been concentrating on the 'ākulikuli papa. So, meaning that we're now creating a really highly-resilient zone that is primarily of 'ākulikuli papa that survives through this heavy nutrient runoff coming down from mauka.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It sounds like some life science to me. Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Tuivaiti. I just was wanting to clarify. Were you in the Mayor's budget, or did you have a request, or did you get less than you requested?

MR. TUIVAITI: We're...we're...we're working on it. We're not in the budget yet, but we are working on it.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: How...how much was the request that you were working on?

MR. TUIVAITI: The request was right now for the same amount that we had, yeah. Do you want me to say?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: 1...150?

MR. TUIVAITI: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thousand.

MR. TUIVAITI: And...and this is...we're in the Kūlanihāko'i Corridor right now, right? So right now, we're...the TMK is really big, so it's from...it's from the Waiohuli muliwai all the way to the Waipuiani bathrooms. Right now, we're operating in a small part of that. So, it's really about expanding our...the connectivity of the dune system, the wetland...reclaiming wetlands.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And in your kilo of when it floods, is it less in the area that you're working on? It's --

MR. TUIVAITI: It's --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- not as damaging?

MR. TUIVAITI: Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, if you guys ever get the time and want to come down, I would love to show you guys. We just had the coastal planning department come down, and they said it's...it was one of the best examples of natural restoration that they've seen. But in one of the muliwai zones, we had completely taken out all the kiawe, all the mangrove, all the fleabane, uprooted everything. And then in place, on its own, all we did was guide it, grew all the kaluhā, 'ahu'awa sedges on the bank, 'ākulikuli right in the back. Gabe was there, he kind of seen it for himself. But it...it...it just shows exactly what the 'āina's trying to do, right? It shows the sedges holding...it holds volume, it holds sediment, and it filters through the 'ākulikuli.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are you aware what section...the...this year's money is coming out of? Like, is it EP&S or OED?

MR. TUIVAITI: I'm not sure.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MR. TUIVAITI: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You...you get a question? Or, oh --

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Cody. You know, I'm certainly considering you one of my priorities. The 150,000, I know you can use, and use it well. Do you need more? Is it something that you think you have capacity of 175?

MR. TUIVAITI: To be honest...see, the thing...the whole thing about moving into new space is understanding new space, understanding new challenges, understanding new impacts. When it comes to being...to being kama'āina, more familiar with these areas, I can have more of a grasp on it. But as of right now, I'm just kind of like sticking --

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. TUIVAITI: -- to that area. But yeah. As we begin to grow, I wouldn't...I wouldn't be surprised if we'd need a little more as well.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: All right. Thanks for that.

MR. TUIVAITI: Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Terani Richmond, to be followed by Kaleo Demello.

MR. RICHMOND: Aloha mai kākou. My name is Terani Richmond, I'm a field hand and a kia'i for 'Āinakūko'a O Waiohuli Kai underneath Cody Nemet. And I'm here to testify for your continued support, and just to say mahalo. Waiohuli Kai thrives in education. We currently host field work trips for multiple schools, including Lokelani School, Hawai'i Tech Academy, and my alma mater, Kamehameha Schools, Maui. On these trips, we teach the students the importance of mālama 'āina, as well as teach the importance of our ocean. Over time, the students have grown to look forward to these trips, and when they leave, they cannot wait to come back and immerse themselves in the land once again. Waiohuli Kai thrives in native plant protection and restoration. When we started, there were few traces of native plants on the 'āina, and now when you visit Waiohuli Kai, you can see an abundance of native plants like 'aki'aki, kīpūkai, pōhuehue, 'uhaloa, pōpolo, and 'ākulikuli. With the ongoing flooding we experience in Kihei, I can't stress the importance of our work enough as we are the only wetland restoration left in Kihei. The native plants we protect have roots that soak up and filter flood water. They also hold our 'āina in place, keeping it

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

from going into the ocean and killing what is left of our reef. As our hui grows, we look forward to teaching the values of wa'a expedition, as well as the restoration of the Waiohuli Kai fishpond. We hope that the Waiohuli Kai fishpond, or loko i'a, can serve as an amplified ecosystem that serves our community. Once again, I just want to say mahalo for all of your advocacy, and ask for your continued support for us and all other mālama 'āina and 'ike-Hawai'i-based organizations.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez has a question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha. Mahalo for your testimony. You said that you welcome students to the project from Lokelani as well. And we heard some students from Lokelani involved in STEMworks. So, are...is STEMworks part of the students that come to visit and see the work that's being done?

MR. RICHMOND: I'm sure they bring it...they bring it with them. But we really just teach them a lot about 'āina, and maybe we can include the STEMworks a little more.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, actually, I was saying the opposite.

MR. RICHMOND: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Because so often, Western science doesn't consider 'ike Hawai'i science. And kilo is science. What you folks do is science. And separating culture out of...of science, and saying that what kānaka do is lesser than, gets to me. So, mahalo.

MR. RICHMOND: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Next testifier, please.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Kaleo Demello, to be followed by Kay Anderson.

MR. DEMELLO: Hello, I'm Kaleo Demello. I grew up Upcountry. I live in Waiohuli in Hawaiian Homes, and I'm the field manager with Koko at 'Āinakūko'a. And I'm just here to give my thanks on being able to do what we do, and just learning every day from Koko is...is a blessing. And a lot of the problems that we see around the island, around Hawai'i, is kind of caused by the misuse of the lands and our resources. And I think, you know, it's important first to try and bring back some balance and focus on, you know, things that will really affect us in the near future. So...yeah. Just in full support of what we've been doing. And thank you guys.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very nice. Thank you. No questions. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Kay Anderson, to be followed by Cristina DeLeon.

MS. ANDERSON: Aloha. Thank you for this opportunity, really appreciate it. I have a question for you. Do you think it is really appropriate for over 7,000-plus luxury homes to be built in the next ten years for this island? Does this belong here? That's something to really think about. The other thing I wanted to talk about is the fact that infrastructure must be paired with growth. And since I've been...I'm a citizen of Maui, I've been here a long time, and I have not seen that. In fact, a streetlight at Okalani took 17 years to get in after it was contracted with the developer to install. We are behind the eight ball now because it has not been required to pair infrastructure with growth. The mentality has to change, and that has to be a requirement when you do your negotiations with these developers. I know they don't want to spend the money until they get the sale on the back end, but you need to take charge of the negotiations, and make this happen. We are in dire straits for water, sewer, and roads in South Kihei, and to catch up is going to be critical. I want to talk a little bit about affordable housing. Affordable housing must be affordable. When you build in Wailea, high property values. And if they're in a condo association, on top of the mortgage, you're going to stack on a \$2,000 maintenance fee, and a WCA fee. Have you considered that? Is the County going to pick up that cost? Because it's no longer affordable if that occurs. And I'm not saying don't...if you do build the developments, please make sure that you consider that because those fees aren't stagnant. They go up each year, there's a cost of inflation to that, and our insurance rates went sky-high this year because of the Lahaina fire, and we had...we had to assess our owners \$2,000. Some of them had a hard time coming up with it. I truly believe that not everyone can afford a home, so I think that you need to start thinking about developing mixed properties, to where you have affordable new rental properties for individuals, and for-purchase homes that are affordable. And there are ways to do it. Finally, I have to tell you something because I wanted to point out this chart. You notice that the citizens of Maui County are at the top of the structure for the reporting...the structure of the Maui...the County of Maui. I recently was very disappointed . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . when I tried to get an appointment with Kate Blystone, Director of Planning Department, and she has refused to see me. That is unacceptable. Unacceptable. She stated that I talk to her staff and that she could...she answered my questions. She doesn't know what my questions were. And if, by the way, she thinks her staff is good enough to do the job, then we don't need her, and you can save \$280,000 by getting rid of her. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you.

MR. HURDLE: Chair --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. HURDLE: -- the next testifier is Cristina DeLeon, to be followed by Krystal Barnett.

MS. DELEON: Aloha. My name is Cristina DeLeon. I know it's late, I'll try to talk fast. Just bear with me. I'm here on behalf of the Teran James Young Foundation. We're a local nonprofit in Wailuku fighting for peace and sustainability. I recognize that this is not the first time that you're hearing about the project I'm about to speak on, and this is not the first time you've heard from me. But I appreciate your continued attention, and I promise I'll make it worth your while. I'm referring to our Kēōkea Eco Village project here in South Maui, which is designed for around 42 acres of land on Welakahao Street, and would serve as a kauhale, providing safe shelter for up to 212 houseless individuals. The land is 75 percent wetland, with a high and dry area that will be perfect for an Eco Village. The current landowner, who lives on the mainland, intended to build eighty luxury homes on this property, but that plan is in a contested case hearing. The Eco Village plan did not originate with our organization. It reflects the vision the community shared for this land. This eco...our role has been to help shape that vision into a viable, actionable plan, which we have spent the last several years doing. We have even partnered with Maui Rapid Response, who are onboard to provide day-to-day operational support for the Eco Village once complete. At this point, the only thing stopping us is purchasing the land. The landowner has asked for \$10 million, despite the fact that the land has been appraised at just over six. I understand that \$10 million is a lot, and likely unfeasible, and I'm not here to convince you otherwise. All I'm asking is that the County work with us to find a way to make this happen. We have made countless presentations to countless individuals at both the State and the County level. We've been bounced around...around numerous times to different departments and directors, and I understand the County is looking for solutions to the housing crisis, and this project would be one of them. I think it's a tragedy that this 42 acres of land is just sitting unmanaged because of the selfishness and greed of some guy on the mainland, when the wetlands could be restored and protected, and help reduce dangerous flooding that happens in Kihei every time it rains. And the high and dry area could provide much-needed safe shelter for our community's houseless. All we're asking for is partnership. Help us come up with a creative solution. We've done the work. We have a plan. We have the partners. We have the community ready to build something meaningful. But we can't do it alone. We need your leadership. We need your cooperation. We need you to see the same possibility that we see for this land. This is more than a housing solution, it's a vision for peace, for resilience, and for restoring balance. Please don't let bureaucracy be the reason this opportunity slips away. We're ready when you are. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Any questions? Thank you. Next testifier, please?

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Krystal Barnett, to be followed by Brian Pfeiffer.

MS. BARNETT: Thank you so much. Aloha, everyone. My name is Krystal Barnett, and I am also here on behalf of the Teran James Young Foundation. The second project we would like to share with you is sustainable landscaping. It might not sound as exciting as Kēōkea, but this issue has far-reaching impacts...from the health of our residents to the well-being of our island, our reefs, and our climate. Many people are not aware of this, but gas-powered lawn mowers and leaf blowers are actually more polluting than cars. Might sound a little outrageous, but it's true. And it's because these machines are not regulated, so they don't have the same requirements that a car engine would have to minimize pollution. In fact, one hour of lawn mower use is equivalent to driving a car 300 miles, and one hour of leaf blower use is equivalent to driving a car 1,100 miles. The emissions from these machines are polluting our island and the world, while we are already in the critical decade for climate change. The hydrocarbons from these emissions are also incredibly dangerous to our health, especially to those who operate them, as well as any bystanders. Chronic exposure can lead to multiple health issues, including neurological damage, respiratory damage, immune system impairment, and even cancer...not to mention, these machines are very loud, and actually operate at 90 decibels, while hearing damage starts at anything above 85 decibels. Several states have already banned gas-powered landscaping equipment, including California, Colorado, Illinois, and others. We have an island ecosystem to protect, and should be leading the charge with these kinds of changes...but again, we are not here to ask for a ban. We are here to ask for funding for our organization to run an incentive program to inspire residents to exchange their gas-powered landscaping equipment for electric...electric landscaping equipment. The program would be run entirely by our organization, and would help us remove up to 960 gas lawnmowers, or up to 2,400 gas leaf blowers, depending on the amount of funding we receive...and we have options for \$300,000, \$200,000, \$100,000 and \$50,000. Our organization has a fully fleshed-out proposal that we have been working on with the assistance of Michelle McLinden at EP&S, although we understand that she is no longer with the office. This isn't just about landscaping, it's about public health, environmental justice, and doing our part during a critical moment for our planet. We have a real opportunity here . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . to make a measurable difference, to reduce harmful emissions, protect the health of our communities, and set an example of sustainable leadership for the rest of the State and beyond. By...by supporting this program, you're not just funding cleaner landscaping tools, you're investing in the long-term health of our island, our reefs, our residents, and our future. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none. Thank you. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Brian Pfeiffer, to be followed by Frank Barbosa.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. PFEIFFER: Aloha, and good evening. My name is Brian Pfeiffer, I'm here to testify for Maui AIDS Foundation. A lot of people don't realize the services that are provided. It is so important for our community, all the way down from our keiki that have parents that are suffering with different diseases--STDs, AIDS, HIV--all the way from our young teenagers who are experimenting, to our young adults. And then we get to the older people like myself. I'm very proud to say that I'm going to be celebrating my 66th birthday in two weeks, and it's because of programs like Maui AIDS Foundation that have allowed me the affordability to stay healthy, to find the food that I need--they provide a food pantry as well, as well as housing--but they've paid for medical bills, they've helped pay for insurance. They're there to help us find a way in this community. STDs have always been a hushed subject, and as far as HIV and AIDS go, it...people have seemed to believe that it is not the problem that it used to be. But I'm here to tell you, it is. There's more people diagnosed with this every single day. And if it weren't for people that offer the testing for all of these conditions, and the resources for people to come and just talk to someone, that...that helps our community and our children as well. There's so many people out there suffering, and...and I just...I just believe that if you just continue the support that you have for these foundations, I mean, it'll better everybody in our community. I'll tell you, everybody's afraid of STDs, especially AIDS, but nothing is more frightening than being diagnosed with it. And it is these people over here that have helped me and countless...countless other people to provide a safe condition for us to thrive, and for us to move forward. That's really all I have to say, but thank you very much for your time, and thank you for your past funding.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. No questions. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Frank Barbosa, to be followed by Anna Merritt.

MR. BARBOSA: Good evening. My name is Frank Barbosa. I here testify about that Ohukai's sidewalk project, that you guys get going on. I been advocating for this for about ten years, and the reason why because I'm disabled, and I've been living in Kihei for over 37 years, and I was finally realizing that walking down Ohukai Road is very challenging from Noe, Oe, Hale Kai, and Kaiwahine...oh, not Kaiwahine, Hoalike. Those four streets is where all the kūpunas, all us old people...older, I would say, residents. And I was just informed that the project does not cover our streets up there. And just walking down the streets just hearing drivers yelling, hey, get off the road. And, you know, try walk in the middle of the road and you're blind, or see one sight...see one wheelchair coming down the street, or one...one 84-year-old lady walking up the street the other day with a walker. School buses pulling over on the side of the road, taking up half of the road and dropping off the kids, the kids running all over the road like ants. When the project called for--and I read it last week--and it said it'll cover the whole Ohukai Road...that's not the whole Ohukai Road. And if you guys no more money for do that project, then talk to Marc Tanimoto...Takimoto [sic]. Because

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

had money for the city bus from Mā'alaea to go up Ohukai and then come down Kaiwahine so the disability bus can pick up us guys because they are in...they're not...they are...they have regulated areas, that they cannot come up to our house and pick us up. If you guys think MEO and paratransit is...you know, you guys think they're efficient. They're not efficient. Back in the '80s, maybe. Residents was 75 percent...or 75,000, now it's 146,000 on Maui. Figure it out. And having two businesses under one entity is corruption, brah. Let's get more services. Let's get more services on the island. Because someday, you guys, these guys, the youngsters going to be riding those bus service. And with all these services, brah, I don't know. You guys can walk like me. I walk all over, I walk in Haleakalā, blind and all. But I tell you what. If you guys no more money, talk...tell Marc get that services. I talked to him three weeks ago, and he said it wasn't about the money, it was about the time. The time that they couldn't get from Mā'alaea to Kawahine, down Ohukai, back to Mā'alaea in one hour. So, they scrapped the whole thing. The budget was there, but they took it away. Make this happen. Extend Ohukai. . . .(timer sounds). . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. BARBOSA: And Mr. Tom, get ahold of me because I like walk with you up and down that street. Mahalo.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Anna Merritt, to be followed by Max Tornai.

MS. MERRITT: Aloha, everyone. Thank you so much for letting me have a chance to come up here tonight. I'm Anna Merritt, I'm representing MEO Head Start. I have some parents that weren't able to be here tonight, or they had to leave, so I have testimonies I'm reading for them. The first one is from Grace Garcia. She says, first of all, I'd like to thank...I'd like to say thank you. I'm very grateful that Victoria has been a part of the MEO Head Start program. She has learned a lot and gained friends, as well as a whole family. We have a second family outside of our house. We hope you will continue to support MEO Head Start for other families so they will benefit as well. For the teachers that handle our kids, we appreciate your efforts and patience towards our kids. We will cherish every moment that we share together. Mahalo from the Garcia family. The next one I have is from Miulang Bascar. She says I support MEO. They help so many children on the island. Please grant their funding so they can use it towards the kids for excursions and supplies that the children need in class. The teachers are outstanding, teaching the students in early learning schooling. They learn so much. Thank you Miulang Bascar, II. And my last letter is from Leilani. My daughter Angel Pua has been a student of MEO's Head Start for the past two years, and the program has been a valuable resource for our 'ohana and my child's growth as recipients. Our 'ohana's request for continued funding of this Head Start for future students. We appreciate all the staff, and my daughter

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

enjoys the comfort of her classroom, puzzles, toys, teaching skills, as well as lunch and breakfast, et cetera. Mahalo for MEO's kōkua, and for your consideration of our family's request. I had a question I wanted to ask also. One of the families that was here had a question, she had to leave with her little one. She has a child that goes to the Kihei High School--and I'm sorry, I don't remember the name of it--the Kihei High School, and she's asking about the possibility of there being a bus stop there. She lives too close for them to send a bus, but yet too far away for them to...him to walk because of the highway. So, she's just asking, is there any way we'd be able to put a bus stop there for them to be able to take the bus home? And that was it.

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

MS. MERRITT: Yeah, yeah. She had asked me, even just having a county bus be able to come and...and pick up. That way he doesn't get stuck having to wait if it's a day when she's late trying to come and get him because they can't walk on the highway, and then they're too close for them to actually send a bus back and forth to take them to and from school. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. If you could talk to Jared--you want to raise your hand, Jared?--and get your number. Just...thank you. For a clarifying answer, I have talked to the school, and I talked MEO, and the issue about it being too close and whatnot. So, it's a work in progress, and I'm personally trying to make that happen. So, talk to him and we'll keep informed. Thank you.

MS. MERRITT: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Max Tornai, to be followed by John Starmer.

MR. TORNAI: Aloha, Councilmembers. My name is Max Tornai. I wear a couple different hats, so I want to cover a couple different things. But first, I want to say thank you so much for putting in the long hours to listen to the community of...of Kihei and Maui overall, and...and hearing us out, hour after hour, day after day, to hear what our priorities and our needs are. I've been the development director for Habitat For Humanity for 12 years now. This is my last month, but I would like to do one last plug for our MCOA grant. It's a safety repair and home retrofit grant that we've had for the last five or six years now. It is to provide those services at no cost to our low-income seniors and disabled homeowners in Maui County. And those repairs are very specific, and based on the individual needs of the approved client. And this can mean anything from grab bars to reduce fall hazards, wheelchair or other ramps to improve mobility, and...to the installation of ADA-compliant toilets and bathroom fixtures, to the removal and replacement of rotted and moldy flooring, walls, or even roofing. And this has really changed the living conditions too, for a lot of our seniors and our

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

low-income seniors in Maui County for...for years now. I'd also like to speak...so, my next position is grants director with Hawai'i Farm Project and Hali'imaile Pineapple Farm, and I just wanted to speak in support of the Mayor's proposed increases to the Department of Agriculture...Maui Department of Agriculture. It's a pretty significant increase. I maybe would have liked a little bit more allocation to the to the Grants Division, but it's a very substantial increase, and it will support the agriculture on Maui...in Maui County substantially. So, I'm very much in support of that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So, the name of the organization you're going to? You're still at Habitat; is that right?

MR. TORNAI: Still at Habitat for this month, yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So, that organization is?

MR. TORNAI: It's called Hawai'i Farm Project.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hawai'i Farm Project.

MR. TORNAI: And they own the Maui Gold Pineapple Farm. They have Maui Pineapple tours, Maui Pineapple Store, Maui Chocolate Tours at Ku'ia. So, it's a collaborative eco...agrotourism-type of company.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MR. TORNAI: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Anybody have questions? Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Aloha. Mahalo for your testimony. Did you finish your testimony?

MR. TORNAI: No, but that's okay.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Will you please complete your...finish your testimony?

MR. TORNAI: Did you have a have a question on any of the two that I --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yes, after.

MR. TORNAI: Okay. My last bit that I wanted to speak in support of is the Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows program. I know that's in the Mayor's proposed budget as well. I graduated from this program in 2013, and am currently on the Alumni Council.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

And this, I'm sure many of you know, is a local leadership development program, is something that continues, in my opinion, to be a great investment for Maui County. And not only provides practical leadership skills, but also provides many opportunities for up-and-coming leaders to build relationships . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . with, and directly learn from, our current and previous leaders across so many different industries that are important to Maui Nui. And this program allows for strong relationship-building and networking across these industries, which is really invaluable. So, I support that as well. And that's it.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony. So, I was looking in the budget, and Habitat For Humanity has 250,000?

MR. TORNAI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Is that for the retrofitting and renovation?

MR. TORNAI: Yes, that's specifically for the MCOA --

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Was that how much you applied for, or Habitat For Humanity applied for? Is that the full amount?

MR. TORNAI: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay, great. Mahalo.

MR. TORNAI: Thank you.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Tornai...oh, when you said you're leaving Habitat, I was like, oh, no. But --

MR. TORNAI: It's bittersweet for me too.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: -- you're...you're staying. You're coming back to Lahaina?

MR. TORNAI: Yes. When we rebuild, I...we will be back in Lahaina, yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, main thing. Thank you.

MR. TORNAI: Yes.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Anybody else have questions? So, before you...before you leave, I'm sad too that you're leaving Habitat because you're very effective. And I hope one day Habitat finishes Member Sinenci's Hāna housing project.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. TORNAI: I've been pushing for that since --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, anyway.

MR. TORNAI: -- 2018.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: I just want to put it out there.

MR. TORNAI: Councilmember Sinenci, I know you've been a huge supporter of that project, so I appreciate that.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. All right. Thank you very much. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is John Starmer, to be followed by Andrew Beerer.

MR. STARMER: Aloha, everyone. I'm John Starmer. I am the science director at the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council, and I'm also a Kihei resident. I just wanted to voice a little bit of support for the idea of a mauka highway, versus the focus on the extension of Lipoa Road. I think the Lipoa Road will basically drive traffic into our neighborhoods, and doesn't solve the problem of a second way to get out of Kihei if we did have some sort of an event, such as a fire, or we lose South Kihei Road again due to a big storm. So, just want to plug that. Also want to plug Cody Nemet's project down at Waiohuli Kai. Definitely worthwhile. A really impressive bit of coastal wetland restoration, a cultural experience, and something that has benefited my children directly, but also a lot of the kids here in Kihei, as well as other areas that come and visit it. So, do continue to support that, I hope. As for MNMRC, we're a small organization that hopefully has impact beyond the size of our organization, and we absolutely could not have done what we have in the past without your support. We appreciate the past support. Hope we get to see future support from you as well. We recently started a coral-restoration program, which is the first locally-driven effort in this manner, just here off of Kihei as well, which is hopefully going to be something that helps us continue to improve the reefs here in Kihei, as we've been spending basically the past five years trying to understand the condition of reefs here. We realize they're not so great. We're learning that there's sewage influence, there's nutrient influence, and we're finding a lot of problems. But finding those problems allows us to then push forward, and find solutions as well. And things like what Cody is doing, which helps mitigate flood waters, keeps sediment out of the environment, these are little steps that are on land that help our ocean, right? We're also doing things like reef-friendly landscaping, which is encouraging not just large hotels and farmers, now we're working with Maui Gold Pineapples in pilots, so agriculture as well. And we're also getting, hopefully, more and more landscaping companies to start applying this. So, it's effectively using natural fertilizers so that we're not seeing the nutrient runoff, which we're detecting in...in coastal waters from...from industrial fertilizers showing up, and also reducing

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

the reliance on pesticides because some of these processes actually allow nature . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . to heal itself. As a whole, again, we're...we're a small group, and we really rely on partnerships with a large number of groups. So, again, hopefully our impact is larger than we might seem as an organization in and of ourselves. So, thank you again for past support, and we look forward to future support as well. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Question from Member Rawlins-Fernandez.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. Mahalo for your testimony. In the budget, it says that there's 225 for Maui Nui Marine Resource Council. On...an earlier, testifier said the request was for 500,000. Do you know if it's --

MR. STARMER: So, my -- yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: If you can clarify that?

MR. STARMER: Yeah. My...my understanding is that the request is actually for 525,000, which combines the 200-some from last year, but also includes Hui O Ka Wai Ola, which is the volunteer-driven water-quality monitoring group.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, does the 225 not include Hui O Ka Wai Ola?

MR. STARMER: No. Right now, it's 225 for MNMRC, and I believe 100,000 for Hui O Ka Wai Ola.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for that clarification.

MR. STARMER: Yep.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much.

MR. STARMER: Thank you.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Andrew Beerer, to be followed by Zandra Amaral-Crouse.

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

MR. HURDLE: Not here? Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Andrew...Andrew Beeler *[sic]*? Okay. Next testifier.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. HURDLE: Then the next testifier is Zandra Amaral-Crouse, to be followed by Lisa Stilley.

MS. AMARAL-CROUSE: Can somebody lower this for me? I wish I was that tall. Good. Aloha. Aloha. Good evening, Councilmembers. I was hoping the Chair would be here as well. By...by the way, I need to start with Tamara. I have heard your Molokai testimonies and the other districts. You...you should be in Human Resources for engineers. You're great. You're wonderful. I'd like to testify housing, which you have...I'd like to start off by saying, I know, and I realize e hānau au o 'Īao 'ī Valley territory o Hawai'i [sic]. I have been a resident of this island for 73 years. My 'ohana, my lineage, goes back 200-plus years--Maui, Molokai, Lāna'i, O'ahu, and Kaua'i. So I felt compelled to do that. But housing...and the way...the reason why I stipulated my age is because we have had this discussion 56 years of my life. When Mr. Molina, way back when--and I'm not talking about Mike or...I'm talking about his great-grandfather, the first one, yes. The one thing I think that we are doing wrong, or maybe perhaps not doing with housing, as a real estate broker for 45 years, right here on Maui, I need to tell you, this is how it goes. Projects--and Councilmember Tom, you know this--a project is built, affordable housing. If there isn't sold affordable housing, it goes into market. It goes into market, and this is what we do. We make our money off of Chinese buyers, cash, or we make our money off of people from the mainland buying out the housing, and then reselling them within the period estimated, or put forward by you for 50, 60, 70, even 100 percent more, which pushes it totally out of affordable. What we need to do is adapt something very similar, I believe, to Hawaiian Home Lands. Put our young men and women while they are in high school on this list. Can they afford to buy a house? No, they cannot. But the trick is, guys, they will be on a list, and we will know that they have been here for the years that they say they have been here. I am not prejudiced, I love all the people of Kihei. They have been good to me, the visitors, and the ones that have transplanted and has been come Hawaiian at heart. I love them all. But we need to do something to eliminate the taking away from our children, and . . . (timer sounds). . . making it affordable for everyone else. I humbly ask, in closing, that you guys look at not only building more, but look at what concept can you use to see that our children have first priority? And I also want to ask, please support the STEM program, and all the other programs. And I do realize, in closing, that all that was asked for this evening, all these infinite needs, they were so profound, and so needed with the finite pot of gold. I realize that. So, I respect you to make such hard decisions, but do it for the local people first. I appreciate all of you. A hui hou. Mālama.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Ms. Z. Anybody have questions? Okay. Next testifier.

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the next testifier is Lisa Stilley, to be followed by Dylan Schwarzmeier. If...if Lisa is not here, then we can go ahead to Dylan Schwarzmeier.

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. SCHWARZMEIER: Thank you. Thank you, Councilmembers, for being here, and fellow community members for testifying on behalf of what we need in the future. My name is Dylan Schwarzmeier, long-time resident, and grew up here. Kindergarten right across the street. I was here last year, speaking on behalf of the Maui Economic Development Board and the STEM program, STEMworks, and how that has had an impact on the students that are going to school now, looking for what they're going to do with their future, which is where I was. In growing up here, I know I didn't want to do hotels, and what else was there? There was agriculture...nuh-uh. But the STEM thing worked out, and anything that I can do to help support further proliferating that, I'm going to do. So, if you guys could please support the Maui Economic Development Board's economic development grant under the Maui County Office of Economic Development, I would appreciate that. Because beyond helping the students last year, which I was testifying on last year and currently, I've actually taken the next step to go out on my own, start my own business in the STEM industry here. And starting this next Monday, I'm hiring three people that grew up here--well, two people grew up here, one person has deep ties to the island--that'll provide them high-paying jobs that can give them a chance to maybe afford rent. Probably not buy a house, but maybe afford rent, which can keep them here, and help them raise a family here. And just...thank you guys for everything. Really appreciate it. A second note is, I have heard the other people here tonight bring up the infrastructure needs of South Kihei, and I know it's a very, very difficult situation because of the finances involved. But having another way out, even if it's just in the case of an emergency, like that people can know about. You know, maybe it's not open all the time for public use, but in case of emergency, having another way out if there's a fire, because we're downwind 90 percent of the time, would be very good. So, maybe coordinating with Haleakalā Ranch, if that hasn't already been done, to create a partnership that people can know about, is in case of an emergency, go here, would be huge. And maybe it exists, and I just don't know about it. So, thank you all.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you very much. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Schwarzmeier. I just...you know, all those things, like the mauka North-South Collector Road, we can totally fund it, but we don't have engineer capacity to take on that kind of project. So, that's what goes hand-in-hand, right? The STEMworks, County engineers, throw the money, do the project. But the other thing for...so, you're not a teacher anymore?

MR. SCHWARZMEIER: So, I am not teaching with the University of Hawai'i myself. My replacement...they're...that's a whole 'nother can of worms.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. So --

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

MR. SCHWARZMEIER: But I am still supporting the University of Hawai'i to the fullest extent possible with the existing faculty that are there. I'm supporting their programs however I can, I'm showing up to present to students. I'm also supporting the new initiative from Maui High School to help develop their own internal academy for STEM, as well as other career placements.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Like apps or STEM kind of stuff, right?

MR. SCHWARZMEIER: Yes. They...they actually...it's cool how they're doing it. They have a lot of different career paths. It's not just STEM, but they do have a STEM one, or a few ones that are STEM-related, directly related. So, they're bringing on industry advisors.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: We just purchased like two things, the Genasys Protect and the Ladris AI. I have no idea what that means, but it's kind of STEM-my [sic]. But that's...that's the software, I guess, that's going to help, like how to evacuate and stuff like that.

MR. SCHWARZMEIER: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, maybe if you learn about the STEM-my [sic] side of it, you can come back and break it down for everyone?

MR. SCHWARZMEIER: I'd be happy to support. If there is a point of contact that you would like me to follow up with any questions, I'd be happy to do that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Cool. I'll...I'll give you a point of contact.

MR. SCHWARZMEIER: Okay.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. May I ask how many more testifiers? Are we all...we have –

MR. HURDLE: Chair, the last individual signed up to testify is Christian Galapon.

MR. GALAPON: All right. Members of the Council, aloha. Members of the community, aloha. Sorry. Kind of late, so I felt like I should bring up the energy a little bit. So, to kind of preface what I'm about to say, a brief introduction. My name is Christian Galapon, born and raised Lāna'i, and six-year resident of Kihei. I am the owner of Tanaka-Galapon Consultants, and a board member of the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce. I have...personally speaking, I have helped open and launch eight different businesses across the County of Maui, and I hope to open five more this year. One of these projects that I aim to help is actually a project in which the aim...in which to help the land and transform it into a flood-, fire-, and drought-resistant ecosystem, a project that I hope to be able to have the opportunity to...to present to the Council and the community one day. But

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

as I was...transparency, I was not planning on testifying today, so kind of improvised. But as I'm hearing the testimonies of the members of my community, I agree, we need affordable housing. Of course, a second pathway out of Kihei. One thing that kind of struck me was the amount of people testifying for STEMworks. And that got me thinking, along with my experience in helping businesses launch in compliance and permits, one concern I've heard--with the County, at least--is the barrier of entry for hiring. I've been told that it is too strict, or it does not take into account a lot of nuances with people that may apply for the County. One worker, personally--I'm not naming names--I know said that he had...they had to wait six months to be hired from the County, which I feel should be looked into. I mean, I just looked into engineer openings with the County. You have six postings online, even for technicians, there's eight. I feel that doesn't quite communicate the need for engineers that you guys currently have as right now. So, maybe that should be looked into. And maybe more of a look into your hiring criteria in a more open-hiring process. I feel that should be examined and scrutinized a little bit more to allow for more...ah, what's the word?...nuances into bringing people in. Which also kind of brings me into my second thing I feel should be addressed. And I'm not too sure if this is something you guys are already looking into, right? Of course, anything I say is subject to facts that I learn as I continue my journey here, but brain drain. Of course, we're hiring for STEMworks, we're hiring for engineers. But I guess to kind of give you an example, we have a nursing program here. We churn out a lot of nurses from that program. They work at the hospital, and then . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . eventually, oh, sorry, I'll make it fast. And eventually they moved to Vegas, right, because of course, cost of living is lower there, and of course, pay is still the same. So those are the kind of things I hope the Council is looking into as well.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. You're the perfect last testifier. Thank you very much. Yeah? Any more?

MR. HURDLE: Chair, we'll just do a last call for testimony. If there's anyone else in the audience who would like to testify, and we'll give a final countdown...three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated they --

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. HURDLE: -- wish to testify.

. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, everybody, for being with us. This was a long evening. It's now 9:30, and we're at the end of our meeting. Really appreciate you sharing your thoughts with us. We take this very seriously. So, tomorrow, Member Cook will do a summary of your meeting tonight for us, or for the greater community on *Akakū* Land. And...and I wanted to also thank Austin from *Akakū*. He will

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Council of the County of Maui

April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

be televising this particular meeting at a later date. It wasn't done live, but we will be showing it on *Akakū*.

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

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It is live? Oh, wow, ours wasn't live. Neither was Molokai live.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Was live.

CHAIR SUGIMURA: It was?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah. . . . *(laughing)*. . .

CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, different kind live, not the *Akakū* live. But anyway, Members, thank you very much for being with us. Thank you very much for sharing. And this meeting is now adjourned at 9:31. . . . *(gavel)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS (excused: AL).

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

ADJOURN: 9:31 p.m.

bfed:min:250415-South Maui:kr

Transcribed by: Kaliko Reed

BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
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April 14, 2025
Kihei Community Center, Main Hall

CERTIFICATION

I, Kaliko Reed, hereby certify that pages 1 through 67 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 5th day of May 2025, in Wailuku, Hawai'i



Kaliko Reed