

April 16, 2025

MEMO TO: Members of the Budget, Finance, and Economic
Development Committee

F R O M: Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair *Yuki Lei K. Sugimura*
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee

SUBJECT: **LĀNA'I RESIDENCY AREA MEETING REGARDING THE FISCAL
YEAR 2026 BUDGET** (BFED-1)

On April 8, 2025, the Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee held a public meeting at the ILWU Hall on Lāna'i regarding the proposed FY 2026 Budget. Committee Chair Yuki Lei K. Sugimura and members Tom Cook, Gabe Johnson, Tamara Paltin, Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, and Shane M. Sinenci were present. Committee Vice-Chair Tasha Kama and members Alice L. Lee and Nohelani U'u-Hodgins were excused. The meeting started at 6:07 p.m. and adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

The Committee received oral testimony from 26 individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, the following oral testimony was received in support of funding for the organization, program, or project noted:

1. Fifteen individuals testified in support of Lāna'i Economic Development, Environmental, and Cultural Programs to support the Lanai Filipino Community Coalition (LFCC). Testifiers included Lāna'i High and Elementary School students and teachers who are J-1 visa holders. They spoke of the cultural enrichment gained through the LFCC.

Kathleen Costales, LFCC Treasurer, requested \$40,000 for LFCC to help with upcoming cultural events and programs. Ms. Costales also requested funding for the Office of Economic Development's travel to Lāna'i to hold an in-person grant funding workshop.

2. Stanley Ruidas, a lifetime Lāna'i resident, supported a Hurricane-3 emergency shelter/community center that could also be used for student athlete transient housing or community workshops. He said that the youth shelter is small and only has the capacity to fit 300. He suggested that perhaps the facility could be built below the skate park. Mr. Ruidas said a study on the Kaunalapau Highway is needed and a determination should be made on who has the right-

of-way. He also said County vehicle and equipment maintenance is needed.

3. Rose Jane Ancheta, Maui Economic Opportunity Lānaʻi Branch Manager, requested support for transportation services.
4. John Janikowski thanked the Committee for funding the Lānaʻi skate park. He said the skate park is being well used. He also thanked the Committee for funding Lānaʻi Kināʻole, but said they lack funding for additional staff. Three patients are on the waitlist currently.
5. Michele Weinhouse, a farm owner, supported the Maui Economic Development Board STEMworks program. Ms. Weinhouse supported the Farm Apprentice Mentoring Program through Hawaiʻi Farmers Union United and said she has seen the impact of STEMworks agricultural internships.
6. Shelly Kaiaokamalie, Executive Director, Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center, said the 501(c)(3), founded in 2007, operates the only museum and archive on Lānaʻi. The Center offers an annual cultural literacy program and ʻāina-based community outreach activities. Their Lānaʻi Community Stewardship Program started in 2021. They steward 20,000 acres on the eastern side of Lanai. The Center runs a hunting program because of how detrimental invasive ungulates have been to Lānaʻi. Through their program over 3,400 invasive ungulates have been removed. Up until now their grant funder has been the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Center is unclear about federal cuts and is therefore requesting support.
7. Ashley Richardson requested: (1) \$52,000 from the Lānaʻi Economic Development, Environmental, and Cultural Programs to support the Pineapple Festival and keiki activity area; (2) Molokai and Lānaʻi student travel; and (3) cultural traditions for the Filipino community, such as the Barrio Fiesta.

8. Diane Preza requested funding support for: (1) water and sewer infrastructure; (2) Lānaʻi Kināʻole; and (3) Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center's stewardship programs.
9. Adam Purdy supported funding for the STEMworks program, Lānaʻi Academy of Performing Arts, and MEDB.
10. Mary Lou Kaukeano requested funding support for Lānaʻi youth sports, which is often a costly expense for families. She expressed thanks for MEO Transportation, Lānaʻi Kināʻole, and the Lānaʻi skate park. She requested more help with grant writing.
11. Kari Bogner, Education Specialist, Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center, requested funding for feral animal control and the Lānaʻi Community Stewardship Program to remove ungulates from the 20,000 acres on the eastern side of the island. She said the hunting program is free for residents, with participants ranging from 10 to 85 years of age. She also supported the Pūlama Lānaʻi community gardens and the State Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Safety Program.
12. Roger Alconcel thanked the Committee for supporting affordable housing, MEO Transportation, and Lānaʻi Kināʻole. He also supported everyone who testified previously.
13. Kayla Sanches supported the preschool program and thanked the Committee for grant funds for the preschool.

For questions relating to the Lānaʻi residency area meeting, please contact OCS staff (Ellen McKinley at ext. 7661, Carla Nakata at ext. 5519, Maria Leon at ext. 7866, or Lori Ann Tengan at ext. 7147).

If you have any questions relating to the FY 2026 Budget, please contact Committee staff (Kirsten Szabo at ext. 7662, James Krueger at ext. 7761, Jarret Pascual at ext. 7141, Clarissa MacDonald at ext. 7135, or Pauline Martins at ext. 8039). Thank you for your cooperation.