

KŌMIKE ALOHA ‘ĀINA
Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

March 19, 2026

Online Only via Zoom

CONVENE: 9:07 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Chair
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Vice-Chair
Councilmember K. Kauanoë Batangan, Member (arrived at 9:19 a.m.)
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member (left at 11:05 a.m.)

EXCUSED: Councilmember Tom Cook, Member

STAFF: Kasie Apo Takayama, Senior Legislative Analyst
Kirsten Szabo, Legislative Analyst
Megan Moniz, Legislative Attorney
Lori Ann Tengan, Committee Secretary
Lenora Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Office (RAO):

Keomailani Hirata, Council Aide, Molokai Residency Area Office
Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office
Chaelin Ryu, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

ADMIN: Rogerene “Kali” Arce, Director, Department of Agriculture (Item KA‘Ā-1(13))
Shayne Agawa, Director, Department of Environmental Management (Item KA‘Ā-1(12))
William Jay, Environmental Program Specialist, Environmental Protection and Sustainability Division, Department of Environmental Management (Item KA‘Ā-1(12))
Adrian Reifsnnyder, Corporation Counsel (Item KA‘Ā-ALL)
David Raatz, Director of Council Services, Office of Council Services (Item KA‘Ā-1(5))

OTHERS: *Resource Personnel*
Maggie Batangan, Executive Director, Maui Economic Opportunity (Item KA‘Ā-1(13))
David Daly, BDC Director, Maui Economic Opportunity (Item KA‘Ā-1(13))

Testifiers

Jasee Law, (Items KA‘Ā-1(13), -1(12), 1(5))
Joseph McCorkle (Item KA‘Ā-1(12))

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Kai Nishiki (Item KA'Ā-1(12))

Kaala Fay Camara, Principal, Kualapu'u Public Conversion Charter School (Item KA'Ā-1(5))

Kawaipuna Kalipi (Item KA'Ā-1-(5))

Manuwai Peters, Educator (Item KA'Ā-1(5))

Maile Naehu, Boricua Kanaka Maoli Educator; Cultural Arts Consultant;
Program Director, Hui o Kuapā; Director, Molokai Nui a Hina Project; Co-
founder, Ka Hale Hoaka, School of Hawaiian Knowledge (Item KA'Ā-1(5))

Aulani Herrod-Perkins (Item KA'Ā-1(5))

Leialoha Kealaiki, Educator (Item KA'Ā-1(5))

Joshua Gante, Educator, 'O Hina I Ka Malama (Item KA'Ā-1(5))

Melia Kalawe, Archivist (Item KA'Ā-1(5))

(24) additional attendees

PRESS: Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . . *(gavel)*. . . Aloha kakahiaka kākou. 'Ehiku minuke i hala o ka hola 'eiwa ma 'umikāmāiwa o Malaki i ka makahiki 2026. 'O kē'ia ka pō mahina 'o Hilo i Nana. E 'olu'olu mai e ho'omalua ke Kōmike Aloha 'Āina. 'O wau 'o Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, ka luna ho'omalua o kēia kōmike. It is 9:07 on March 19, 2026, in the season of Nana, in the moon phase of Hilo. Will the Kōmike Aloha 'Āina please come to order. I'm your Chair, Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. There are currently no testifiers at the Molokai District office. And...oh. And then, Members, in accordance with Sunshine Law, if you're not joining the meeting from the Council Chamber, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today, unless you're in a public place. Minors do not need to be identified. Please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. A i kēia lā me ko kākou hope luna ho'omalua 'o Tamara Paltin who is multitasking right now. Aloha.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou. Streaming live and direct from the Cameron Center. I'm at a public place because everybody is giving blood. I don't know everybody's names, though. That's it.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Committee Vice-Chair Paltin, and mahalo for your support of the community in that capacity. Member Cook is excused. And then Member Batangan, Kauano Batangan will be joining us at 9:30. With us in the Chamber, we have Committee Member Alice Lee. Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Aloha, Chair. And chāo to everyone. Looking forward to your meeting. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair Lee. And mahalo for the sugar. You may regret it later. With us in the Chamber, we have Committee Member Shane Sinenci. Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha kakahiaka kākou. Hau'oli wau ma 'ane'i, 'a'ohe mea

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kanaka me ka mana‘o ma ka hikina and happy to be here.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Sinenci. And joining us online, likely from Upcountry, we have Committee Member Yuki Lei Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good morning, everybody. Chào. It was drizzling a little bit up here, so we still have rain Upcountry and looking forward to a productive meeting. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And is there...do you have anyone in your workspace?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I have nobody in my workspace. Although, my husband is on this floor, but he's not in my business office. Thanks.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. And I did receive the note that you will need to leave at 11:30 today. Okay. We have two Non-Voting Committee Members, Councilmember Gabe Johnson and Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, who are always welcome to join us. From the Administration, joining us today from the Department of Agriculture, Kali Arce, Director; Koa Hewahewa, Deputy Director; Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos, Grants Coordinator; Department of Environmental Management, Shayne Agawa, Director; William Jay, Environmental Program Specialist, Environmental Protection and Sustainability Division. From our Committee Staff we have Committee Secretary Lori Ann Tengan, Senior Legislative Analyst Kasie Apo Takayama, Legislative Analyst Kristen [sic] Szabo, Legislative Attorney Megan Moniz and Council Services Assistant Clerk Lei Dinneen. We have three items on today's agenda; Ka Papahana Ha‘awina Kālā Li‘ili‘i No Ka Mahi‘ai, Agricultural Micro Grant Program; Mana‘o Ho‘okele Mālama ‘Āina A Ho‘oholuholu, Climate Action And Resiliency Plan; and Ka Lilo ‘Ana O Ke Kalana O Maui I Aupuni ‘Ōlelo Pālua, Maui County's Transition To A Bilingual Government. Since these items are 7(B) presentations with no legislative action we will jump straight into opening remarks and presentations before receiving testimony. So I will ask Staff to welcome our resource personnel to the front. I think the others will be joining online so that they can get comfortable while I do the opening remarks. And then the Chair's intention is to complete today's agenda by noon. I think about an hour per item should be sufficient. The House Committee On Water And Land has scheduled SB1432, the bill regarding the House Committee...I'm sorry, the bill regarding the transition of Kalawao County to Maui County today starting at 9, of course. It's the last item on their agenda. So I intend to break for recess when that item is taken up. My Staff is monitoring that hearing for me. Are there any objections to proceeding that way?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Members.

ITEM 1(13): AGRICULTURAL MICRO GRANT PROGRAM

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CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So, our first item, Ka Papahana Ha'awina Kālā Li'ili'i No Ka Mahi'ai, Agricultural Micro Grant Program. Joining us for the first agenda item today we have Director Kali Arce from Department of Agriculture; Grants Coordinator Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos; Executive Director of the Maui Economic Opportunity, Maggie Batangan; BDC Director of Maui Economic Opportunity, David Daly. If there are no objections, Members, I would like to designate the persons listed as resource...resource persons under Rule 18(A) of the Rules of the Council. Are there any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Members. Last budget session, our Council supported my budget priority to condition \$100,000 of the Agricultural Micro Grant funding to data collection for the purpose of better understanding the positive impact this investment has had in our ag industry. Deputy Director Hewahewa, his team, and I have met with Director Batangan, Mr. Daly, and now Ms. Raven Uyechi on the plan for this data collection. And we were just all really excited by...by the plan that we've mapped out. And I wanted to take this up in KA'Ā to give everyone enough time to discuss this before budget session started. We'll proceed in this order. For opening remarks, I'll call on Director Arce, followed by Executive Director Batangan, then BDC Director Daly. Okay. Aloha, Director Arce. Mahalo for joining us today. I'm sorry, Director, we can't hear you in the chamber at the moment. Not yet. I can read your lips but no audio. I'm sorry. Okay. Staff is asking if you have selected the...your mic. The other...the other problem that I have sometimes is if I've used Teams and Zoom, I have to close out completely of any other online platform. So sometimes when I use Zoom, and I go back to Teams, there's no audio on Teams until I close out of Zoom completely. So maybe what we can do is we'll...we'll come back to you, Director Arce, while we figure out the audio on that. And then we'll go to Executive Director Batangan. And I also see Ms. Debbie Cabebe in the gallery. Mahalo for joining us this morning. Ms. Batangan, I know you know how to operate everything.

MS. BATANGAN: Yes. Thank you so much, Chair. As the Chair mentioned, my name is Maggie Batangan, and I am the executive Director at MEO. I have the great privilege of jumping in at year six of this Micro Ag. Grant, which is wonderful because it is a well-established program that I get to help take credit for. But in my completely biased opinion, I will say that I think this data collection project is a prime example of accountability and responsible stewardship of funds because we're looking at outcome data to inform future funding and to see the actual impacts of farmers. So, so far we've gone back and pulled data from Fiscal Years '21 through '24. Of that data, we've seen some really promising trends. So we've awarded over 400 grants. Well, two...over 400 hundred awardees, excuse me. Mainly the types of products that they produce are fruits and vegetables, the vast majority, and the vast majority of farms saw positive impacts and increased production of those food products. So there's very promising outcomes. And as Chair mentioned, we're also moving forward with administering a survey. So, a post-funding award survey for people in the community who have received these funds. So we hope to have a very robust data report by the end of this grant period. We're also in the midst of working on administering the

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funds for this Fiscal Year as well, so. We also have plans that we can talk about later, too, in regards to farmers who have been impacted by the recent flooding. And so, we can speak to that later as well. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Batangan. Mr. Daly, did you want to add anything? And I do see Committee Member Kauanoe Batangan joining us, and I'll let him get settled in before I acknowledge him. Anything else you want to add, Mr. Daly? Okay. Okay. We can check with Director Arce. I...I hear sound. I don't know if that's from her. Okay.

MS. ARCE: Good morning. Can you hear me now?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Loud and clear. Mahalo.

MS. ARCE: Okay. Great. Thank you . . .*(inaudible)*. . . Good morning, Chair and Committee Members. Thank you, Kōmike Aloha Āina Committee, for having the Department of Agriculture in your meeting this morning. Both Deputy Director Hewahewa and our Grant Coordinator, Ana Mejia-Vasconcellos, are not available this morning, so I'm stepping in at the last moment. I'll be providing opening remarks for this meeting. And I apologize, but I need to step out at 9:30. This morning an update on the Agriculture Micro Grant Program will be presented by MEO, by new Chief Executive Director Maggie Batangan, congratulations, and BDC Director David Daly. The Department of Agriculture has funded the Agriculture Micro Grant Program from its grant subsidy since Fiscal Year '24. MEO has received from the Department of Agriculture \$2 million in Fiscal Year '25 and \$3.1 million in Fiscal Year '26, of which \$100,000 supports data collection. This program has supported agriculture producers across our three islands. These farmers are helping to improve food security in their communities by also making available locally grown, fresh, healthy food to our residents. We look forward to learning about the impacts these grants have on farmers that are recipients of this Maui Economic Opportunity grant program. Mahalo.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director Arce. I think there may...if...if someone is watching the meeting with the audio on, we can...we can hear it in the background. Yeah, Director Arce. Oh, okay. We...we can just mute Miss...Director Arce for now. Okay. And then I'll recognize Committee Member Kauanoe Batangan. Aloha.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Aloha kakahiaka, Chair, Members. Good to be here. For the record, I am conflicted out of this item and so will not be participating in discussion.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. All right. We will now...yeah, we'll...we'll go to public testimony. And then I...I know Director Arce said she will have to leave in...in a few minutes. So, mahalo for stepping in regarding this and providing opening remarks.

. . .OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY KA'Ā-1(13). . .

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CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Testifiers wanting to provide testimony should sign up in the back of the Committee's...in the lobby, join the online meeting via the TinyURL link to connect to the Zoom meeting or call into the phone number and enter the meeting code noted on today's agenda. Written testimony can be submitted via the eComment link @mauicounty.us/agendas. For individuals wishing to testify via Zoom, please use the raise-hand function by clicking on the raise-your-hand button on the bottom bar. Staff will ask you to enable your microphone and video prior to your turn to testify. You can unmute yourself when you are called on by clicking on the microphone and camera buttons in the lower left portion of the screen. For those calling in, please follow the prompts via phone. Press star 9 to raise your hand. And when it is your turn to testify, press star 6 to unmute. Staff will add names to the testifier list in the order testifiers sign up or raise their hands. For those on Zoom, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added. I will add the...I will then call the name you're logged in under or the last four digits of your phone number when it's your turn to testify. Please ensure your name appears in Zoom as the name you prefer to be referred to or as anonymous if you wish to testify anonymously. If you're in person, please notify Staff that you would like to testify anonymously. Otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of your testimony. Oral testimony is limited to three minutes. Staff has been monitoring individuals joining today's meeting by phone and by video, and we'll do our best to take each person up in an orderly fashion. Staff will now call on the first testifier. Sorry, I didn't pull up the link. I don't see anyone. Okay. I don't see anyone on the list, but I do see an individual, Mr. Law, approaching the podium. Please proceed, Mr. Law.

MR. LAW: Kanaka Law. Thank you for...good morning, everybody. Thank you for being here. And I mean everybody, the people on TV and the people in the audience too. I just heard on the radio this morning that the price of vegetables was up, like, 100 percent. So I want to thank everybody for...yeah, we got to do something now. And I save the rest of my time for the Kānaka o Maui.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Mr. Law. Okay. We'll do a last call for testifiers on this first agenda item. If anyone wishes to testify, you may please unmute yourself now. Hearing no one speaking up, we'll close public testimony on this first item, and we'll continue to receive written testimony. Are there any objections, Members?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

...CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY KA'Ā-1(13)...

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Aloha. Okay. Mahalo, again, to our resource persons for your opening remarks. Members, I will now open the floor for discussion on the Agriculture Micro Grant Program beginning with questions for...since we have four more minutes with Director Arce, if anyone has questions for Department of Ag., we can start there, and then we can go back to our resource persons in the Chamber. Committee Member Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Director Arce, you talked about...I think...is Ag. Grant

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Program 6.0 application...applicant data, is that from your office or from MEO? Oh, from MEO. Okay. But you do evaluate your program on an on-going basis, right, Director?

MS. ARCE: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So my concern is if we have been dependent on our food supply, 90 percent from outside sources, are we looking at, what my colleague always calls, the unmet needs? Or are we just supporting farmers who like to grow tomatoes, who like to grow potatoes? I mean, is there a connection between need and what we're trying to supply?

MS. ARCE: We are supporting farmers and agriculture producers that are...that we, you know, seem to think that they are going to be successful in improving the food supply, whether they're start up or larger operations.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: But wouldn't it make sense to support those farmers who supply items that we actually need as oppose to, let's say we have an overabundance at Costco and all the big suppliers, shouldn't we look at what...what...what our producers can succeed at, can excel at, and not have to compete with the large...the...the large stores?

MS. ARCE: Yeah. I understand what you're saying. Our role is not to dictate what they can grow, but we are here to support their...you know, their production. We have other agencies like CTAHR that we work with and NRCS that help to direct them in the right...you know, right direction, especially with this drought period, to kind of look at other food production that we can grow in accordance with the...with the weather. I...I believe it has to start somewhere. You know, it's up to the farmer what they want to grow. So as long as they're growing food, I believe that we're making a step in the right direction.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: But...yeah, they're growing food but if it doesn't make any difference in terms of our over-reliance on outside sources, I mean, should...shouldn't there be some rhyme and reason for why we're subsidizing farmers, not only because we look...we support the idea of diversified ag. But that diversified ag should make some kind of sense in terms of what the needs are so that we can help them become successful so that they can become self-reliant. You see what I'm saying? These are steps toward --

MS. ARCE: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: -- their own independence, right?

MS. ARCE: Yes, that's the reason why we're trying to develop a baseline foundation on what is here now. We just started a couple years ago, and we're slowly gathering information based on what was happening in the past as it got transferred to the Department.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

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MS. ARCE: And as we fill that baseline data, we'll be able to know more of where we can help with increasing production in those areas that we're lacking in . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. I know other people want to ask questions. Chair, I...I noticed that the cover of the mic is gone. See, I was going to steal hers, but she just came so we need one.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Steal Member Johnson's. . . *(laughing)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Alright. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: We'll return it after. And then I'll...I'll just add, Director Arce, that your Department also developed the Food and Nutrition Security Plan that's also helping to guide the County so that we can provide the food that our community needs support with.

MS. ARCE: Yes, that's correct. And we're also working on...with Planning to develop a section in the Countywide policy that includes food security. We also have the dashboard that has various layers of the food systems, which will be available on our website sometime soon. So that will have many layers of food system. So that would also be a help for our Department and our County.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director. I see that it's 9:31. Member Sinenci had a question...no...if you have a second to . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, real quick. I was just wondering, Director, you know, when we look at some agriculture programs, say, on the mainland where they're trying to get fresh produce to underserved communities, has...has the Department looked where a high concentration of, maybe, low-income families that might have a need for...or...or possibly was just recently kicked off of SNAP where they cannot get some fresh food. Has the Department looked at some of these underserved communities and maybe supported some of the farmers in those areas so that they can quickly get to some of these underserved populations?

MS. ARCE: Yes. Yeah, thank you for asking that. Our Food Access Coordinator, Lauren, has already begun collecting that kind of information and has brought some of that information from her background when she was with Healthy Initiatives Program, I believe, under the Department of Health. And as you know, we did secure 2.2 million for Hāna to help with their food security, which they'll use for their development of their kitchen. So, yes, we've been working with those rural communities, as well as Molokai and Lāna'i.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Director, for that because I think with the aggregation center, farmers can go ahead and...and do value-added products that they can ship...you know, export outside of the community as well as in the community, so thank you for that.

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MS. ARCE: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Sinenci. Okay. Member Paltin just joined us in the Chamber. And just to catch you...I think you were listening the whole time but Director Arce has to leave. So we're going to let her go unless you had, like, a super burning question. We also have MEO with us who can answer specific questions about the Micro Grant Program.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I think I asked her in the overview, but I don't know if she got the answer between then and now about if we are affected by the fertilizer in the Strait of Hormuz situation.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Director.

MS. ARCE: No, I...I did not get the answer.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director, for staying a little longer to answer some of the Members' questions. Appreciate it.

MS. ARCE: You're welcome.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I lā maika'i.

MS. ARCE: All right. Mahalo.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Members, I'll put three minutes on the clock for questions with MEO. And I'll...I'll go by raise of hands. Member Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Maggie, hi. I'm sure you feel very comfortable in these Chambers. I'd be asking you the same question as Director Arce.

MS. BATANGAN: Yes. Thank you, Chair Lee. Of course, I can only speak to our piece of the puzzle with these micro grants and the specific funding. But I will say that, as part of their application, the farmers submit a farms needs statement. And part of how the grant is evaluated is based on their scale of food production that goes to our community. So whether they're small scale, moderate scale, large scale, or fully operational, if you are a fully-operational food production farm that is serving our community, that is accounted for in our decision making for awarding the grants. So, although that's just a small piece of the puzzle, that's part of the approach we've been taking to make sure that we're addressing needs within our community on the largest scale that we can with these micro grants.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, let's say our Department doesn't have the resources or

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the time to do a more comprehensive study, would you be able to do that? And I'm talking about rather than asking the...the little farmer which is...is starting out, can we check with Costco and ask them, and check with Foodland, and check with Safeway, all the big supermarkets; where do they get their food from, what...what kind of volume do they order, so that we know what kinds of foods that they need, you know. Because the idea is...is not to subsidize little farmers for the rest of their lives. Our...the idea...this is a business venture, and we want them to succeed and fill gaps, you know, where it's not being filled now. So would you be interested in doing something like that if the Department can't do it?

MS. BATANGAN: I'm not sure that we have the in-house expertise at this moment to do something like that. But I will say that we have been working collaboratively with the Department to talk about how these grants can address food security moving forward. And part of our role in that is the data collection process. So I am hopeful that we would be able to direct our data gathering efforts in a way that would probably address your questions on a large scale. But I know that the Food, Nutrition, and Security Plan is being actively worked on by the Department, and they have asked for our assistance in different areas.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Lee. I'll...I'll add that in our discussions it takes...it takes time. So some...some of the funding, some of the grants were supporting expansion of infrastructure. This...there's been five years of...of grants that have been issued. And so, as the...the farm operations expand, the hope is that it will build capacity as they go so that they can scale up as, you know, you're...you're noting in your question. At least that's the...the hope. Part of the challenge that was shared by Deputy Director Hewahewa is that the...the income that farmers have to rely on the farm is still difficult to live off of. And sometimes it, you know, forces folks out of farming business alone. So, that's...that's one of the challenges that we're hoping to capture in the survey that Executive Director Batangan shared in her opening remarks.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Can I comment?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I fully understand what you're saying. And I...I can see, for the time being, the...the best thing that the County can do is to improve the administration of the grants. The...get them out in...in a timely manner, and that's on us, and that's how we can help people succeed. But, you know, for the...for the near term, but for the long term we need to know what the master plan is. Okay? Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Lee. And I don't disagree with the other grants, but with the micro grants the way it's administered is a little different than the way we administer the other grants. If, Ms. Batangan, you would...you would speak to that, please?

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MS. BATANGAN: Yes. So, we are administering the program on behalf of the County. This has allowed us to be very nimble and to get funds out to people quickly once our grant is executed with the County. And we've been very grateful for the Department of Ag.'s partnership in that. I will also say, the numbers that you see before you are from 90-day impact surveys from the farmers who have received these grants. So we are seeing big changes in their operations very quickly. And I think that's especially encouraging to see. With this little bit of support, they're able to make large-scale impacts for their personal production capabilities.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Lee. Okay, Member Sinenci, followed by Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you, Chair. And I, too, kind of wanted to add to your line of questioning. Is...is there a portion of the grant where...and...and Member Rawlins-Fernandez talked about building up the infrastructure. Is there almost like a cohort of sorts where some of the applicants are working with the other ones to share some of their resources. Say, for instance, one of them might use their funds to get a tractor, the other ones didn't. Can they use...are they...are they going beyond their farms creating more of a...kind of like a cohort? Or...or is one working on getting more mulch that they can share with the other farmers that don't have to purchase it at cost. You know those types of things to...to kind of build out the...not just one farm but a collection of farms. And then maybe the next step would be, hey, you've been successful with...with this product, maybe we'll send you, I don't know, classes, or something, to...that you can, you know, start on the next level...or the next step of farming; something like that? I don't...I don't know, just throwing it out there.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Sinenci, for that question. And the grant doesn't require...I think that would be community driven if...if folks wanted to resource pool in that way. I know that on Molokai there is an effort with the members of Hawai'i Farmers Union to create that kind of sharing of equipment and tools. I'll invite MEO to add anything else that you --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you for that.

MS. BATANGAN: Yes, I think that's a great explanation. The only thing I will add is that I think we very much see this grant being sort of the step after people hui up. So they come to us once they have accessed what is needed outside of the resources that they've already pooled and already have; so we're able to come in and fill that...that gap.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: That next step.

MS. BATANGAN: Uh-huh.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Sinenci. Member Sugimura, followed by Member Paltin.

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COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. Actually, Member Sinenci asked the question that I've been hearing in the community. So, thank you, Member Sinenci, about sharing, you know, equipment that other farmers may have. And it's nice to hear that there may be an effort on Molokai or with Hawai'i Farmers Union. So I hope that they...they do that here on Maui, however that can happen. MEO, do you have a thought on that, as to how we can support that to also have it here on Maui?

MS. BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Member Sugimura, for the question. Like I said, I think our role is stepping in once they have sort of started that assessment of what is missing outside of these groups that they're able to do the sharing with. But we're happy to support that in...in any way that we can moving forward.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. And also, I'm...I'm really glad that you are doing this study, right, because all this money...this is, like, the six year and what is...what is the outcome, so thank you. I think it was Member Rawlins-Fernandez who put that in the budget, you know, to make sure that this happened, and maybe we should look at it for other grants of this magnitude to see its effectiveness. The other thing is...I don't know if you heard, like maybe a year ago I heard the City and County of Honolulu were talking about how they're now supporting ag. And I thought, oh, they copied Member Rawlins-Fernandez because there's...there's a pot of money. I don't know what department that they have, but it's doing something very similar, you know, to support ag. and to, you know, build the industry. So, kudos to you twice on that. I...the other question I have is that can...can a farmer apply twice for this pot of money, in different years, of course? And especially if we're talking about them growing their business, so at some point, do they then become eligible because they are, you know, expanding their capabilities and they need help to take it further? Or is it one time and that's it?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for that question, Member Sugimura. The condition that we put on this funding, that we all voted on, was that the preference would go to first-time applicants first. And then if there are applications of folks that may not qualify or hit the marks, then we would look at applicants that have received grants. I...I...I will...I will add that Kula, the district, received some of the most grants, 105; so they're definitely benefiting from this program. Ms. Batangan --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I guess it's a study...there's a study that I don't have. I...did it come by email . . . *(inaudible)*. . . --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah, it's --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It was just distributed . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . this morning. And Staff is working on uploading it to Granicus.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I hear the...I heard the bell.

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CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, it's on Granicus already? Okay. It's on Granicus already, so you can see some of that. And like was shared earlier, we...we just planned out how the data collection will happen. And I was just really excited to share this with you folks before we go into budget because they'll be working hard to collect data based on some of the questions that we worked on together with the Department of Ag. that will help to paint the picture of the impact that this investment has had on our community. So that after the data collection is done, we'll...we'll have more specific answers. But I...I wanted the Committee to also, like, have an opportunity to, you know, provide feedback as well at the beginning of data collection. Ms. Batangan, did you want to add anything I missed?

MS. BATANGAN: No, I think that covers most of it. I will just say that, you know, the data that we have now has already told us a wonderful story. And this is just from the basic grant reporting data that we received from people after they've received the grant. So I'm very confident that with our survey data, coupled with evaluating this data we already have, it will tell a really good story about, not only where we met needs, but where needs may still remain, or maybe where farmers have continued to struggle after these grants, or where they've succeeded because of it. So just based on the work that we've done so far, I'm...I'm very hopeful that we will have a very thorough and robust story to tell.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. Mahalo, Member Sugimura. Member Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you. I'm stoked to have this before budget so we can have, like, you know, the facts and the data, and that you compiled it for us so we don't have to. So I'm looking at the green sheet, and is this just applicants or were they awarded?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Batangan.

MS. BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. These are just the applicants for this year.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh, okay.

MS. BATANGAN: So the application has closed, and we're processing what they've turned in so far, but we just wanted to include that data in some capacity.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Great. Great. And then some of the folks, do they fall into one...more than one category? Okay. Did we...I can't remember if we restricted flower-producing farmers. Are they allowed?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: We did. You did, and we supported it. Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: We restricted or we allowed?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: We...we set aside a condition for --

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh, great . . . *(inaudible)*. . . --

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CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And it looks there are nine.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Nine.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yeah. Applicants.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Yeah. I saw that they were considering banning the purple flower lei, so we got to build up our local industry before we...I don't know if it's going to pass at the State, but it's a good conversation. The other question I had, other than the start-up farms, is everybody selling their...their...I don't know if you call it a produce if it's animals, but selling their outputs or items?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mr. Daly.

MR. DALY: Can you ask that question one more time, a little louder?

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh, sure. Sorry. Aside from the start-up farms, are the rest of the applicants selling their products?

MR. DALY: They are producing. I would say the majority are selling, but there are quite a few that...you know the...the...what they are producing and growing is actually distributed and donated either within families or to other organizations.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Okay. And then I heard in the opening comments, I think from Ms. Batangan, that they noti...you guys have noticed trends of success. Could we dive deeper into that of what they are and how we're continuing to support those trends or, like, whatever we need to know to make those types of decisions to support the trends of success.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Ms. Batangan.

MS. BATANGAN: Yes, absolutely. Thank you very much. So some of the trends of success are shown in this handout that you have under the Primary Farm Impacts information. So, we've seen, for the vast majority of farms, increased production. We've seen increased revenue for folks that that applies to. We've also seen pretty substantial numbers in terms of increased safety and health, which is very encouraging. Marketing, and visibility, and increased business acumen, I think we can see that those are probably areas for opportunity where we can offer access to additional resources for folks so that they feel supported in that area as well. And then we're confident that our data specialist will also be looking into the other impacts category and kind of flushing that out for you folks in our full report.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you. And then I'm...I'm kind of interested, I don't know if closed-loop systems are the correct word, but I see fruits and vegetables, livestock and poultry, and...and like that. And do they link up together? Like, if you have off-grade fruit or nonconsumable fruit to give to the livestock and poultry and then the...what

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comes out of the livestock and poultry go back to the fruit and vegetable so they taste better and...and like that? Like, that sort of closed-loop systems. Like, are...are you able to connect the producers of each with each other because, you know, the fertilizer that we import is mostly, like, petroleum-based and why panic if it's organic.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Batangan.

MS. BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. I think it's a very interesting question, and I think it's somewhere where if we were to ask the Department of Agriculture how we can best word that question . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . to our farmers. One of the things that I think is really exciting is that by keeping contact with these farmers it gives us unique opportunity to have those lines of communication opened already and staying in contact with them moving forward. So I think that could provide a good opportunity for gathering that type of information.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you so much. My next round is going to be fish questions.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . . *(laughing)* . . . Mahalo, Committee Vice-Chair Paltin. Okay. Any other questions? We'll go to round two, starting with Committee Vice-Chair Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you. Can you educate us about the seven fish...the fish products with the (7)? Is it like aquaponics, or real fishponds, local i'a, or what...what...or do they catch the fish from the ocean? How does that work?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mr. Daly.

MR. DALY: If you could kindly repeat the question?

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Sure. Can you educate us about the fish...fish grants? Like, where do those fish come from? Are they...is it all aquaponics, is it local i'a, is it from the ocean, tidepools, or...

MR. DALY: It would all be through aquaponics, that I am aware of. I would say maybe there's a handful, at best, that have applied that are currently using aquaponics as part of...part of their production.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Is it like tilapia, trout, catfish, mullet? Oh.

MR. DALY: That...that's a valid question. I'm going to assume it's tilapia. But we...unless they provide that information, we're not asking that.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh.

MR. DALY: But we can.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Yeah, because I remember Upcountry, they had this big operation and then when the power went out all the fish died, which was really unfortunate. So when

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you award the fish grants, do you have...like, do you ask that kind of question, if they have back-up power systems? Because I was really impressed with his operation and so sad that it went under, and now we're having big power outages again. And so, like, have we learned from those other people's experiences, or whatever?

MR. DALY: So, we have not...we have not gone to that depths of infrastructure outside of a request for certain power-related shoulder operations for existing farms. But we can, obviously, ask that question, for sure.

MS. BATANGAN: Sorry, I will just add to that as well. So when the farmers submit their farm needs statement, David is quite modest about this, but his area of expertise is really looking into the sustainability of these folks' businesses and how that can be supported. So that type of infrastructure and having food production capabilities would be something that would likely be contained in their farm needs statement. So when it comes to, like, what type of fish people are producing, we could probably pull that data from the needs statements that we have.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: And then the other part about increased marketing and visibility, I just was wondering, like, if having a marketing on the Ag. Department's . . . *(timer sounds)*. . . website, like these people are promoted by micro grants, check them out, try their produce, or something, that could be a value-added bonus to the micro grant. And then like, you know...or like, oh, this is our taxpayer-funded dollars at work, I want to try their bananas, or trout, or whatever it is, like trout chips because sometimes you can just fry up the bones and it's good.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Paltin. Ms. Batangan.

MS. BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. We provide an incredible amount of data on these applicants and grants to the Department of Ag. So I am positive that they would have the information from us to be able to pursue something like that if they wanted to.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Yeah. Like, I mean, if they even just have their logo and just put it up on a spreadsheet...on the site, like, I would check them out.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Committee Vice-Chair Paltin. Okay. Seeing no other questions and SB1432 is coming up next, we're going to take our morning recess. I want to thank Executive Director Batangan, Mr. Daly, Ms. Uyechi for joining your wonderful team. And Ms. Cabebe, mahalo for being with us in person, as well, today. Members, if there are no objections, we'll defer this item. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then we'll take recess to 10:10. Okay? Kōmike Aloha Āina is now in recess. . . . *(gavel)*. . .

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RECESS: 9:58 a.m.

RECONVENE: 10:22 a.m.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Will the Kōmike Aloha Āina please return to order. It's 10:22. Mahalo, Members, for that extended recess. I did get to testify before having to reconvene, so I appreciate that flexibility.

ITEM 1(12): CLIMATE ACTION AND RESILIENCY PLAN

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Next, on our agenda is...let's see...Mana'o Ho'okele Mālama Āina A Ho'oholuholu, Climate Action and Resiliency Plan. For this item, we'll receive a development update on the public dashboard for the 2025 approved Climate Action And Resiliency Plan. Joining us today for this second item we have Director Shayne Agawa from Department of Management and Mr. William Jay, Environmental Program Specialist from EP&S under DEM. If there are no objections, Members, I would like to designate Director Agawa and Mr. Jay as resource persons in accordance with Rule 18(A) of the Rules of the Council. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And I will...oh, wait, let me see. Through the passage of Bill 136 (2024) we established Chapter 20.44, Climate Action And Resiliency Plan. We added 20-44-050(D), an online dashboard must track the progress of the plan's specific recommendations by December 31st. The online dashboard must be accessible from the County's website upon approval of the plan and must be updated on a monthly basis. Okay. Director Agawa is...is also multitasking. He's in a MEMA storm briefing, so hopefully he's able to step away for a second. I know he...he really wanted to try. Oh, he's trying to log on. Do you see him? Oh, you just let him. Okay, perfect. Okay. Mahalo nui, Director Agawa, for...for stepping away from your meeting to provide opening remarks. Director.

MR. AGAWA: *(Audio interference)* Good morning, Members. Just want to thank you for this opportunity to...to provide an update for the CARP and to showcase all the hard work that our EP&S Division has been doing to...to work on the CARP. Today, we have William Jay, who's the head of our Environmental *(audio interference)* section, the EP&S Division *(audio interference)* he will be leading this presentation and he can also help with Q&A*(audio interference)*. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director. Mr. Jay.

MR. JAY: Let's see. Good? All right. Morning, everybody. Thanks for having me today. I'm here to provide an update on a few questions that you all had concerning the Climate Action Resiliency Plan: primarily the plan itself, the dashboard implementation progress, and upcoming milestones. -It's on?

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CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then we're going to share screen?

MR. JAY: Yeah. All right.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then if you could speak directly into the mic.

MR. JAY: Got it. Better?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Better. There we go.

MR. JAY: All right. Okay, there we go.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, if you could close that blue box.

MR. JAY: All right. So, just a few short slides here. The overview, you know just going through, is the CARP itself, as it's often referred, Climate Action and Resiliency Plan. The dashboard progress and upcoming milestones, so as it stands right now, this is kind of an overview of what it'll look like. If you go online, and you pull up the County of Maui's Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, it was solicited, I believe, in 2020 and adopted in 2022. So we're coming up on a period where we've been asked to update the...the plan, which I'll get into some specifics shortly here. The principal objectives, as identified in Ordinance 5756 in 2024, it's a bill for establishing a climate action and resiliency plan for the County of Maui. Some of the key components include, but aren't limited to, transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy, achieving negative carbon emissions, strategies and action items being updated every ten years and an online dashboard being posted so that we can track the progress and that there's transparency in the action items. There's a deadline of 2045 for these objectives for...primarily for transitioning towards renewable energy and achieving negative carbon emissions. There was a deadline to have the dashboard online and active, I believe, December 31st, 2025. So we got that compliant, Phase 1, as we call it. I'll get into Phase 2 as well. So this is just a short description of the overview and purpose. If you haven't seen this before, there's ten overarching categories, 47 strategies, 167 action items as it stands right now. And if you go to mauicounty.gov/CARP, C-A-R-P, it'll pull up the dashboard itself, which will give you access to the PDF file of the plan itself, as well as all of the strategies listed by their current status, and you can click into each strategy and see each individual action item. There are indicators there to show whether or not it was...has been started, hence, you know, in planning or in progress, if it's not started, and if it's complete. Looking at some of the other programs and plans across the State of Hawai'i, we are one of the only ones that is currently tracking their progress actively in this type of way, transparently. So this is something that was put online, I believe, in November of 2025, and we'll have some updates to it in the future. Upcoming milestones, so a few upcoming milestones for the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan are updating the plan itself. I know many people refer to it as the CARP, as it stands right now. In the 'Ōlelo it'll be ka Papa Ho'olālā Ho'oulu 'Āina. Another aspect of it will be hiring and onboarding a person to assist with the plan itself, collecting metrics, data information, and getting that channeled to the dashboard. So yes, metric collection is part of it. We've started collecting metrics by each moku from some of our sustainability grants.

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That will be a part of Phase 2 in terms of publishing those results. But right now, the main thing is tracking the overall strategies as...as evident on the dashboard as it exists. And then the...the fourth update is Phase 2 of the dashboard. I'm sorry. Phase...sorry, Phase 2 of the dashboard, fourth update here, Phase 2 of the dashboard, which will be more of an interactive dashboard that can be used as a tool, both for monitoring and tracking internally and externally as well as an education and outreach tool. So, expected timelines, the CARP update, itself, the RFP, we've had a cross-departmental working group, collected feedback, currently synthesizing and finalizing all feedback. So you'll see an RFP solicited within, you know, a couple of months or so. This Fiscal Year it'll...you'll see it solicited. But we plan to award the RFP and the contract itself, the following Fiscal Year, in Fiscal Year '27. The award, it'll be made in Fiscal Year '27, as I said, and it could take anywhere from 12...as much as 18 months, realistically. The previous solicitation from the Mayor's Office came in 2020, and I think they designated about 18 months. So, that's in the works to get that updated, get plans updated. The dashboard itself, we're going to be posting updates on a quarterly basis. And, again, collecting metrics, you know, that's begun for the sustainability grants as we hire, you know, a staff member to assist with this. You know, that'll be branching out and going and collecting more information across different departments, and just making sure it's tracking all public and private progress against measures and impacts related to climate change. Yeah. And then Phase 2 of the dashboard, again, you know, I kind of mentioned it before, but it'll be more of an interactive display. You could use it as a education or outreach tool and both for tracking progress internally, externally in a more integrated and comprehensive way than it currently exists right now. Thanks.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo, Mr. Jay. All right. Okay. Members, we'll take public testimony before I open the floor to questions. And before I open public testimony, I failed to recognize our Deputy Corp. Counsel Adrian Reifsnnyder. Is that correct? Okay. Mahalo for being with us today.

. . .OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY KA'Ā-1(12). . .

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Testimony on the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan is now open. There's one testifier on the list, Joseph McCorkle.

MR. MCCORKLE: Hello. Mahalo for taking my...my testimony here today. I have a question, you...you had mentioned that the dashboard was going to have quarterly updates, but I thought I had heard earlier that it was going to be monthly updates. Was that quarterly update on the...the dashboard progress, itself and not just updates to the contents of the dashboard? Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for your testimony, Mr. McCorkle, and when we get to the Q&A deliberations portion, I'll be happy to answer the question. Next, we have, online, Kai Nishiki to testify.

MS. NISHIKI: Aloha, Chair and Committee Members. Well, how relevant to have this on your agenda and thank you for having your little...your...your recess or your break

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because we were in the same meeting at the. . .*(inaudible)*. . .Water and Land. I was testifying on climate adaptation bills that are going on, so very relevant. I...I really wanted to share. I've been down in North Kihei. Our family's business is right in the impact zone there in North Kihei by the old Suda Store. And in that area, there's a very significant issue that needs to be addressed. And it...and it really is about, like, how...how, as a community, it would be really nice to...to look at, collectively, how we protect our properties and address flooding issues and...and specifically is. In that area in North Kihei the shoreline condos have raised their walls on South Kihei Road, put in flood control devices...gates that are, like, big...big metal walls. And then...and I'm not sure who is...who put up the railings on the bridge there, but I can show you guys videos of how...you know, we are not looking at the cumulative impacts of how all these condos put up their walls, the...somebody, State or County, put these railings on the...on the drainage bridges. And so, when the big water comes down the mountain, and hits into this small little area right there, and then all those people have the walls, and that railing on that bridge it acts...it...it...the big water comes down, hits the wall, then bounces back and funnels right into, you know, long-time local businesses. And so, like, everybody is worrying about themselves. I understand, you know private property owners are...are...are doing that. But like businesses like ours, we don't have the money and ability. And, you know, like, all these people they make the walls and then they get after-the-fact permits. And so, like it's created this huge problem where there isn't a coordinated effort. And so, I don't really want to like point fingers or whatever, I just want to share my observations that there needs to be coordinated community efforts on...on what the impacts are when all these people are all doing these things and then how it's protecting them, perhaps. And all these shoreline vacation rentals, oh, they're getting protected, but how it impacts other people needs to be looked at. And that railing on the bridge...the...I...I was down there yesterday and...and there were County officials looking at it. So I know that there will be discussion about this. In fact, they're probably having a discussion right now at that FEMA meeting at the...at the college with...with all the officials. But I'm just asking for the County Council in all of this, the discussions about what we're doing about climate action and resiliency, that we really look at this as . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . everybody needs to be at the table in...in discussing how...how we address this and what the impacts are because I'll show you guys the videos and how it just funnels down . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . because of all of these walls and gates. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Nishiki. Questions for our testifier? Okay. Seeing none. I couldn't agree with you more, Ms. Nishiki. Mahalo for your testimony. Okay. Let's see if we have anyone else signed up. Okay. I see no one else on the list. So, we'll now take our testifier in the Chambers.

MR. LAW: It's...it's me, Jasee Law. Luna Ho'omalua Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. I'm kind of interested, maybe you could share how Molokai is doing. You know, they don't have as much asphalt and concrete to wash all the water down, so they might probably be doing better than South Maui. This is one plan that probably won't be put on a shelf because there's...the...the shelf got washed away, so the...probably carrying the plan with you there in your back pocket. I'm going to go back to a familiar topic of mine, which is the United States Administration. They have...seem to have their head in the

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sand, and I don't know what's down there underneath the sand, but probably the Israeli Administration is also down in there. And I'm pretty sure the Councilor from Lahaina is going to bring up the Strait of Hormuz on this one. So, thank you for...Maui County Aupuni for having a plan, a realistic plan. And maybe the rest of the world can learn from the Kingdom of Hawai'i to mālama 'āina.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Any questions for our testify? Seeing...seeing none.

MR. LAW: I forgot to say, we have a distinguished guest in the...in the Chamber today, is David Raatz.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Mahalo, Mr. Law. Okay. We'll do a last call for testimony. Anyone wishing to testify, you may unmute yourself at this time. Hearing no one speaking up, we'll close oral testimony and continue to accept written testimony into the record. Members, any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo.

. . .CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY KA'Ā-1(12) . . .

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And then before I open the floor to questions, I'll thank Mr. McCorkle for that catch. I looked up the Code, and it indeed says quarterly. So an online dashboard must track the progress of the plan's specific recommendations by December 31st, 2025. The online dashboard must be accessible from the County's website upon approval of the plan and must be updated on a quarterly basis. When I initially drafted that amendment, it was monthly, and then we compromised to quarterly. Okay. So I will put three minutes on the clock, and by a show of hands I'll call on folks when they're ready for questions. Committee Member Batangan, followed by Committee Vice-Chair Paltin, and then Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Administration, for being here. I have a question related to work from home. So, Section 3-9 of the County Charter is declaration of policy and then, among other things, list out policies that the County is to adopt in part for climate change adaptation. Subsection 5 is implementing guidelines to allow County employees to telework and have alternative work schedules. Has the County started implementing this? I don't see it as a...as a strategy on their municipal or in transportation in the climate adaptation strategy. The CARP that you mentioned, is it something we've been working on? Because I know people have been working from home. I just don't know if it's being tracked here, do we have the data elsewhere, is it actually part of our strategy for climate change adaptation, or is it just like something else that the County been doing because of COVID. Do you have any data or any update on this?

MR. JAY: That...do I personally have any data on it right now, no. If you submit that

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question in writing, I can look into it, research it. And if there is an action item specifically tied to that, as it relates to the CARP, I can make sure that's updated. Another good thing about making this dashboard public is that if you notice something, we're saying, hey, you know, I know this might have been done. Check with them, send something over to the Department of Environmental Management. And so we can have it updated. That's part of it being public. So if we're not collecting or having accurately displaying information, we can get that done. But...yeah, if you have questions regarding that just send it through Department.--

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Staff noted your question, Member Batangan.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Okay.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. Committee Vice-Chair Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Jay. I...I like the dashboard. Wondering if that sub action...or the actions under the strategy are going to be color coded with the status as well. And being that we're a three-island County, like, I...I know for sure we're working on, like, evacuation routes and things in West Maui. I'm not sure if it's being done countywide, and like that. But...I mean, what is top of mind for me right now and may need to be a written question, is in designing our infrastructure or...or anything in...in my memory we...we allow projects to be built to the 50-year storm, which...I think that whole rating system...are we looking at a new method of rating based on like volume, or something, because I don't know how many year 100-year storms have happened, and I'm not even 50 years old yet. So do you think that's a writing question?

MR. JAY: Part of it is an in-writing question, part of it I can answer now. So the first part related to action items and color coding, it was a discussion that was had related to, you know, just being compliant and getting this online first.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Uh-huh.

MR. JAY: And we made the decision not to identify each individual action item in terms of the progress. It looked a little too busy on the --

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Uh-huh.

MR. JAY: -- current format and the website; it just didn't feasible at the time. And so, in order to comply and make sure we had an active dashboard it was just, okay, first things first, let's get this going.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh, yeah, this is a great first step.

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MR. JAY: And then, you know, Phase 2 coming. And in Phase 2, certainly, you know each individual action item will be reported on, transparent, visible in terms of progress made against it. The question related to evacuation routes, 50-year planning, yeah, that might be one better...better for in-writing to the Department. And that might not be Department of Environmental Management, it could be another department which part of this plan is --

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I think...I think the Genasys Protect app is like countywide.

MR. JAY: Yeah.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: But I know that, like, specific bottlenecks that had occurred for us in West Maui are...are in the process of being addressed in that...like, we're trying to make more through streets, and stuff. So, I mean, I know Genasys Protect is countywide but in addressing those potential bottlenecks. But, yeah, I guess...I mean, I just can't get past the...the storm ratings and what we're building towards and just...also I think on the...the mitigating impacts from sea level rise, or something, manage retreat...the managed . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . retreat one, in Lahaina we are planning for infrastructure to be redundant besides under Front Street. I think the other one might be Luakini ,so that could be potentially in design in one town. I don't know if that makes the cut or what.

MR. JAY: Yeah, I'm familiar with a few managed retreat projects actively going on, which, you know, also it's how do we want to represent our actions. You know, is it strictly just public sector, or is public and private as well? Is it just public funding? For example, The Nature Conservancy is working on something that could be attributed to managed retreat in Olowalu. And so, therefore you could have something and say, okay, this is in progress, not necessarily in design, you know, if...if no acts had been done but that's kind of how we're measuring it out but noted.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Committee Vice-Chair Paltin. Member Sinenci, followed by Member Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair. And mahalo, Mr. Jay, for your presentation. Does...I guess the Division under EP&S, do you give out grants?

MR. JAY: This is related to EP&S?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Member Sinenci, I think the...I know it says Climate Action Resiliency Plan, but the specific thing we're taking up under this is for the dashboard.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, just for the dashboard.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And...and...yeah. I know EP&S issues grants but that's not

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his position.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: And...and this particular...they don't give out any --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: EP&S does --

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: But not --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- not CARP.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Not CARP. Okay, thank you. And then I guess for...for me, you know, I had some questions about some of the efforts at the...at the County level. For example, the Department of Water, their largest cost is their electric bill. I was wondering if you guys kind of tracked if they are moving towards, maybe, solar to kind of supplement some of their electric bill. And then as far as...well, East Maui, we're trying to look at some alternatives, maybe diversion programs from our waste...our landfills. So is the Department also tracking...or, I guess, maybe looking for investments into landfill diversion programs? Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mr. Jay.

MR. JAY: Good questions. So the part related to Department of Water, cost of electric, and if we're transitioning to solar, I'd submit that one in writing to the Department for clarity on that. With the second question related to waste diversion and capacity of landfills, yes, we are actively working and planning on things in terms of waste diversion. It's also part of the State goals from the climate action pathways to meet certain waste diversion measures. So those...some of that is in planning.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, I...I understand Kauai County, they're run...and Oahu, they're running out of some of their landfill space as well, so they're...so they're actively looking for alternatives. Well, they don't have...they're nearing the capacity of their landfills. Yeah. So thank you for that.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Sinenci. Okay. Member Sugimura, followed by Member Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. And perfect timing to have this update. And I...I had a question regarding how the energy projects...are you also working closely with...or talking to them?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mr. Jay.

MR. JAY: Is Department of Environmental Management working closely with the energy projects? Is that your question?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah. Right.

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MR. JAY: I would submit a question in writing so that Director Agawa can respond to that.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. I thought maybe it would tie into your study. The...we got an email from Darla Palmer, who worked on this. I don't know if she was a consultant, but we just got an email saying, you know --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: She was. --

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: -- that this will come up. And so, what I'm wondering is are you now continuing discussions with the community, and with her, and that group that she represented?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mr. Jay.

MR. JAY: I have not talked to her in months. I met her within the first week that I transitioned into the County of Maui. The Climate Action Resiliency Plan update is not being actively worked on right now. So is she being spoken to about the plans and updates? No, that is going to be for the successful contractor who wins the award to then go out into the community, talk to stakeholders, nonprofits, public and private sector, community members. And that's part of the drafting of the RFP, which is going on right now. As I understand, she was involved in the process for the plan that came out in 2022, and I will leave it at that.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Sugimura. And then Member Lee had all her questions...she had many questions; they were all answered. Mahalo for that. So for my turn...okay. Let's see. When do you folks plan to have Phase 2 complete?

MR. JAY: Phase 2 of the dashboard, right? The plan is to contract it out in Fiscal Year '27. So we've identified a few vendors to solicit quotes to, but that is a Fiscal Year '27 project. It's also going to be important to onboard new...a new hire for the CARP role to assist in that, collecting data information, not just from our own work but across the County and in the community. But I can't give you a specific date, but I can tell you that it is a priority for Fiscal Year '27. You know, I can't put a date on it, but it is going in Fiscal Year '27, yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. But the dashboard will continue to be updated quarterly.

MR. JAY: Quarterly, correct. Yes.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. And then you mentioned to Member Sugimura about the RFP. Do you have an approximate timeline for that? What quarter are we out?

MR. JAY: Do we hope that you can see it publicly and that it's solicited, you know, before June 30th? A few things need to be finalized before that's ready, but the plan is to award

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that...that contract in Fiscal Year '27 as well . . . *(inaudible)*. . . --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay, good. You answered the question that I was going to follow up with, which was how would you pay for that because that's the end of the Fiscal Year. So, that'll come --

MR. JAY: Yeah --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- under FY'27.

MR. JAY: -- come under Fiscal Year '27, yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay, great. For Phase 2 you said that...of the dashboard, that that will be a priority of FY'27 but are you in the process of...or is the Department in the process of drafting an RFP the way it....it will have one for the community outreach?

MR. JAY: Is it in the process of drafting an RFP for --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: The Phase 2 of the dashboard.

MR. JAY: Have not drafted the RFP for that yet. One RFP at a time, so getting the update ready for the overall plan first, but yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo, Mr. Jay. Okay. Members, any round-two questions? Okay. Seeing none. Well, thank you so much, Mr. Jay, for all your work on getting that dashboard live, and we look forward to the progress. Any closing remarks?

MR. JAY: Thank you all.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo. Okay. Members, if there are no objections, we'll close...we'll defer this item, Climate Action And Resiliency Plan, and we'll thank Mr. Jay and release him back into the wild. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Members. Okay. And then we will invite Director Raatz to join us on the floor for our next item.

ITEM 1(5): MAUI COUNTY'S TRANSITION TO A BILINGUAL GOVERNMENT

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Our third and last item is Maui County's Transition To A

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Bilingual Government. When preparing to post my agenda for today's meeting, there was a new format I was asked to use which separated the English and...and the Ōlelo Hawai'i versions of the agenda instead of having them combined the way that we had been doing for the past year plus. And we...we also discussed this in Committee, I believe, last January with Department of Ōiwi Resources when we were talking about the formatting of the agenda. And at that time, in Committee, I didn't hear any feedback that was not supportive of the direction that we're heading. I was told that the new format was intended to keep all agendas consistent and professional looking. Mahalo, OCS, for always making us look good. I understand that there may be Committee Chairs who would prefer not have the Ōlelo Hawai'i version of the agenda. I placed this last item on the agenda so that we can discuss our efforts in transitioning to a bilingual government, as required in Charter Section 13-17 and Ordinance 5758, especially regarding the Ōlelo Hawai'i agendas. And I'm glad that we have Deputy Corp. Counsel Reifsnnyder with us as well so that if we have any legal questions we have both our Director and Deputy Corp. Counsel. So in County Code, Chapter 2.02, Bilingual Government, 2.02.10...010, Official Writings. This chapter is intended to implement Charter Section 13-17, which provides that the County must operate as a bilingual government and to promote the use of Ōlelo Hawai'i. Charter Section 13-17 also provides that official writings of the County must be prepared and made available in both official State languages, English and Ōlelo Hawai'i, as determined by Ordinance. Section 2.02.020, Public Meeting Agendas, all official public meeting agendas required under Part 1, Chapter 92, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, must be published in English and Ōlelo Hawai'i. And this ordinance took effect on September 1st, 2025. In the Charter, Section 13-17, Bilingual Government, the County shall operate as a bilingual government and shall implement opportunities to promote inclusion of the Hawaiian language. Official writings of the County shall be prepared and made available in both official State languages, English and Hawaiian, as determined by ordinance. The County shall provide appropriate oral language services to any resident who orally communicates with its officers or employees in the Hawaiian language. And that was amended in 2024. So those are my opening remarks for this 7(B) item, and I will open public testimony before we...I open the floor for questions from the Committee Members. Okay. I have...oops...listed...oh, okay. Names aren't on the list yet. Okay. But I see hands raised by three individuals and I...I believe it was Kaala Fay Camara...Camera...Camara, followed by Kawaipuna Kalipi. Aloha.

. . .OPEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY KA'Ā-1(5). . .

MS. CAMARA: Hi. Aloha e nā 'elele o ka 'Aha o ke Kalana o Maui. 'O wau iho nō 'oe Ka'ala Fay Camara, he kupa no Moloka'i nui a Hina. Aloha. My name is Kaala Fay Camara, and I stand before you today as a Native Hawaiian, an educator, administrator, and a proud member of a community deeply rooted in this 'āina. I am here to reiterate that we continue to support Maui County's transition to a bilingual government. The State of Hawai'i has already established the law and practice that 'Ōlelo Hawai'i is an official language of this State. Alongside this, there's a clear commitment to ensuring that Hawaiian language immersion education is available to any family who chooses it for

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their child. As a principal of Kualapuʻu Public Charter School [sic], a bilingual school on Molokai that offers educational pathways through English medium education and Hawaiian language medium education, we are but one of at least fifteen schools across Maui County; including Maui, Molokai and Lānaʻi, that offer bilingual education to the next generation of keiki reflecting a growing movement of families choosing to raise their children in the language of this land. As these students progress through our schools, they are becoming fully bilingual, capable, confident, and grounded in both ʻike Hawaiʻi and global knowledge. Research consistently shows that students who are fluent in multiple languages demonstrate stronger cognitive flexibility, improve problem solving skills and higher academic achievement. Bilingual learners are often better prepared to adapt, think critically, and succeed in diverse professional fields. Those youth become our leaders, those elected to government positions, like yours, who in turn play a big role in societal decisions that shape our lives. We are raising a generation of bilingual, capable, and industrious youth. The question before us is, will our government grow alongside them. If our County truly serves its people, then it must reflect its people. Our families are choosing immersion education. Our children are speaking ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi and English fluently. Our educators are dedicating their lives to revitalizing this language. Therefore, it is both appropriate and necessary that our county government conducts its businesses...it's business both in official languages of the State. A bilingual government is not symbolic; it is a commitment to equity, access, and cultural alignment with the very constituents you represent. This is about more than policy. It is about normalization. It is about ensuring that ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi is not confined to the classroom or cultural spaces, but that it lives in our institutions, our systems and our daily interactions. Just 40 years ago our kupuna fought to revitalize the Hawaiian language in schools across Hawaiʻi. Their dream was to create a future where our youth, grounded in their identity as proud people of Hawaiʻi, could . . .(timer sounds). . . grow up to be successful, industrious individuals who understand --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: --You may conclude.

MS. CAMARA: -- their kuleana, the responsibility to this land and its people. We now see third-generation Hawaiian language speakers that have been educated in our bilingual schools who are now doctors, marine biologists, architects, educators, and administrators fully bilingual and fully capable. We want to ensure that they are fully supported by the systems that serve them. Wahi a ka Mōʻī Kauikeaouli, as declared by Kamehameha III, “He aupuni palapala koʻu.” “Mine is a nation of educated people.” Today, that vision lives on through our commitment to education, language, and the advancement of our communities. Let us honor that vision to ensure that ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi is not only preserved as a heritage language but recognized and supported as a living, breathing language spoken by the residents, families, and children of Maui Nui and Hawaiʻi. I leave you with this thought, as residents and natives alike of Hawaiʻi, of Maui, of Molokaʻi, who will preserve, uplift, and live the language of Hawaiʻi? If not me as a mother and an educator he kupa o kēia ʻāina, then who? If not you, as our elected officials, then who? It will not be the legislatures of the United States or the businessmen of China, or the lawmakers of Portugal, Japan, England. So if not you, then who? Mahalo for your time and your commitment to the people of Maui County.

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Aloha.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo no kou leo i kēia kakahiaka, Ms. Camara. Members, any questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Mahalo. We'll call on our next testifier, Kawaipuna Kalipi, followed by Manuwai Peters.

MS. KALIPI: Um, aloha e ka luna ho'omalua a me nā lālā o ka 'Aha Kūkā Kalana. Mahalo no ka ho'ohui 'ana o kākou. 'O Kawaipuna Kalipi ko'u inoa, a ke hō'ike mana'o nei au m luna o ke KA'Ā-1(5). He mea nui ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i no ka mea, 'o ia ke kumu e ola ai ko kākou mo'olelo, ko kākou 'ike, a me ko kākou pilina i kēia 'āina. 'A'ole ia he 'ōlelo wale nō, akā he 'āpana nō ia o ko kākou 'ano Hawai'i. He mea nui ka 'ōlelo ma ka papahana no ka mea, he palapala kūhelu ia no ke aupuni a he hō'ailona ia o ka ho'okō 'ana o ke Kalana i kona kuleana ma lalo o ka Palapala Ho'okumu e lilo i aupuni 'ōlelo 'elua, 'a'ole 'ekahi. He mea nui kēia manawa no ka hanauna e hiki mai ana. Pono kā kākou po'e 'ōpio e 'ike he wahi kūpono ko ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i ma loko o ke aupuni. No laila, ke noi aku nei au iā 'oukou e kūpa'a i ke kōnāwai a me ka Palapala Ho'okumu o ke Kalana a mai ho'i i hope ma kēia hana. Aloha, Chair and Members of the Council. My name is Kawaipuna Kalipi, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Maui County's Transition To A Bilingual Government. I first want to say thank you for having this conversation with us and reaffirming our collective commitment to make 'Ōlelo Hawai'i a bilingual language in Hawai'i and especially in Maui County. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i is important because it's how our history, our knowledge, our values, and our relationship to this place continues to live. It's not just a language; it's a part of who we are as Hawai'i. That's why it matters that 'Ōlelo Hawai'i remains in the agenda. The agenda is an official government document. And when 'Ōlelo Hawai'i is included, it shows that Maui County is honoring its responsibility to be a bilingual government, a bilingual government. Removing it would be a step backward and another act of pushing our language aside. This matters now and it matters for the next generation. Our young people, as Kaala said, need to see that 'Ōlelo Hawai'i belongs everywhere, including in government. They need to see that our language is not something to hide but something to uphold with dignity. Thank you, Councilmember Keani, for doing just as much. As public trust in government continues to erode at the federal level, I'm...I'm proud, proud to live in Maui County where I can trust my local government, especially now. We need...we need you to continue setting a good example by following the laws that you set and the charters that you set no matter how inconvenient this may seem. The Charter is clear, and the will of the people is clear. Please do not move us backwards. Please continue to uplift and promote 'Ōlelo Hawai'i as part of Maui County's responsibility as a bilingual government. Mahalo hui.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Kalipi. Members, any questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Mahalo nui no kou leo i kēia kakahiaka. Our next testifier is Manuwai Peters, followed by Maile Naehu.

MR. PETERS: Mahalo nui, Chair. Aloha nui kākou. 'O wau nō 'o Manuwai Peters. My name is Manuwai. I am also a lifelong educator, and I support the last two testifiers and what they've been sharing. I am a resident of Kalama'ula, Molokai, and I am

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registered to vote in the County of Maui. I support this measure to...to transition our county government into a bilingual government for those reasons shared earlier. And in historical context it was...we...we had government before in the Kingdom time and through policy and through government action this language was...was further eroded in government practice and therefore in business as well. So, even today 40 years after the Hawaiian language immersion program was started in 1987...well, next year makes the 40th anniversary. Our communities are growing stronger and stronger with ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i but it's still relegated to learning in classrooms and the school settings. So this measure is really critical that it shows value for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in government. This leads to employment of these graduates from our schools, rightful employment because they are citizens, they're taxpayers, they need employment to exercise their use of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. Particularly with the Trump Administration and the downgrading and degrading of indigenous funding, language programs, we are getting hit really hard from the federal government with funding for our education. This is impacting many people in this room. And so, the County of Maui has a really important role to play in supporting local action on the ground. This is not really a very big lift for the county. I think that it is an inconvenience for some, and even for me, I...I will admit that when I have to read the minutes and notes in Hawaiian, I have to read slowly. I have to look really deeply at the ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i to really comprehend it. But I...I'm so stoked and happy that I can do that because it's being provided in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. So do know that your choices here are important, that it is appreciated, and that we look to Maui County on this beacon of light on this hill. Because if we look around, State of Hawai‘i, other county governments they're not that...they're not doing this. And so, we really give props to Maui County for taking that step to really validate where we're coming from. And it's not just as indigenous people but as a political class. The State of Hawai‘i has an actual trust obligation to the political class of these people, these inhabitants could have been here since the Kingdom times, right? So, I'm just...I'm just so excited and hopeful that the County will continue this good work to really lift up ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i because like Keani was saying, we have generations coming behind us and this is very important for cultural preservation as well. With that in mind, mahalo for letting me testify today.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Mr. Peters. Members, any questions? Seeing none. Mahalo no kou leo. Nice to see you. Aloha. Our next testifier is Maile Naehu.

MS. NAEHU: Welina mai --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Welina.

MS. NAEHU: -- Chair and honorable councilmembers. a me aloha e ko Moloka‘i. ‘O wau ‘o Maile Naehu. I am a Boricua Kanaka Maoli educator, cultural arts consultant, and community organizer from Molokai. I'm the cofounder of Ka Hale Hoaka, School of Hawaiian Knowledge and Director of the Moloka‘i Nui a Hina Project, and Project Director for Hui o Kuapā where we store local i‘a, fishponds. For the past 26 years I have dedicated my life to serving Maui and Molokai communities, traveling throughout Hawai‘i and beyond to educate, advocate, and perpetuate ‘Ōlelo and ‘ike Hawai‘i while raising my three beautiful bilingual keiki. Through Ka Hale Hoaka, our programs,

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including ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i education, cultural arts, and ‘āina-based learning has served nearly 16,000 students and community members. ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i is not irrelevant. It is essential to a bilingual county government, and it strengthens identity, provides knowledge that English alone cannot, and equips youth and residents to make pono, thoughtful decisions for the communities and environment. I strongly support the transition of the County of Maui into a bilingual county government where hearings, communications, and official materials are accessible in both English and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. ‘Ōlelo carries knowledge that informs stewardship, guides leadership, and reflects the unique connection Hawaiians have with our ‘āina and kai. Centering ‘Ōlelo in governance restores indigenous perspectives and decision-making and sets a model for other counties to follow. As a kumu and Project Director from Hui o Kuapā, I often translate English concepts into ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i for students. And when expressed in ‘Ōlelo, understanding deepens immediately. Language conveys a vivid, place-based perspective of the world we inhabit in Hawai‘i, connecting learners to land, ocean, and culture while fostering responsibly...responsibility, clarity, and insight. In my ohana, raising children bilingual in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i has been transformative. Two are valedictorians, one graduated from Pomona College and is now a film and music producer. Another became the first Molokai graduate accepted to Princeton University, later graduated and is now preparing to complete her master's degree at NYU hoping to return as an immersion teacher. My youngest is a sophomore, class president and academically ranked number one. These achievements aren't strengthened, not...these achievements are strengthened and not hindered by ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. Community programs, professional developments and youth programs like Kia‘i Coalition Camp (*phonetic*) that we host in our local i‘a initiatives at ‘Ohalahala Fishpond in Mana‘e, Molokai, show similar results. Youth engaged in stewardship, leadership, and creative expression through arts, storytelling, and cultural practices. They emerge confident, grounded and capable of making . . .(*timer sounds*) . . . real-world decisions informed by cultural identity and connection to place. I personally invite each Councilmember who desires to begin their ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i journey to join my Papa Kahua, a free class that I will teach you for three hours, and you will see how the language brings clarity, insight, and understanding to perspective and decision-making. Supporting a bilingual county government is not only about language, it is about equity, identity, and responsible leadership. Mahalo nui iā ‘oukou pākahi a pau for your consideration. Mahalo.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for your testimony and for that invitation, Ms. Naehu. Members, any questions? More information on that invitation? . . .(*laughing*). . . Mahalo, no kou leo i kēia kakahiaka, Ms. Naehu. Aloha. Okay. Our next testifier, it looks like, is Mr. Law.

MR. LAW: ‘O wau ‘o Jasee Law. Hafa Adai everybody. I'll try to make it quick, but I was...this is going to be a little bit longer. Might use my three minutes. This...I...I compare it to like being in a desert and looking for water. And I get this...I found a little...just a little drip of water in...in the rocks. And that's what I compare this ‘Ōlelo Hawaiian to because I'm out there trying to learn it as much as I can. It was one of my plans...on my top ten...it was actually number one on my top...on my top-ten list when I came to Hawai‘i. So it's...it's one thing to speak it and then it's another thing to read it. So, it's...it's kind of hard to do both but...but thank you for...thank you

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Maui County and Mr. Raatz. One of the first times I met Mr. Raatz was when I was having trouble with the library, and I wanted to write a letter in ‘Ōlelo Hawaiian to the librarian so that she would have to learn it to...to understand what I was writing about. But Mr. Raatz told me that it's not...that we didn't have the...the capability for that yet, so I'm glad that this is happening. I was speaking yesterday at the DRIP meeting about the general plan implementation. I was trying to explain my...my situation. How I'm having pilikia with the State tax office. And I guess everybody has heard about the...how certain members of the United States military are told that they can refuse orders if they're illegal. Well, I think it's illegal for the State to make me pay taxes if they claim to be a branch of the U.S. Government corporation. That should be voluntary. And I know realistically that the State is only a government recognized by the U.S. Treasury and the IRS. So I'm willing to compromise if the State does too. I have here a State of Hawai‘i business...basic business application. It's in English, and I've asked several times for an ‘Ōlelo Hawaiian version, and they said they don't have it. And then when I went back again and again, they threatened to call the Sheriff on me and have me...removed from the...the office. I'll pay the fee in U.S. dollars if someone will help me with an ‘Ōlelo Hawaiian translation. And there's a whole lot more on here that I...it's going to be...it might take while but I'm going to try. And there's another State form here for a different service over there at the State building. . . .(timer sounds). . . It says, do you need help--I heard the bell. It says, do you need help in another language and I'm going to tell them yes. It says, we will get you a free interpreter. So the interpreter is kind of going to get thrown for a loop when I tell him, I understand what the application says but I want them to help me translate it into ‘Ōlelo Hawaiian, and I'll tell you all how that turns out. And the reason I'm doing all this stuff, and it's making it harder for my life, to make a living in Hawai‘i, but I have an obligation to Queen Lili‘uokalani.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Members, any questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Well, thank you for your testimony. And I see another individual wishing to testify, Aulani Herrod-Perkins.

MS. HERROD-PERKINS: Aloha mai, Chair and councilmembers. ‘O wau ‘o Aulani Herrod Perkins. Noho wau i Kamiloloa i Moloka‘i. A kāko‘o wau i nā mana‘o i hāpai mua ‘ia. A no‘u, . . .(timer sounds). . . this isn't just about policy, it's about kuleana. In 2022, the po‘e of Molokai...kala mai, Maui County made it clear that we are a bilingual government and that commitment should be reflected in how this Council operates and not treated as just something that is optional or convenient. Ma Molokai, ‘Ōlelo isn't just something that we separate from our...our daily lives. It's how we connect to ‘āina, to all our kaiāulu, and to one another. ‘O ka ‘ōlelo ke ka‘ā o ka maui. Language is the fiber that binds us to our cultural identity and when treated as...when treated as optional it does have a real impact on how our language is valued and carried forward, and we should be moving forward, strengthening and normalizing Ōlelo Hawai‘i in our systems and not stepping back. No laila, I ask...I ask the concert...Council to honor that commitment and kāko‘o, continue to support ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in all proceedings. Mahalo.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Ms. Herrod-Perkins. Any questions for our testifier?

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Okay. Seeing none. Mahalo no kou leo. Our next testifier is Leialoha Kealaiki.

MR. KEALAIKI: Welina mai me ke aloha. ‘O wau nō ‘o Leialoha Kealaiki no Maui Nui a Kama, a he kumu wau ma ka mokupuni ‘o Molokai. Aloha. My name is Leialoha Kealaiki. As an educator, I see every day how important language is. Language is not just words on a page. It carries identity, it carries ‘ike, history, and the way that our students understand who they are and where they come from. When our county government makes space for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i it sends a powerful message to our keiki in our communities that this language matters, that it belongs here, and that it has a living place in public life. For many of us in education, we work hard to uplift ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in our classrooms so that our students can see it, they can hear it, and they know that it is worthy of being spoken and honored. If our government starts treating ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i as optional, that sends the opposite message. It tells our children that their language and culture can be pushed aside when it becomes inconvenient. That is not the lesson we should be teaching. The people of Maui already voted for the county to operate as a bilingual government, that choice should be respected. Supporting ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in council agendas is not about doing something extra, it is about honoring the will of the people, honoring the place and honoring the language of Hawai‘i. As a teacher, I know that what is modeled by leadership matters. And so, when students see ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i reflected in government, they learn that their language is not limited to the classroom or just to ceremony. They learn that it belongs in leadership, decision-making, and the everyday work of serving our communities. I ask that the Council continue to uphold its responsibility to support and normalize ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, not reduce it. Our language should never be treated as optional in our own home. Mahalo for your time.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Mr. Kealaiki. Seeing no questions. Mahalo no kou leo. Our next testifier is Joshua Gante.

MR. GANTE: Aloha hou--

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha.

MR. GANTE: e ka po‘e e holo nei. My name is Joshua Gante...Ikaika Gante. I am a kumu at ‘O Hina I Ka Malama 7 to 12 Hawaiian Immersion Program here on Molokai, and I also teach social studies. So one of my social studies classes is participation in a democracy. And what I really got my kids accustomed to reading bills, looking at certain candidates and the bills that they support, and whatnot. And also testifying is also the ability to grow into that stage where they're able to be a councilmember like you...like yourselves. And hearing the ability to also do it in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i actually created a big pull towards their interest in office, in running for public change. And it's just amazing that just because ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i is offered on the table to be run as the language for the government created a lot of interest for a lot of my students, and I want that interest to continue, and I want them to continue to be able to aspire to be not only law, or legal, or attorney representatives but also representatives for the community in the ‘Ōlelo that they learned in, the medium. You guys are not familiar, but the immersion program teaches all standards that the English side has to abide by but in the medium of

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Hawaiian. So U.S. History, World History, Pacific Island Studies, you name it, also in...also PID as well. And so, I'm constantly translating because we don't have curriculum to teach our students, but I'm trying to translate as much as possible but just having 'Ōlelo as a conduit for them to aspire to really increases their interest, especially for our...our haumāna here in Molokai and their background to be greater than they're...they're currently are now. But mahalo, thank you very much. A hui hou.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: A hui hou. Mahalo, Mr. Gante. No questions for you, so mahalo no kou leo. Our next testifier is Melia Kalawe.

MS. KALAWÉ: Aloha nui kākou. My name is Melia Kalawe. I come from the Island of Molokai. And I fully support the previous testifiers and support the transition of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i as a bilingual language. I believe that it should not be an option. And speaking from a personal experience as a former student of Kula Kaiapuni or the Hawaiian language immersion programs, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i has allowed me to build pilina, relationships with moolelo, with 'āina, with histories, and stories, especially places like Molokai. It has elevated my experiences and skills professionally and inspired me to become an archivist for the Island of Molokai and work with the community in building the first island-wide digital repository. I believe that you cannot separate language from culture and from government. We are in Hawai'i, and we must acknowledge and support utilizing 'Ōlelo Hawai'i by all means. Language is part of our identity as Kānaka, and I believe that the use of our language supports more Kānaka to become leaders and stewards of our government, our counties, and our communities, bringing us closer together. So with that being said, please consider to support 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and uplift 'Ōlelo Hawai'i within your folks' work. Mahalo nui.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo nui, Ms. Kalawe. Okay. I'm going to do a last call for testifiers because it looks like she may be the last one. We'll do a last for oral testimony, and we'll continue to accept written testimony into the record. Seeing no one raising their hand or unmuting themselves, we'll close oral testimony. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

. . .CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY KA'Ā-1(5) . . .

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And we'll continue to accept written testimony into the record. Okay. So, I see that Chair Lee has to leave. Before you go, Chair, the...the question and the...the purpose of this meeting is to provide OCS the necessary and clear instruction on what our agenda should be. OCS is doing their best to keep our agendas consistent. And the format that was chosen was a compromise, as I understand it. I wanted to call on Director Raatz and yourself to answer that question on what is it you need from the councilmembers for OCS to achieve that consistency with the agendas, but to continue the agendas combined and not for 'Ōlelo Hawai'i to be cast to the side.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Can I go? Okay. Sorry, I thought your meeting was going to be ending sooner. I have an 11:30, but I probably could switch it...detain it until maybe

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11:45. Okay? But I'm not sure how this got on your agenda, but I did ask David, maybe a few weeks ago, maybe a month ago, that I was getting complaints about our agendas. And it's not to delete the Hawaiian language, that was never in our discussion. It was to put it on a different page. That...that was...you know is it...is it possible to make it so that you don't have to keep going through the agenda to find what you're looking for. Just put all the Hawaiian in one section and all the English in one section. That was the question. So I...I'm surprised at the...the tone of the...of the testimony because I...unless somebody else brought this subject up. I was getting complaints because people were taking much longer than needed to go through the agendas to find what they needed in English. So that was something I brought up to him. But I don't know if that was the reason for him...for this being on the agenda today.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: I can answer that question.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: That is the reason. I understand folks who don't 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and have no desire to that live here and look at our agendas. I understand the complaints. But when I weigh the impact of a little more time that would take for someone to review our agendas versus the continued erasure of our language and culture, that's an easy one for me. Also, by law, we're required to do this. We're required to keep it combined because it says we shall implement opportunities to promote inclusion. And by putting it on a separate page, that's a violation of our Charter, in my opinion. But we can ask Corp. Counsel or our Attorney, Director Raatz, if you like. Mister...Deputy Corp. Counsel Reifsnyder.

MR. REIFSNYDER: Yeah. I'm not sure if we have an official determination on that yet.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Oh, into the mic.-

MR. REIFSNYDER: Oh, is it on?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Just...yeah.

MR. REIFSNYDER: Hello.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: There you go. In...into the mic and keep...keep speaking into the mic.

MR. REIFSNYDER: Okay. Sorry about that. Yeah. I don't know if we have an official determination on whether separating it or keeping it together, which one is the most lawful way you know --

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CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: That promoting inclusion.

MR. REIFSNYDER: I have my personal thoughts on it, but I don't think --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Because it was combined before and now it's separated onto its own page. Is that promoting inclusion?

MR. REIFSNYDER: I have my personal opinions on it, but I don't know if we have a departmental determination quite yet, so I wouldn't want to speak on the...on behalf of the entire Department. But we can absolutely have those conversations offline, yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that opinion. Committee Vice-Chair Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, thank you. I did receive a email from Mr. Mayor, and his suggestion wasn't to separate it. Sorry I didn't bring it up sooner because there was a lot going on, but it was to color-code it. Like I feel like with them right next to each other it promotes learning because, you know, if you see the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i next to the English then you can kind of learn the English 'Ōlelo [sic] for 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i for English. But I did think it was kind of weird because we had initially been asked our preference on how we wanted it to appear and then it just changed, but I didn't have time because there's a lot things going on. But I would be supportive of the color-coding. Like, maybe we could try that.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Director Raatz.

MR. RAATZ: Thank you, Chair. I welcome the opportunity to be here today and have this discussion. And thank you for that comprehensive context you provided in your opening remarks. I'll provide just a little bit additional background, if I may, please. So, we...we in the Office of Council Services are essential staff for all of the councilmembers. And one of our primary tasks is to staff all the council committees and that includes, of course, producing the meeting agendas. And as you mentioned, we try to be consistent in our formatting to ensure that all committee chairs have the same access to our services and to ensure that councilmembers and members of the public, others who deal with meeting agendas see a consistent format and it improves their understanding...their comprehension of...of what's being presented. So we actually had an agenda format that didn't change for about 30 years, it seemed to working well, where we have a topical heading in all caps...the...the item heading, followed by narratives, a description of the item and status of the item. And with the ordinance that was referenced in Chapter 2.02 of the County Code to implement the Charter Amendment, we welcomed the change to produce bilingual meeting agendas. As I mentioned before, Hawaiian is an official language of the State of Hawai'i and it seems appropriate to us to execute this effort to produce bilingual meeting agendas. So our original format to comply with the ordinance last year was to alternate the language for each section, so back and forth between each language. And...and as Chair Lee mentioned, we did receive constructive feedback that the back and forth was...was kind of jarring to some...some readers, that in the feedback and from some complaints were so persistent over time that we made the decision earlier this year to produce a different format which

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is we've seen recently where we still produce one document that's the agenda for each committee meeting. And...and we agree with you, Chair, that an agenda is a singular unified document. But instead of having alternating language as we go through each section, we now publish Hawaiian first and then English. And for the inclusion piece that you mentioned, we felt if we're going to do it that way, where we're not alternating, it would be important for Hawaiian to...to become first. Otherwise...because we know most of the population are not 'Ōlelo Hawai'i readers, if we did English first, we wouldn't be promoting inclusion and familiarity with, and acceptance of the Hawaiian language for a lot of readers. They would just stop at the English version. So there's sort of an intentional inconvenience, if you will, where to get to the English version you have to go through the Hawaiian version first. So we...we are operating under our...our interpretation of...of the ordinance and...and the Charter Amendment and what's required. So, again, we appreciate this discussion because we can't consult with the councilmembers jointly on their preferences in a different venue. The ordinance could be changed to provide different direction if that's the will of the body. We will take comments from today's meeting and consider further changes as...as warranted. We do hope to, at some point soon, really get to consistency that, again, the readers of the agendas can be comfortable with. Our staff has researched...you know just close with this, Chair. Thanks for, again, this opportunity...practices in other jurisdictions. A few municipalities on the continent provide bilingual meeting agendas in English and Spanish. And some in Canada produce agendas in both English and French. And those other jurisdictions seem to do it in different ways. The...the two main ways that we've tried so far are...are not uncommon, the alternating between each section, back and forth between the two languages or producing the whole content in...in different...in each language. We did notice there's a third possible option that some of our staff, at first glance, thought might be appealing, producing the content side by side, so you have two columns, English and Spanish, English and French, or in our case English and Hawaiian. So if you're interested in looking at that, Chair, in...in our limited time today we do have an example we could...could show. We're certainly welcome to other ideas. But I...in response to your question finally, I...I do think that what we're producing today does comply with the ordinance and...and the Charter, but we welcome other viewpoints. Thank you.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director Raatz. I saw indications that Members would like to see that example if it can be screen-shared. And then while that's happening, I will go to Member Sinenci for a question. Member Batangan, I guess, has to also leave. So if you both leave I will have...not have quorum.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: I have until noon

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: *(Inaudible)* 11:30 but *(inaudible)* 11:45.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you for making that accommodation. Yeah. Okay. So we have on the screen the example. What I was hoping to achieve for OCS today was the ability for OCS to provide consistent agendas. And I appreciate Director Raatz's research in finding an alternative to satisfying the concern.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: I like that one only because you can --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Please speak into the mic, Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. I like this one is because you can...I mean, before you had to kind of go up...toggle up and down to see...to compare the...the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and the English. This one you can just kind of, you know, toggle...or don't even have to, just back and forth. But I agree with you, Chair, with...with this latest one, I mean, we wasting so much paper. I mean, it looks like yours is more inclusive and it's only a couple pages. But I think when we were doing the entire in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and...and the entire one in...it took, like, three times the amount of paper for us to print out. So...and then my question was, well how many complaints are we talking?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Plenty.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I've had at least five from people you know.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And it's local people.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: You know, it's...and then our offices had other complaints.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: About...about just the...the timing of...of translating?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Not...not having the language there, nobody complained about that. It's the format. It's the format.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Is it *(inaudible)* --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Into the mic.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: --*(inaudible)* --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Into the mic, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I just was asking her if it's people only Shane knows or is it --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: ...*(laughing)*...

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: -- like it's to --

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: It's all of us.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: -- clarify the way she used you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: It's all of your friends too.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. So we...we have this alternative as we try to...no one said transitioning to a bilingual government was going to be easy. It's...it's a work in progress, and I'm going to fight this fight every time to not let our language and culture be erased because it inconveniences people, and that's super offensive. I also want to honor all of our kumu, educators that are putting in the work to ensure the survival of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i because how sad would it be if 50 years from now we reminisce about, oh, remember when there was that language. Like, I don't even want us to...to get to that point. Our...our language should not just be for ceremony, and it shouldn't be for...for decoration. It...it's insulting and it's not what our law says. So we have this alternative. Director Raatz, I can do an informal poll of those that are here. I did also receive a text message from Member Sugimura saying that she...she is supportive of making it as...making 'Ōlelo Hawai'i inclusive. Member Batangan.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: I'm supportive as well.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Of which --

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: The --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- version?

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: I like that...the side by side. I guess, if you're asking my thoughts in general, it's that I am not fluent in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i but I'm trying to learn. You know I helped found the Papa'Ōlelo Hawai'i in my college and have been trying to take it up since. I would really like for my kids to be able to learn from me. I...I didn't have that opportunity. My grandfather, who was Hawaiian, passed away when he was young, he didn't get to teach my mom. It wasn't as available when she was growing up and it was just starting when we were in school. So I'm making an effort now and would like to learn. I guess that's a way of me saying that if it was only in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i I wouldn't be able to figure it out. I do appreciate having the English there as well and have used these agendas as an opportunity to practice. Sometimes it is more time-consuming. I will say, I was not the person complaining to Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: ...*(laughing)*...

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: But...and my thought, when I first heard this discussion, was maybe instead of doing it page by page, it be section by section. You know it's close enough where you can still reference back and forth and using it as an opportunity to learn and it's not easily discarded. Apparently, in all of the research that OCS did, nobody else in the world thought this was a great solution. And the side-by-side does

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seem to work for me. You know it's still an opportunity for the languages to be on equal footing, not easily discarded. It's an opportunity for me to be able to reference and learn. And, you know, it keeps all of the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and all of the English together in sections so that it's not so broken up, and you can get the information that you need all in one place.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Batangan. Before I go to Member...Committee Vice-Chair Paltin...or...or maybe...maybe Member Lee since she has to leave for her meeting, I just wanted to fact-check what you said real quick with Director Raatz. So, in your research, Director Raatz, did you find no other agenda that had formatted it the way that we had originally formatted it with --

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Sorry. Was it originally done section by section? No?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It...if by section you mean like --

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: I mean, like, agenda item by agenda item.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: It...it was, like, several lines. Like, so the...the categories. Like, the description of the item and then, like, the status, and then, like, the action.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Sure. I mean, I...it's not super important to me whether or not anybody else in the world adopted this idea. We don't have to reinvent the wheel.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: I actually would prefer utilizing a template from somewhere else that has been proven to be successful. So whether or not you found something that matched what I had envisioned when I was thinking about how to approach this from scratch is not all that important to me.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. You like the side-by-side?

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo. And mahalo for...for sharing the painful past that we all have in common with the erasure of our language. Committee Member Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I'll be happy to support anything that works for everybody.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. We don't have everyone here...all councilmembers here, but if you're okay with everyone who is here now making that decision that's great.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: We do have a quorum of the full Council, so if everybody here supports it, we could vote for it.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

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COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Chair, are we able to vote? It's a 7(B).

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: We're not voting.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: . . .You mean right now.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: But we're taking an informal poll --

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: -- so that we can give OCS clear direction. Member Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I'm supportive of the side-by-side. And as one of the testifiers mentioned that they oftentimes have to spend extra time to translate their curriculum, I would support more of our government business than just the agenda in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i because, you know, in our entire society, it feels like people don't understand, even though it's in English, how we operate and what we do. And if there is a chance of better understanding in the language of this place, then I'm all for it. And...and perhaps it supplements the curriculum that is in existence because, you know, who else, to me, do we want as our future leaders than the kupa'āina of this place because like you figure some kid in 5th grade right now saw the fires in Lahaina, saw the record-breaking floods in Kihei, and they'll live with that forever, and it'll shape probably their policy decisions and who better than our keiki o ka 'āina to be our future leaders. And it's also sad that all of the information that we put out in English isn't well understood either. So I don't think that understanding should stop us because so much English is not understood as well, it seems.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Committee Vice-Chair Paltin. And it was super encouraging and inspiring to hear one our kumu share that his haumana, his students became more interested in learning civics because we...we're conversing...or at least had our documents in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, which made it more accessible to the next generation of kupa'āina of this place. So, which version?

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Side by side is A-okay.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: We go try that one.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Yeah.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Okay. Committee Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, I just want to reiterate the side by side. But also, Chair, I wanted to mahalo you and mahalo to all the kumu that came up and...and speak; that was very inspirational, especially Ms. Naehu. As a kumu, myself, of 20 years we've seen the...the...the change in the students. For students that are of Hawaiian ancestry to be...it was...it's tough...it's still tough to...to learn the Western way of education.

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And...and so, you know, we saw increased behaviors, a spike in behaviors, a spike in, you know, not wanting to participate, no interest. So as Hawaiian kumu, now we're seeing inside the curriculum there's also Hawaiian values, there's also pono behavior. So it's...so you can eventually reach the keiki and teach them because we've seen, in a Western society, that you...we cannot teach them without...without the participation first. So I think what you saw today was...and...and as Ms. Maile had said, you really see the...the advancement of...of the keiki. So, mahalo for their testimony, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for that wisdom to our resident kumu. Appreciate that, Member Sinenci. And mahalo to all of our testifiers, testimony was very powerful and there were more than five testifiers. The last thing I...I wanted to state for the record, again, is that 'Ōlelo Hawai'i is not just a language. It's...in it is 'ike Hawai'i, 'ike kupuna coded so that we remember the areas that get flooded, that have fire, that has certain things so that we don't build in certain areas, that we don't build in the wetlands, that we remember that Wailuku means, you know...oh, I'm going to slaughter that but treacherous water. Yeah. Anyway, destructive water. Yeah, I think so. That's...and to remember that all the areas that have wai in it is 'ike kupuna to let us know that that is what that area is known for. So I...I would be supportive to try the side-by-side if OCS is open and willing to go through the growing pains with us.

MR. RAATZ: Thank you...thank you so much, Chair and...and councilmembers. Appreciate this guidance, and I do appreciate your recognition of the possible growing pains. We'll have to work with our contractor, Granicus, to see what we can do. But I am acknowledging the consensus viewpoint that we like the side-by-side format. In one way it's convenient. Standing committees are going to go on hiatus for a while, so we have some time to work on it. But, of course, BFED is going to be starting budget session within a few days. I can't promise what we're going to be able to do for...for budget session, necessarily, but really appreciate this guidance and thanks for your insight.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Director Raatz. Okay. Any other comments? I know Member Lee needs to leave. Member Batangan.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: And if you have to go, Chair, I think we have quorum.

COUNCILMEMBER BATANGAN: It doesn't sound like we're going in this direction, but I just want it on the record that I would be against going with color. I think it would just make it a lot busier and a lot more expensive for us to produce our agendas. Just wanted it stated. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for that feedback, Member Batangan. I'm sure OCS appreciates that feedback as well. But I do appreciate the idea and creativity because it is a kākou effort. And, you know, as we...we try to figure this out as the...basically the tip of the spear, right? None of the other counties are really doing this, so...Member Paltin.

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VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: How do you feel about bold and not bold, or underline, italics? Just going through --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: No, we did do that.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: -- all the options just...I mean, there's many.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: So, we...we did do the different font styles, italics, bold, you know, indentations for...you know, so we...we've...mahalo to OCS for trying all the different things to try to make...yes. Yes, to try to make the review of our agendas, you know, as...as easy as possible for those that do not 'Ōlelo Hawai'i. Member Paltin.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Was that a private showing, or did I miss it?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: No, that...that was how the combined agendas were, with the, like, italics, and bold, and larger fonts, and smaller fonts.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: For the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and the English?

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: When it was combined, yeah.

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: Oh, I guess, I don't read the agenda. . . *(inaudible)*. . . --

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . . *(laughing)*. . .

VICE-CHAIR PALTIN: I go straight to the meeting details.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Member Paltin. Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: I vote for Old English font.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . . *(laughing)*. . . Oh, we're going to make it really difficult to read, huh? Then that won't be a language thing, that'll be a font...a font issue. Okay. Any other last comments from...from anyone? We'll thank Director Raatz for being with us on the floor today and for the research that you did. I'm supportive of doing the side-by-side and figuring that out. And mahalo Deputy Corp. Counsel for being with us in our meeting and Staff for your very hard work. Okay. Members, if there are no objections we will defer this item. Any objections?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.

CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Wonderful. All right. It is 11:56, and we completed our agenda. So Kōmike Aloha 'Āina is now adjourned. . . . *(gavel)*. . .

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ADJOURN: 11:56 a.m.

ka'a:min:260319

Transcribed by: Tricia Higa

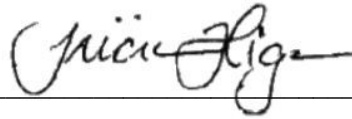
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CERTIFICATION

I, Tricia Higa, hereby certify that pages 1 through 43 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 April 2026, in Mililani, Hawaii

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tricia Higa", is written over a horizontal line.

Tricia Higa