

April 25, 2025

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

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

SUBJECT: **MAKAWAO-HA'IKU-PĀ'IA RESIDENCY AREA MEETING
REGARDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET** (BFED-1)

On April 15, 2025, the Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee held a public meeting at the Pā'ia Community Center Social Hall regarding the proposed FY 2026 Budget. Present for the meeting were: Committee Chair Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Committee Vice-Chair Tasha Kama, and members Tom Cook, Gabe Johnson, Tamara Paltin, Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Shane M. Sinenci, and Nohelani U'u-Hodgins. Committee member Alice L. Lee was excused. The meeting started at 6:04 p.m. and adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

The Committee received oral testimony from 31 individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, the following oral testimony was received in support of funding for the organization, program, or project noted:

1. Will Spence, Vice President, Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center, testified in support of \$50,000 for the Art of Aloha Program and \$75,000 for the Hui Youth Program. He mentioned that for keiki, art is therapy, especially for fire victims.
2. Brian Kohne, Maui Film Commissioner, requested support for the \$345,000 included in the Budget (\$250,000 for operations and \$95,000 for the Wailuku Film Festival) to develop Maui's film industry in collaboration with Maui Economic Development Board.
3. Three individuals, including Georgia Pinsky, Co-founder and Executive Director, testified in support of \$300,000 for Maui Farmer Support Network. The organization helps farmers develop value-added products and online markets, use social media, obtain grants, and conducts Laulima Days where crews help farmers with larger projects such as clearing and chipping. They also offer an apprenticeship program, shared tool library, and workshops, including one for tool repair.

4. Two individuals, including Ashley Moody, Manager, Farm to School Program, spoke in support of a \$150,000 Agriculture line-item for Grow Some Good. The organization teaches youth how to grow food, which contributes to their mental health, instills a desire to learn, and supports Maui's need to grow more of its own food. Ms. Moody also submitted written testimony.
5. Francine Aarona asked for road improvements to address dangerous conditions, including extending sidewalks in Makawao to Pā'ia, and installing speed bumps.
6. Three people urged support of Head Start Afterschool Programs & Summer Programs, including Ha'iku Head Start, amidst concerns about losing federal funding and the resulting increased need for childcare support.
7. Daniel Southmayd, Medical Case Manager, Maui Aids Foundation, requested continued funding for services. Although HIV is a manageable disease, patients still have many needs.
8. Ten people, including three students, requested continued or increased support for STEMworks programs through MEDB. The students are exposed to a variety of career paths, including robotics, healthcare, and cybersecurity. They learn solution-oriented thinking and skills which will provide opportunities enabling them to stay in Hawai'i and make it a better place.
9. Five individuals, including Kacy Schwen, the Makawao Boys & Girls Club Director, and two students, one of whom was awarded Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year, requested continued support for Boys & Girls Clubs of Maui. They cited the Clubs' variety of programs fostering education, support, and role models in performing and visual arts, leadership, and STEM skills. They also expressed appreciation for Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. transportation and food access programs.
10. Four people, including Cassi Yamashita, Community Services Director, MEO, spoke in favor of continued funding for MEO. County-funded community service programs support rental assistance, reintegration after incarceration, kūpuna, and Spanish-speakers.

11. Shay Chan Hodges, Director, Nā Leo Pūlama o Maui, requested continued and increased support for its cultural and language initiatives. She suggested funding previously dedicated to Ho‘omau could be allocated to the organization, which supports Pūnana Leo o Maui, its language immersion preschool. She also encouraged surveying communities for interest and efforts to create energy resilience hubs.
12. Three people urged changing real property tax rates. Two urged raising rates for extremely high-value properties and nonresidents, and one requested higher exemptions for long-term rental and owner-occupied homes.
13. Nikhilananda provided a list of items for possible funding, including:
 - Remodeling the Council Chamber to allow Councilmembers to face the gallery, and conducting public hearings in communities and in the evenings for greater attendance;
 - Building reclamation facilities to divert materials from the landfill and instituting residential curbside recycling;
 - Expanding the Maui Bus system to include a Makawao-Pā‘ia-Huelo shuttle, and replacing gas buses with electric or hybrid buses;
 - Establishing “aloha zones” for houseless or unsheltered individuals, including those living in vehicles, by providing social services and hygiene facilities;
 - Keeping County beach parks and park bathrooms open at all hours;
 - Phasing out the use of toxic weed control products;
 - Changing zoning to allow taller buildings for residential rental or for-sale units, with commercial facilities located on the ground floor;
 - Urging the State to make Election Day a State holiday, and instituting rank-choice voting for elections;

- Installing more flashing lights for crosswalks, creating pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian trails and paths, and providing more County parking lots and spaces;
- Funding increases for social services and for affordable land trusts;
- Advocating for Pā'ia and Lahaina alternative route projects; and
- Installing one pickleball and one tennis court at the 4th Marine Division Memorial Park.

He also submitted his list as written testimony.

14. Lucienne de Naie, Secretary and Director, and Maile Davis, Grants and Volunteer Coordinator, Malama Hamakua Maui, requested increased funding from \$25,000 to \$35,000 to allow the organization to do more mowing and cleanup activities, and expressed gratitude for the \$50,000 in the budget for car removal. Ms. de Naie also expressed support and gratitude for County department staff funding, the Ha'iku Fire Station, Maui Invasive Species Committee, and acquisition of 82 acres in Pauwela as public lands.
15. Nicole Hokoana, Chief Executive Officer, Maui Behavioral Health Resources, requested continued support for the organization and described the services its agencies, Aloha House, Malama Family Recovery Center, and Maui Youth and Family Services, provide.
16. Michael Dupont, Makawao Parade Committee Chair, requested continued funding. He cited the importance of the parade and related activities which bring the community together to celebrate paniolo heritage.
17. Jill Wirt, Project Manager, Maui Nui Marine Resource Council, gave examples of the breadth of work the organization engages in, including conducting reef restoration and surveys, promoting reef-friendly landscaping, sampling limu, water sampling, and helping to restore Kahoma Village in Lahaina by planting trees and installing benches. MNMRC can no longer rely on federal funding and requests \$525,000, in part to provide matches for larger grants. Ms. Wirt also provided written testimony.

18. Desilee Santiago urged no cuts to rental and affordable housing funds and help for those subjected to rent gouging.
19. Charen Kepler, Executive Director, Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows, requested support for the \$47,000 included in the Budget for its leadership program, which claims local business owners and Councilmembers among its alumni.
20. Dan Ellis, Managing Partner, Paia Village Company, LLC, spoke about restoring the Pā'ia Sugar Mill to make it an asset for Pā'ia, and supported funding for MEDB and STEMworks.
21. Mo'i Kawaakoa, requested \$75,000 for Holomua Outreach, a homeless-outreach service provider that promotes workforce development programs before housing, provides services, and uses cultural practices for recovery and healing. The organization partners with established businesses to provide jobs, e.g., a florist flower farm pays for lei-making.
22. Tania Hansen, Communications Assistant, Maui Rescue Mission, thanked the Council for supporting their partner organizations. Maui Rescue Mission has two portable trailers that provide showers and laundry for houseless individuals at Kanaha Beach Park, Pu'uhonua, St. Teresa Church, and Cut Mountain. She invited Councilmembers to volunteer at community outreaches.

Your Committee also received the attached written testimony, including one from Annette Wenzler, who did not provide oral testimony.

For questions relating to the Makawao-Ha'iku-Pā'ia residency area meeting, please contact OCS staff (Carla Nakata at ext.5519, Ellen McKinley at ext. 7661, Jennifer Yamashita at ext. 7143, or Jean Pokipala at ext. 8006).

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

Testimony presented at the Maui County Budget meeting, Pa'ia

April 15th 2025

My name is Dan Ellis and I am testifying in support of Maui Economic Development Board's Economic Development Grant under the Maui County Office of Economic Development

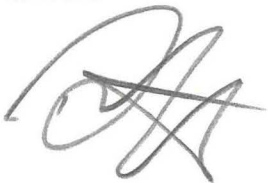
Along with their critical work all over Maui, MEDB is helping us as we restore the Pa'ia Sugar Mill and bring diversified manufacturing jobs and opportunities back to Pa'ia for our local working families.

This is essential so that the legacy of a **community** for all people can continue on Maui and working people can once again thrive here.

For generations Pa'ia Mill supported hundreds of working families and with our efforts, the continued support from MEDB and others, it can once again be an asset for all the people of Pa'ia.

Thank you for your time and work you all put in for our community.

Cheers



Dan Ellis

9 Lana St #B, Pa'ia, HI 96779

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PA'IA

Testimony to Maui County Council on Behalf of Malama Hamakua Maui

Aloha and mahalo to the Council members for your continued support of Malama Hamakua Maui, which is located at the County of Maui Open Space Preserve at Hamakualoa. Your investment in our work has allowed us to plant over 1,000 native plants last year and host monthly volunteer days that continue to strengthen our local community. Through strategic partnerships with organizations such as Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC), Malama Maui Nui, Haleakala School, MEO Youth Prevention Group, the Maui Visitor Bureau, and others, we are able to expand our efforts to protect and restore Maui's unique natural environment. We work closely with MISC to manage invasive species, as both fire ants and coqui frogs have been found on this property, threatening our ecosystem. These efforts include proactive monitoring and removal, which are crucial to safeguarding the preserve's biodiversity.

We are proud of our ongoing collaboration with several County of Maui offices, including Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Planning, Recycling, and Sustainability and Council Member U'u Hodges office. Their guidance and support are integral to our success. In particular, the cooperative work with these departments is essential as we take on larger-scale restoration and land management projects. This collaboration fosters a multi-agency approach that ensures that taxpayer dollars are being utilized efficiently to achieve long-term environmental and community benefits.

While we are grateful for the two current line items in the Mayor's budget, we also raise funds from private donors, the State of Hawaii, and several other funding applications. These efforts have allowed us to leverage County support, securing amounts that are often double the County's investment. These funds directly support critical initiatives such as trash collection, fire suppression, and native plant restoration, alongside the development of a food forest—an initiative that could eventually contribute to food security for Maui's residents. This model of partnership allows us to maximize the impact of every dollar spent, ensuring that County funds are being supplemented with substantial additional resources to achieve the best outcomes possible.

Malama Hamakua Maui manages one of the County's largest open space preserves, and as we continue to collaborate with the County on the long-awaited cultural assessment, we anticipate that further funding will be necessary to access more of the land. Currently, we have 15 cars tagged for removal. This is in direct contrast to other areas, such as the Cut Mountain site on the West side, where insufficient trash management has led to environmental degradation. Our proactive management of this preserve helps avoid the accumulation of hazardous waste, illegal dumping, and abandoned vehicles, and ensures that these areas remain safe, clean, and accessible to the fullest extent that we are able to as we build capacity.

For example, last October, with the help of dedicated volunteers, we removed over 1 ton of debris in just one month. These efforts demonstrate the impact of our work and the importance of continued funding. As we expand our capacity to manage this land, we kindly ask that you consider increasing our allocation to \$35,000 in the upcoming budget, instead of the current

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\$25,000. This increase will allow us to maintain and improve our efforts, particularly as we take on more land access, trash hauling, and land clearing. This increase in funding is directly correlated with the completion of the Cultural Assessment, which has been in contract with the County for over 4 years and will soon be completed, allowing us to move forward with several key projects.

County funds are primarily used for essential services such as mowing and trash bin rentals. With expanded access to the land, we anticipate that our trash hauling and land clearing needs will increase, and we are committed to covering all other operational expenses. The requested increase in funding will be solely allocated for additional mowing and land clearing efforts as we continue to restore and maintain this valuable open space. These efforts are crucial to keeping the preserve safe, accessible, and free of hazardous waste, illegal dumping, and invasive species.

We are confident that increasing funding for Malama Hamakua Maui will result in long-term environmental, economic, and social benefits. The continued restoration of native plants and the maintenance of open space preserves help reduce fire risk, improve biodiversity, and protect vital ecosystems that benefit both residents and visitors. Additionally, the engagement of our volunteers, especially youth groups like MEO Youth Prevention, fosters a sense of community, environmental responsibility, and civic pride that will contribute to Maui's sustainability for years to come.

Lastly, we kindly request that you keep the Pawela parcel, which is still in limbo, at the forefront of your discussions. Its inclusion in our work would allow for even greater conservation efforts, as well as the potential for educational programs, research opportunities, and community involvement. This property could become a hub for environmental education and volunteerism, contributing to the well-being of both our ecosystem and our community.

We are deeply grateful for your support, and we look forward to continuing our work together. Your investment in the Open Space Preserve is an investment in Maui's future—a sustainable, thriving community, and a natural environment that will benefit generations to come.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Maile Davis

Malama Hamakua Maui

malamahamakuamaui1@gmail.com

808-385-3176

MAUI COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET HEARING TUESDAY 15 APRIL 2025 PA'IA

1-REMODEL MAUI COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS SO COUNCIL MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE THEIR BACKS TO THE COMMUNITY!

2-EXPAND THE TIERED PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM. Raising property tax on 2nd, 3rd 4th homes and non-residents; ~~or~~ give a break to residents; ~~whichever is more legal!~~

3-BUILD ~~A FEW~~ MATERIAL RECLAMATION FACILITIES around Maui County. Too much usable items go into the landfill; will expand life of site

4-EXPAND MAUI BUS SYSTEM, including makawao-pa'ia-huelo shuttle route. - retire gas buses and purchase electric/hybrid buses to replace them.

5 -INSTITUTE A RESIDENTIAL CURB-SIDE RECYCLING SYSTEM [charging per container].

6-ESTABLISH "ALOHA ZONES" FOR HOUSELESS/UNSHELTERED, including those living in vehicles, with various social services and personal hygiene facilities.

7-UNLOCK MAUI COUNTY BEACH PARK GATES; allow access 24/7.

8-MAINTAIN COUNTY PARK BATHROOMS, INCLUDING KEEPING OPEN 24/7.

9-CHANGE ZONING LAWS TO ALLOW BUILDING UP A COUPLE OF STORIES FOR RENTALS/PURCHASE WHERE APPROPRIATE; WITH RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES UPSTAIRS AND COMMERCIAL FACILITIES ON FIRST/GROUND FLOOR.

10-HAVE MORE OFFICIAL MAUI COUNTY GOVERNMENT HEARINGS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY IN THE EVENINGS SO MORE RESIDENTS CAN ATTEND/TESTIFY.

11-SUPPORT AND WORK WITH THE STATE TO MAKE ELECTION DAY A HOLIDAY, WHILE ALSO INSTITUTING A RANKED-CHOICE VOTING ELECTION SYSTEM.FOR ALL CONTESTS

12-EXPAND THE BRIGHTLY FLASHING LIGHTS ON MAJOR ROAD CROSSWALKS.

13-KEEP EXPANDING AND FUNDING PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE/EQUESTRIAN TRAILS AND PATHS.

14-EXPANDED PLUS ADDITIONAL COUNTY PARKING LOTS IN ALL OF THE SMALL TOWNS AND REGIONS OF MAUI COUNTY.

15-SUPPORT ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE LAND TRUST.

16-HAVE MORE SIGNAGE IN BOTH HAWAIIAN AND ENGLISH.

17-CONTINUE USING NON-TOXIC ORGANIC WEED SPRAYING WHILE PHASING OUT ALL USES OF POISONOUS WEED CONTROL ITEMS.

18-INCREASE FUNDING FOR SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNTY

19-KEEP PUSHING AND SUPPORTING FOR BOTH THE PA'IA AND LAHAINA ALTERNATIVE ROUTE PROJECTS.

20-SINCE 1992 I HAVE BEEN REQUESTING A COUPLE OF TENNIS COURTS BE BUILT AT THE 4TH MARINE PARK ON KOKOMO ROAD IN HA'IKU; THERE IS PLENTY OF SPACE WITHOUT TAKING AWAY FROM OTHER BALL FIELDS. NOW I SUGGEST ONE TENNIS & ONE PICKLEBALL COURT. [less wind then pa'ia]

fyi/btw/NB: With a domestic terrorist now serving as POTUS, there is NO GUARANTEE, nor should Maui County count on that any federal funding will be coming to Maui County!

Maui MPO Policy Board Meeting 04.15.2025 – via Zoom “Hele Mai Maui 2045 LRTP Update_04.11.2025”

INSTITUTE A MORATORIUM ON APPROVING THE FUNDING & BUILDING OF HIGH-END AG SUBDIVISIONS; WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY BUILD MORE AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS AND HOMES FOR PURCHASE.

DELETE ALL ANTI-CANNABIS POLICE FUNDING and place those monies into social services and/or expand anti-cock

-ESTABLISH A SUB-COMMITTEE to review possibly instituting a single member district county council system; perhaps expanding the Maui County Council to 11 members. fighting funds

-DECREASE THE FUNDING FOR THE MAUI COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

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paid- from Nikhilanda

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

My name is Jill, and I live in Makawao. I'm here today on behalf of the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council to respectfully ask that you increase our ~~County~~ budget allocation from \$225,000 to \$525,000 to support our ~~marine~~ conservation work.

environmental.

which is currently listed under the EPA S Fund,

We're a small team doing a lot with limited resources, and this funding helps us protect the health of our ocean and reefs through community-driven, science-based programs. With your support, we've been able to:

- Monitor water quality at 41 beaches around Maui—so we can track how clean and safe our ocean water is.
- Conduct reef health surveys year-round—to see how our reefs are doing and where help is needed.
- Launch Hawai'i's first reef-friendly landscaping program—teaching hotels, landscapers, and residents how to care for land in ways that protect the ocean.
- And just this year, we established a new coral restoration site in South Maui—to give damaged corals a second chance to survive and grow.

These are big wins for our island, but we know there's still more to do—and we can't do it without solid, reliable funding.

~~I also want to mahalo the Council for allocating \$800,000 to wetland restoration—that kind of support makes a real difference. We're asking for similar investment in ocean restoration.~~ Our reefs protect our coastlines, support local jobs, and are deeply connected to our cultural and environmental identity.

Finally, I want to flag a major concern: the risk of losing potential federal funding. Many grants require matching funds or proof of stable local support. Without a dependable county budget, we may not qualify—or even be able to apply—for these opportunities.

We're ready to keep showing up, doing the work, and collaborating with our community. But we need the resources to meet the moment.

Mahalo for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to protecting Maui's natural resources.

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BFED



in your neighborhood

PO Box 1902
Wailuku, HI 96793
(808)215-9228
www.GrowSomeGood.org

FY26 County Council Budget Hearing

Farm to School Program Manager

Grow Some Good

4/15/2025

Aloha County Council,

My name is Ashley Moody and I am the Farm to School Program Manager for Grow Some Good. I am very thankful to be here with you tonight. Over the past year, our nonprofit has continued to grow and strengthen its impact across Maui County, thanks to the support of the county budget. Today, I am here to advocate for your continued support of Grow Some Good in the coming year.

As many of you know, our non-profit works with schools across Maui providing garden-based, hands-on agricultural education. We believe that nurturing a connection to the land and access to local, healthy food, not only enriches the education and health of our keiki today but also supports a sustainable future for Maui.

Our programming is rooted in schools. The role of our Garden Coordinators continues to be one of the most important aspects of our success. These positions allow us to maintain gardens, deliver hands-on learning, and provide meaningful engagement with nature for thousands of students.

This year we have expanded to place coordinators at Princess Nāhi'ena'ena and Kamehameha III Elementary schools, who are not only integrating agricultural education into the classroom but also providing an outdoor space for healing and reconnection.

County funding has been essential in ensuring our coordinators can dedicate the necessary time to these programs. Your continued support will allow us to sustain our current positions and support more schools on our island. Through our farm to school network, we offer resources to network schools, supporting their school gardens, through training resources, curriculum, and supplies.

Our Kumu Mea Kanu garden kits remain one of our most important offerings, bringing agricultural education directly into classrooms. This school year, we have distributed

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close to 2200 kits in 22 schools, including a new pre-school kit which is being piloted right now.

We continue to offer intersession, after-school programs, and fieldtrip support which engage hundreds of students during the school year through our partnerships with the YMCA, Big Brothers/ Big Sisters, and Maui Nui Botanical Garden.

In a continued collaboration with the Hawaii Farm to School Hui, we co-hosted a "We Grow" event this year with Hawaii Youth Food Council. High schoolers from across Hawai'i nei, came together to listen and work with the Lahaina community. Making the connection between the historic Royal Lahaina Capitol and the State Capitol, this event inspired youth for a second "We Grow" event in early March focused on food policy and advocacy.

Grow Some Good works directly with diverse communities across this island. We not only support keiki and schools here, but represent Maui in a larger movement across Hawai'i, connecting youth to the aina, to their food, and to their community. I want to thank you for your ongoing support of our program. The work and impact we have had has been far reaching and will only continue to be. The county's funding plays a vital role in the success of our programs. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley Moody". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ashley" and last name "Moody" clearly distinguishable.

Ashley Moody
Farm to School Program Manager
ashley@growsomegood.org

Dear Maui Council

In recent years more and more trails are becoming unavailable.

Not just for us horse people, also for other recreational activities like hiking, dog walking, mountain biking, family outings.

I understand Kuiaha Bay is lost to private ownership, which is devastating. It is a the most beautiful place and it is heartbreaking to be taken away from public and only enjoyed by one.

But hope is not totally lost, since Maui County still owns some parcels in this area.

On the map it shows we could still work on some amazing trails for all sorts of activities.

Please consider putting some funds for this area aside to create recreational opportunities for us outdoor people.

With friendly Regards

Maui Trail-ride Community

Annette Wenzler

808 281 5718

annettewenzler@yahoo.com

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Map

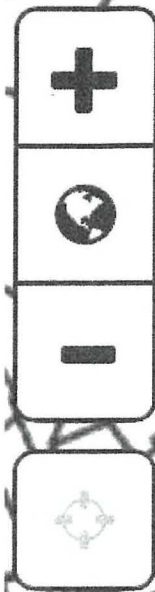
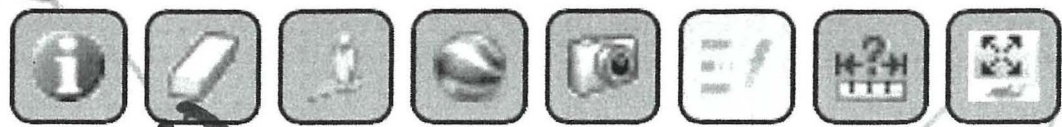
Search

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K-bay



COUNTY OF MAUI

IANA HWY

.82.44 Acres Value \$5,988,700

Last Sale Date 9/20/2016

Last Sale Price \$3,983,746